Heart of Stone 2



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Heart of Stone 2

a Vore Romance

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“Elves,” Ink said, “are perverts”

Dean

Dean could feel her pacing across the cave. It was not the human pacing, up and down, up and down, but rather the smooth, horizontal pacing of a basilisk's slither, fluidly traversing as her insides clenched.

"What are you thinking about?" he asked.

There was no answer. Lately, there never was, though it didn't stop him from trying. Dean adjusted his shoulders; it had been a while since he had gotten a good stretch and his neck was beginning to complain. He reached his arms up into the liquid flesh. For once, Ink didn't resist his intrusion.

The slime-coated walls clung to his skin. Through those walls he could feel the warmth of his friend, his captor, and his current vessel as she made her way around the pool, sniffed, and made her way back, slithering past her sleeping nook, taking a left at the stalagmite. It was a familiar route to him; he wouldn't be surprised if the stone beneath her scales was worn thin from her wandering, but at the moment he was focused on his own predicament.

His neck really ached.

Moving inside of Ink was moving through a living labyrinth; every twist and turn like navigating the corridors of a pulsating, aqueous maze. He lifted his left shoulder, triggering a contraction. The muscles around him locked in place and he had to wait for it to pass before he could shove his elbows into the walls, twisting his neck from side to side. When a satisfying crack signaled relief, he let himself sink once more into the warmth. He was somewhere around Ink's midsection. She stopped in front of Augustus.

"I don't know what to do," she whispered to the statue. "I just don't know."

Her body rippled as she heaved a sob and Dean mirrored the action, pressing his face into the meaty underbelly in honor of his friend. It was hard to fight the annoyance he felt at his captivity, but

he tried to understand. Ink was going through a rough spot. Basilisks tended to eat their problems.

"Ink," he tried again, straining to push his arms up into her stomach. She was moving away from the statue. If she was going to the pool, he'd have to lift himself into her belly to get a drink before it absorbed. "I think it's time we start to think about the future."

The only sign that she had heard him was a vengeful shake. Dean slid further into her tail, locking his legs to prevent himself from sinking all the way.

"I'm going to be jacked after this," he said to nobody as he pulled himself up into Ink's stomach.

Ink bent to drink and Dean drank with her. The water was lukewarm.

"I see you're still moping around," came a familiar voice.

Ink stopped drinking and turned toward the entrance. After a month in her stomach, Dean had a sixth sense for the layout of her cave.

"What do you want, Gladdis?" Ink asked.

"To check in on my bestie. To see if her little snack needed anything. To help you pound him into mush if he's misbehaving."

A convulsion passed over Dean which might have been a chuckle. He would have chuckled himself if not for the fact that he was certain that Gladdis was serious. The fat lamia had as much regard for humans as humans had for mice. More than once she had suggested that Ink should deposit him into her own fat, acidic stomach.

"I don't feel like visitors today," Ink said. "And Dean is fine."

"I could use a stretch," Dean shouted.

Gladdis slithered across the cave and wrapped herself around her friend. Ink was not small by any means, but Gladdis was a giant and she had spent the last month gorging herself on would-be rescuers who came to the basilisk's cave. As such, when she pressed her belly

to Ink's, Dean sank into the flabby skin through which he could hear a deep, insistent rumble.

"Poor thing," Gladdis mocked. "Ink still hasn't decided what to do with you. If it were me, I'd drain you dry and send you packing, but she's a bleeding heart. Why don't you come hunting with me, Ink?" There are plenty of farmers around here whose sheep are looking plump and the farmers ain't too shabby either. A strapping son, a buxom daughter; they breed like bunnies, these humans, so there's always some variety to pick from."

She pushed her stomach further into Ink's, burying Dean in an abundant mound of blubber. With her left hand, she stroked Ink's tail, getting a shudder from the basilisk before she shook her off.

"Away with you," Ink said. "I feel like being alone."



"Because you've given up on your quest? I actually think that's wise. We should celebrate with a farmer or two. Maybe a fisherman!"

Both Dean and Ink winced.

“We haven’t given up,” Dean said as Ink slithered to her sleeping nook. “We’re just stalled, that's all.”

“I don’t want to hear it from the portable tail fat,” Gladdis snickered, flicking him with her thumb. She followed Ink into the alcove. The basilisk curled up in the corner. “How are you still alive in there?”

That was a question Dean had asked himself a couple of times. He figured it was the resilience of his half-dragon heritage that helped him weather the acidic slime that coated Ink’s stomach, but if he was being honest with himself, it was probably because she had chosen not to digest him. She ate and drank at regular intervals, fed him, then packed him into her tail until the next meal. She had swallowed him only a few days after discovering that he could look her in the eye. When he had asked her to explain, she had said it was because she needed to think.

Gladdis wove her tail into Ink’s and settled against her back. Her weight pressed down on Dean from above.

“Come on,” she crooned, stroking Ink’s shoulders. “Let’s have a bit of fun. Do you remember when you used to have fun?”

“Get off, Gladdis.”

“Aww! I come here with good news and you push me away like some kind of harlot! Well, if that’s how you treat your friends-”

Ink shifted.

“News?” she asked. “What news?”

Dean’s ears perked as well. This was Gladdis, though, and she never revealed anything without proper…supplication.

“Well,” Gladdis said, feigning indignation. “Well, well, well! I came here out of the goodness of my heart with wonderful news, news that pertains to both of you, I might add, but if you’re going to treat me like dirt, I’ll be on my merry way. Hmmph!”

The weight on Dean’s back lifted as Gladdis made to storm off. Ink surged forward, knotting herself around the bigger lamia, locking

her in her coils. Dean heard the rustle of fabric as she removed her blindfold.

“There are those pretty eyes,” Gladdis said.

“What news?” Ink asked, squeezing her.

The lamia shuddered erotically. Ink loosened her hold, remaining in place as Gladdis kissed her neck.

“That always gets me going,” she said. “Goodness, you’re stronger than you look. Anyway, I know that you’ve been looking for a phoenix for a while now…”

Dean pushed himself into the folds of Ink’s stomach.

“Phoenix?” he asked. “You’ve heard about a phoenix? Where? Is it still in the area?”

Gladdis ignored the questions, kissing Ink instead. Dean let the walls close around him, his face cold despite the heat.

Part of the reason why he was in Ink’s stomach was because their quest to unpetrify Augustus had stalled. After the troll thumb and the snow maiden’s tear, the recipe called for phoenix spit and fairy venom; simple enough, perhaps, if the last phoenix to be spotted in the valley hadn’t been hunted to extinction a hundred years prior and the fairies weren't involved in a prolonged war.

“The fairies won’t be at war forever,” Dean had rationalized as Ink paced her cavern. “We can search for another phoenix. Come on, we’re so close!”

But it wasn’t just the stalled quest that had aggravated Ink. He had learned from Gladdis in the brief period between their return to the cave and his current gastric imprisonment that Ink was on some kind of love quest of her own, searching for the man that could withstand her gaze.

Well, that man was Dean and from what he figured, she hated him for it.

“Phoenix,” Ink said, squeezing Gladdis harder. The lamia moaned and quivered, but when it became clear that Ink wasn’t going

to continue without reciprocation, Gladdis huffed and went limp in her grasp.

"Rumor has it one has been spotted in the southern valley," she said. "It caused a stir among the villagers who wanted to go and worship it, but it's said to be picky with who it sees and aside from that, it has an elf bodyguard. Leandra, if you know who that is. No? She's apparently a bit of a sadist—gets off on asking exorbitant prices to bend the phoenix's ear then eats the people after they're finished. I think she's a genius, personally, but the farmers have stopped tittering about the phoenix."

"Is it still there?" Ink asked. "The phoenix?"

"For a few days longer."

Elated, Dean wrestled the clenching walls until he was at the forefront of Ink's belly. She was swaying side to side, trembling with excitement, but there was also a nervous energy that Dean had come to recognize.

"This is exactly what we've been waiting for," he said. "Come on, Ink, it's been long enough. Let me out and I'll go and see the phoenix. You don't even have to come."

"No, no, I'd come," Ink said. "It's just-"

"She doesn't know about her cute little human lover now that she knows about you, bright eyes," Gladdis snickered. "Honestly, I think you should let me smash his statue to du-*urgh!*"

Ink constricted around Gladdis, tightening around her fat chest. The lamia gasped and grunted as Ink brought her face close. Her hiss was as venomous as her fangs.

"Don't touch him."

"Understood," Gladdis said, then coughed as Ink relented, slithering out of her sleeping nook toward her pool. Dean remained at the forefront of her stomach, rubbing it in a way that he knew was soothing for the basilisk.

"I don't know," Ink said, stopping in front of the petrified Augustus. "I don't know anything anymore. I thought…I was sure

when I looked into his eyes, but now I know that he'll never be able to *see* me and…what if he's mad? What if he loathes me? I mean, it's not like I don't know this is a bad idea. My blindfold might slip in my sleep. I might get a craving for him while we're making love. Goodness, the pregnancy cravings alone if he puts a brood in me!"

Her heart beat faster, whether from anxiety or love, Dean didn't know, but it made his chest feel strange all the same. He leaned his head against Ink's esophagus and let the heat of her body spread over his own.

"Augustus is the most forgiving man that I have ever met," Dean said. "He is kind and gentle and he holds no grudges. It used to annoy me, actually, how I'd get mad on his behalf while he laughed off the cruelest insult. He sees the good in everybody and I know—I *know*, Ink—that as soon as we unpetrify him, he'll kiss ya with the biggest smile on his face and laugh n' say 'well, I guess that didn't work!' You have nothing to worry about. He loves you."

The tension in her muscles eased. She was crying and the sound stirred something in Dean, so he rubbed her stomach and found that he enjoyed the sensation of spreading his hands wide over her vast inner fabric of her body. The last month inside of her had made him intimate with Ink in a way that he had never experienced and while he was ready to be free, he didn't regret his time inside of her, only the certainty that it would come to an end.

Once they unpetrified Augustus, he would leave for the west coast. Maybe there the strange feeling would subside.

Ink stopped crying after a few minutes and wiped her cheeks. She put a grateful hand on her belly. Dean tried not to read into her touch.

"Thank you," she said. "I know I've been hard to deal with. It's a silly thing to get stuck on, this idea that my husband should be able to look me in the eye."

"No, no, it's not silly," Dean said. "It's just, well, how about this: would you love Augustus any less if he was a blind man?"

Ink shifted.

“No,” she said.

“But he wouldn’t be able to see you,” Dean continued. “He’d never know your face, not by sight, but with his hands and his lips he would explore you until he knew every crevice and then it would be wrong to say that he was unaware of your beauty.”

“I…suppose.”

“And, if that’s the case, then think about what a privilege it is that you do have sight, that you *can* see each other, just not at the same time, and think about how much he must have loved you to have risked his life just for an opportunity to make you happy. Even if you aren’t sure about what you feel for him-”

“I am sure,” Ink insisted.

“-we owe it to him to bring him back.”

Ink twisted and turned, but in the end she sighed and relaxed her whole body. Dean slid further into her tail, fighting to stay afloat as Ink found him with her hands and carried him back into her tail. Gladdis was slithering into the main cavern. Dean could hear her belly scraping over the floor, the glutton.

“So,” Gladdis said. “Do I get something nice for telling you about the phoenix?”

“If it pans out,” Ink said, “you’ll get something.”

“What?!”

Ink ignored her indignant rambling, thrusting her fists beneath Dean to hold him in place as she let her esophagus unravel. For the first time in months, Dean blinked in the light, and then he was rising, sliding through the slime and the saliva until he was prostrate on Ink’s tongue. Gladdis stopped ranting and winked at him.

“You look good like that,” she said.

“I always look good.”

He tumbled out into the pool, gasping as the cool water washed over his tense muscles, wiping away a month’s worth of basilisk stomach smell. Ink slipped into the pool beside him. It was odd to

observe her from the outside. Her recently vacated belly was only just rescinding.

"So," Dean said, taking a cake of soap from the ledge and lathering himself thoroughly. "When do we leave?"

"As soon as possible," Ink said, looking at him, and for a moment, when their eyes met, Dean felt like the month inside of her was worth it.

Ink

“It was a fluke,” Ink whispered.

“I can smell your hormones, Ink. It wasn’t a fluke.”

“Shh!”

Dean was gathering materials in the nearest village for their journey to the southern valley. Even though Ink would have heard him approaching, she kept her voice low as she spoke to Gladdis in the sleeping nook. Gladdis lay curled up in the corner. She was still expecting sex.

“I just never look humans in the eyes,” Ink said, avoiding Gladdis’s questing tail. “It’s a new experience.”

“You looked at him and got wet,” Gladdis snorted. “That’s as unambiguous as it gets.”

Ink shuddered as Gladdis’s tail found its mark, entering her cunt and lingering there. She was still sensitive.

“It’s a…a fetish,” Ink said.

“Mmhmm.”

“I can control it.”

“You can’t even look *me* in the eyes for more than twenty seconds before my scales start to itch,” Gladdis said, pushing herself deeper into Ink. “Honestly, I’m envious of the bastard. Hey, why don’t you and I go see the phoenix and I can swallow Dean? He’s kind of a pest, right, or have your feelings about that changed as well?”

Ink bit her lip as the fat end of Gladdis’s tail brushed up against her clit. Gladdis let herself sit for a moment before dragging the tip along the shallow ridges of her vagina, prompting a gasp.

“He can be sweet,” Ink said.

Gladdis kissed her neck. Ink began to coil, pressing her thin stomach into Gladdis’s doughy belly. More than fifty humans had met their end inside of her swollen curves in only as many days and

Gladdis was flaunting her girth beautifully. She had even pierced her nipples—a new fad among lamia that Ink just couldn't get into.



“I can be sweet,” Gladdis said, moving up Ink’s chin. Her lips were plump and soft. Ink kissed her, gently at first, then harder, melting into her embrace. “I can be very, very sweet.”

“Only when you want something,” Ink said against her mouth.

Gladdis smiled.

“I’m a greedy girl.”

“Yowza!”

Ink pushed Gladdis away as Dean slid aside the curtain of lichen that covered her sleeping alcove.

His month of confinement had burned away the soft edges of his body. A black, cotton shirt stretched over his broad chest, tapering at the waist. His stomach was flat. His shoulders were wide. Slimmed down, Ink could see more of his draconic heritage than just the scales on his back. His previous physique had been a disguise; his current form had a weight to it that could only be described as intimidating.

“Girl…”

Ink had forgotten that Gladdis was inside of her. The lamia’s tail came out of her cunt with a pop, leaving behind a deep, throbbing emptiness that grew deeper as she looked at Dean. He tilted his head sideways when she met his eyes. Flecks of gold shimmered amidst his dark brown irises.

“What?” he asked.

“Nothing,” Ink growled, replacing her blindfold. Gladdis tried to kiss her as she passed, but Ink swept out of the sleeping nook, hooking Dean with her tail. He allowed himself to be carried into the main cave. Their supplies were piled by the entrance.

“Food for a few days,” Dean said, pointing to a small, leather sack. “Food for me, rather, given that carrying enough food for you would be an endeavor; I figured you would hunt. There’s also climbing pitons, sleeping bags, a tent that should—*should*—fit both of us in a pinch, and two more blankets. I also bought a jar of fire water just in case.”

“Liquor?” Ink asked, sniffing the jar.

“Er, no. Fire water. It’s supposed to be good for cold resistance but since it makes most humans burst into flames, it’s more of an alchemical substance. I figured it would be fine for me since-”

He gestured toward his back. Ink thought of his hidden scales and blushed.

“Do most people know?” she asked.

“What?” Dean said. “About my mum? Not unless I take my shirt off and I rarely do that in polite company. Halflings are tolerated as adventurers and traders, but most village yokels will chase you out if they suspect you’ve got a touch of the monstrous in you, no offense.”

He stretched. His motions had always been fluid, but now they were downright catlike. Ink wondered if he’d be able to carry her in a pinch. She shook her head. It was such a stupid notion.

“I’ll look after the cave again while you’re gone,” Gladdis said, waving from the sleeping alcove. “It’s no inconvenience.”

“I’m starting to suspect she doesn’t have a home,” Dean said as he turned toward the cave mouth.

Ink snorted. She adjusted the black wrap she wore to bind her chest and patted her skirt. She doubted that anyone would care if she was naked, but somehow the thought of Dean staring at her while they walked made her cheeks burn. He was standing at the entrance of the cave with his hands on his hips, overlooking the lush, green grass that hid the cave. Summer was almost over and the humans in the south were tending to their yield. Ink raised her nose in the air. It smelled like rain.

“Gray clouds the way we’re headed,” Dean said just as Ink turned to warn him. “We’ll have to find shelter before nightfall. Would you mind?”

He raised a pack for Ink to strap over her shoulder. She looked inside to see some kind of unfamiliar canvas as well as all three alpaca blankets.

“I’m not a mule,” she said. “Carry it yourself.”

“Very well.”

If Ink had expected an argument, she had severely underestimated Dean's enthusiasm; he pulled three packs onto his back like they weighed nothing and strutted through the grass, whistling. Ink slithered after him, frowning at the sun. Her skin was painfully pale after weeks in the dark.

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The path south diverged at the end of the grasslands. One deeply rutted trail led toward the village where Ink smelled smoke and sweat and industry; she licked her lips at the taste of roast pig in the air. The other path was unkempt with weeds breaking through the loosely packed earth. Merchants always passed through the village so only solo travelers made their way directly toward the valley and many didn't make it more than a few miles. These were lamia hunting grounds and Gladdis's sisters were happy to pick off the odd, lost yeoman.

"I'd stay close by," Ink found herself saying.

Dean looked back at her and stopped.

"Why is that?" he asked with a smirk. Anger bubbled in Ink's chest as she pushed past him, making him jog to keep up.

"You know Gladdis?" Ink asked.

"I've had the pleasure of making her acquaintance."

"Well she's one of the nicer lamia. Her sisters and cousins are far less talkative if you know what I mean."

"Ah," Dean said, jumping over a root. His head swiveled and Ink could tell that he was picking up on the broken grass around them, estimating when the tracks were made. She didn't bother to tell him that they were over a day old. It was better if he was fearful. "You're saying that Gladdis's stomach is cozy compared to the others?"

"Something like that," Ink hissed.

She was starting to realize what pissed her off most about Dean. Now that she knew he was half dragon, it was unacceptable to her

how *weak* he was. He could resist her gaze, but not her belly. Any of the snakes in the grasslands could eat him, no problem. Weren't dragons supposed to be strong?

Why exactly that pissed her off, Ink didn't know, but she glared at Dean nonetheless as he continued to whistle.

"So," Ink said, "how did you like spending a month inside of me?"

It was a quick jab meant to take the wind out of his sails, but as soon as she said it, Ink's neck began to flush. It was her first prolonged entrapment, after all, and her prisoner hadn't digested; indeed, he was looking at her curiously. Had it dawned on her that he had been privy to *everything* that she had done over that month?

Well, Ink thought to herself, *I was privy to everything he did, too.*

"Honestly, it wasn't that bad," Dean said. He adjusted his packs and looked up at the sky. Ink presumed he was watching the clouds in the distance. "Longest I've spent in one place, actually; at least since I left the nest."

"Nest?"

Dean adjusted the packs again. Annoyed, Ink took one from him and Dean rolled his shoulders gratefully.

"My mother hoards precious gems," he said. "They're not comfortable to sleep on, but she wanted to keep her baby close. My father was always traveling, at least until–"

He pursed his lips.

"–anyway, let's just say that when I left I developed a taste for fine fabrics and soft women."

Ink's hands went automatically to her stomach. Dean didn't seem to notice.

The summer's heat beat across their necks as the road veered left, then right. Red and gold birds wheeled in the open sky and at the top of a hill, the path before them spread like lines on a map. Trees dotted the middle distance, short and stubby. A river wound to their left, straining toward the sea, and to their right were the mountains in

which they had discovered the snow maiden. The valley where they were headed was beyond a ravine.

"Those clouds are getting closer," Dean said. "We're gonna want to get to that patch of trees before dusk if we're going to set up before the storm."

Ink tasted the air again.

"I agree," she said. "I'll meet you at the trees."

"Where are you going?" Dean asked as she veered into the grass.

"Hunting," Ink said.

***

She had smelled the human a mile back, her stomach rumbling as she recalled the sensation of Dean's palms brushing against her innards. Spitting him out had opened a hole inside of her and it was high time she filled it with something more than the jerky that Dean had brought for the journey.

The human was sitting by the riverbank, staring into the water. She was young, maybe 20, with blond hair that came all the way down to her slim waist. *Not exactly a filling meal*, Ink thought as she sidled up beside her, *but she'll have to do*.

The girl didn't look up as Ink's large shadow eclipsed her.

"Have you come to eat me?" she asked.

"Yes," Ink said.

Flower petals lay strewn in the grass beside the girl. There was a scroll, too, and a piece of painted canvas. Other than that, the girl seemed to have no equipment.

"I've been waiting for this," the girl said. She threw a stone into the water and watched the ripple. Ink's stomach growled impatiently, but she held off, curious. The girl hadn't made any move to flee. "Ever since Evelynn left, the color has leached from the world and these places, these beautiful places that used to give me joy are now filled with pain. I want it to end. Can you help me?"

She tilted her head, looking up at Ink for the first time, and there was not a shred of fear in her posture.



“You want me to eat you?” Ink asked.

“Yes,” the girl said.

“Because your lover left you?”

“She was everything to me.”

Ink scratched her chin, truly nonplussed. There had been times after petrifying Augustus where she had tendered the romantic notion of letting Gladdis turn her into stomach pudge, but when she had voiced that delusion to her, Gladdis had laughed and opened her cunt, holding Ink in her fat tail until the darkness had passed. A surge of gratitude for the lamia flooded Ink’s chest. She lay on her stomach next to the girl, cupping her cheek in her hand.

“This Evelynn,” Ink said. “Tell me what she was like.”

The girl talked for the better part of an hour. Evelynn was a seamstress in her village, the daughter of wealthy merchants. The girl had met her when they were children playing by the stream and even then she had been enamored, but Evelynn was often away, traveling with her parents, so it was a special treat when she saw their caravan come rumbling into town. Eventually they grew into teenagers and became infatuated with each other. They would sneak off into the fields and make love in the soft grass, but Evelynn was promised to another and the girl knew that no matter how many times Evelynn insisted that she’d remain true that eventually, one day, she’d marry that man, that merchant’s son, and leave the girl alone.

And that’s exactly what happened.

Ink listened, fascinated by the tale. In all of her life she had experienced love just once and losing it had been so painful that she had receded into herself, but she had only known Augustus for a week, maybe two, and the thought of having years with him, falling deeper and deeper in love with him, knowing he was going to leave? Oh, it was so sad that she almost swallowed the girl then and there.

When the girl finished her story she sat quietly, looking out over the river. The echoes of her sobs remained embedded in the soil and

Ink, unsure of what to say, lay quietly, waiting for the girl to feed herself to her. The girl sniffed.

"You know what?" she said. "Fuck Evelynn."

"What?"

"Fuck Evelynn," the girl repeated, louder this time. She drew herself upright and threw her hands wide. "Every time we talked about her engagement she'd tell me that she had no choice, that daddy needed her to marry a man, that she couldn't stay in the village forever. You'd think my love was enough, but no, it was all about—the fucking—money!"

She punctuated each word with a kick, tearing up the dirt at her feet. When she finished, she was panting, slavering at the mouth. Ink's stomach growled louder than ever.

For once, the girl had the appropriate reaction.

"Oh," she said. Ink could smell the fear oozing off of her. How mercurial were humans that one moment, they wanted to die, and the next they clung to life? "Um, I'm sorry, I don't think that I want to be eaten anymore."

"Well, well, well," Ink said. "That's too bad."

She sheathed the girl in her throat before she could make another peep, throwing her head back to choke down her thrashing legs as the girl's arms spread uselessly in her throat, trying to slow her descent. Ink felt her hit her stomach with a thud and settled, drumming her fingers on the bulge.

"Delicious," she said.

It was with a full, writhing belly that she returned to Dean that night.



Dean

The storm was approaching faster than he had anticipated. When he reached the treeline, the wind was already starting to whip through the branches, snapping the canvas of the tent while he unrolled it. Dean peered behind him toward the grasslands, but he couldn't see Ink. He hoped she'd be able to find his scent in the wind.

The rain started thirty minutes later. Dean had a small fire going in an alcove beneath a rock, his back propped against a mound of dirt. He listened to the thrum of water on leaves with his hands folded over his chest and tried not to worry as the sky got darker and the thunder grew louder and the lightning began to flash through the trees. Eventually, he saw something moving in the dusk.

"Ink," he called. "Ink!"

The serpentine figure turned in the dusk. As a flash of lightning hit the mountains, the afterburn illuminated the lamia's emerald scales.

Dean doused the fire and looked back into the darkness. The figure had disappeared.

"Okay," he muttered to himself, "alright."

His heart began to race. Lamia could move silently in the woods and this one had seen that he was in an isolated position. The rain would hide her approach as well. Was there another way out of the alcove? No. She was probably waiting on top of the rock, waiting for him to stick his neck out so that she could snap him up.

The rain continued to pound against the dirt as the seconds passed. Dean forced himself to take a deep breath. Why was he scared? It wasn't like he didn't have experience with lamia and this one seemed small; smaller than Ink and Gladdis, at least. The prospect of being swallowed didn't alarm him. He clutched his chest. Why was his heart beating so fast?

"Come out," he yelled at the unseen figure. "Come and get me."

Something moved on top of the rock; the sound of scales scraping against stone. Dean tensed, waiting for the strike, but the lamia was patient. She knew that she had all night.

Wind howled through the trees. Dean continued to listen. He was crouched in an ambush position with his arms outstretched, ready for anything, and his legs were beginning to burn. He got to his knees and waited.

"Dean?"

His head snapped up. Was he hallucinating? He listened closely, aware of the silence atop the rock. The lamia was listening too.

"Dean?"

Ink appeared near the tent Dean had pitched. Her stomach was large and round, a testament to a successful hunt, and her blindfold had come off in the wind. Dean wanted to call out to her, but to do so

would likely trigger the lamia. He waited in the cave, banking on her keen sense of smell to find him.

Moist scales on stone. Dean called out, but too late:

“Ink, above you!”

The lamia’s tail wrapped like a noose around Ink’s neck. Dean could only see them as dark shapes wriggling in the trees, coiling and hissing, beating against the ground. He ran out into the rain and felt it like sharp needles on his shoulders. The wind rose to a horrid pitch. The tent shuddered and flew off into the night.

“Ink!”

The lamia’s grip on the basilisk’s neck had tightened. She had her in a chokehold and she knew that if she just continued to squeeze, eventually the larger snake would have to submit. Ink clawed at the scales, gurgling, prying the crease, but the muscular tail’s constriction was stronger than any hold she could muster. The lamia screamed her victory as Ink went limp in her grasp. Dean’s fist connected with the lamia’s cheek a second later.

WHACK!

He had intended to hold back, but panic and adrenaline caused him to go overboard. The lamia’s body sailed through the air, hitting a rock with a sickening thud.

“Ink, are you alright?”

The basilisk’s tail was a flaccid heap in the wet earth. Her body was buried under a mound of twigs which Dean brushed aside, gasping as he saw the purple bruise encircling her neck. Ink’s eyelids fluttered.

“Fuck,” she coughed. “That was close.”

“Close indeed,” Dean said, relief making his voice tremble. “You alright?”

“I will be.”

Ink tried to push herself up, but she was still weak. Dean took her by the chest and the waist and heaved until she was sitting on her tail. Thunder rumbled as the lamia on the ground twitched.

“She’s alive,” Dean said.

The lamia groaned.

“What are you?” she wheezed as Dean approached. “Not human, not human.”

“You talk like the snow maiden,” Dean said, inspecting her cheek. The lamia had lost a tooth and hit her head, but otherwise she looked alright. “You should be fine. Get lost. Tell your friends not to mess with us.”

“You will pay for what you have done to Savine.”

“Yeah, yeah.”

“If you let her go, she’ll be back with ten more of her sisters,” Ink said as Dean made to push the lamia away.

“What are you suggesting?” Dean asked.

A thin smile spread across Ink’s lips.

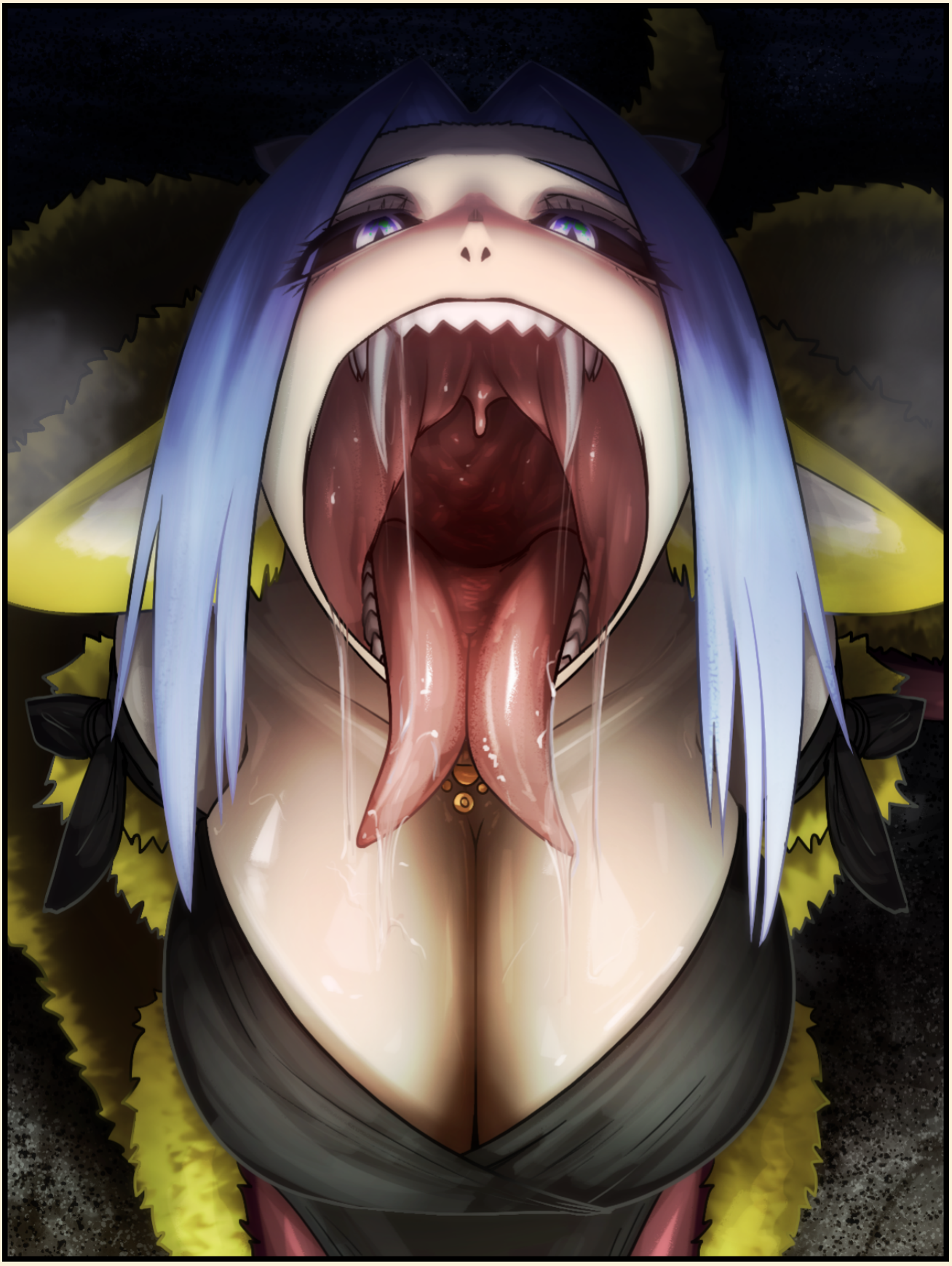
“Feed her to me,” she said.

Lightning flashed as Ink opened her mouth wide. Dean could make out every fang, every bump on her tongue as it splayed across her breasts, throat expanding into a massive, fleshy tunnel. Steam rose with her breath. Her rainbow eyes locked onto Dean’s.

He blushed.

Suddenly it was hard to speak. She was just looking at him, but it was like someone had increased gravity, turning the knob until standing became a burden. Dean’s fingers went impulsively to his neck where he felt his pulse pounding so loud that he could hardly hear the thunder of the rain or the lamia rustling beside him. Ink was…so beautiful.

He had noticed it before, of course, the erotic way that her hips curved into her underbelly, her breasts pooling against the front of her wrap, but now it was charged with adrenaline and the eager look in Ink’s eyes. She was telling him in so many ways that she needed him and he couldn’t take it; he stiffened against the front of his pants, hoping beyond hope that the smell of his lust would be lost in the rain.



“Fine,” Dean said, clearing his throat. He dragged the lamia toward her like she weighed nothing. The serpent squirmed in the dirt.

“What are you doing? Let me go! You will regret thisss!”

Ink lowered her head and opened her mouth wider. Her throat pulsed in slimy anticipation as Dean heaved the lamia up and onto her tongue, shivering as the warm muscle bent beneath his arm. Ink gulped her thanks and the top half of the lamia’s head and shoulders disappeared into her gullet. When he could no longer suppress his urge to touch her, he turned.

“I’m going for a walk,” he said.

Ink’s hand gripped him by the bicep.

“Stay,” her eyes said.

Dean stayed.

Warm saliva coated Dean’s arms as he placed his palms on the lamia’s hips. Ink’s eyes flashed as he mashed the lamia into her tongue, spreading her taste and prompting a preliminary gulp. The bulge in Ink’s throat whimpered. The lamia’s tail coiled around Dean’s legs, a nonverbal plea for mercy, but the smell of Ink’s breath, her gaze, it intoxicated him. He wanted to thrust his arms deep into her gullet and join the lamia on the long slide down, but he also wanted to stay on the outside, watching her human stomach stretch, then shrink as her plump tail grew plumper, softer, wrapping around him in comforting lengths as he buried himself in her-

“Are you going to be okay?” Dean asked. He was starting to get dizzy.

Ink snorted, nodding her head impatiently. Her hands lay flat on the ground, body parallel with the earth, tail outstretched. Dean supposed that her upper stomach was reserved for food she meant to preserve. The lamia was going straight into her lower stomach—her tail—where the gooey, padded walls would hold her until she digested. Dean thought of the human already inside of Ink as a slow gurgle dragged her down into the depths of the basilisk’s bowels. *They were still alive*, Dean thought, watching Ink pack them away. *Is that what I looked like in there?*



The lamia jolted when he put his hands on her tail. He had to mount her to hold her steady while Ink lifted her tongue, letting her glide deeper into her sensuous body. Foot by foot, Dean pushed, arms saturated, knuckles brushing the walls of the throat. Ink never broke eye contact. When the thin end of the lamia's tail swept past her lips, she closed her mouth and moaned as she swallowed, using her hands to follow the path the lamia took as she curled in her upper stomach, making a massive bulge.

"What a treat," Ink hissed. The rain made her skin slippery. Her wrap had come off in the tussle and her bare breasts shone in the moonlight. A patch of clouds had come apart above the woods. The storm was almost over. "It's been a while since I've swallowed a snake."

She licked her lips and Dean leaned forward, drawn to the curve of her mouth. He was standing before her, covered in her saliva, and her eyes were still on him, pinning him in place.



“What?” Ink asked.

“Nothing,” Dean said, shaking his head. He had to snap out of it. This was a momentary affliction. “I was…surprised is all.”

“By?”

The corner of her mouth twitched. Dean got the feeling that she knew just how erotic the twistings and turns of the lamia inside of her were. Her slit glistened as she drew herself up on her haunches. It was starting to get cold and their tent had blown away in the wind. Dean’s crotch ached for the embrace of her tongue, her tits, her cunt; the warmth that was inside of her, the warmth he had felt when she had bitten him, but he had made a silent promise to Augustus and if he

was anything, he was a man of his word. Dean turned away from Ink, breaking eye contact for the first time in minutes.

"I should find the tent," he said.

Without waiting for an answer, he ran into the woods.

Ink

What was wrong with her?

It had been a long night of twisting and turning. The ‘tent’ that Dean had brought was large by human standards, but the makers had failed to consider the capacity of a basilisk with a lamia in her belly. Ink’s enormous gut had taken up most of the floorspace and while she was able to curl around herself, Dean was forced to sleep beneath her vast, gurgling belly, privy to all the whimpers and cries of her prey as she digested into a pillowy white bulge under which Dean almost suffocated. He had woken her at the crack of dawn with his muffled thuds, but Ink, half asleep and sensitive in post-digestion, had merely rolled on top of him, using the drumming of his hands to work herself toward a fine orgasm before realizing the danger.

Now it had been over an hour and Dean hadn’t said a word. He could barely look at her as they walked through the sparse woods toward the valley to the south.

It was a chill morning. A bracing wind swept past them from the north carrying the scent of Ink’s homeland and also the warning notes of another storm. Dead leaves cracked beneath Ink’s underbelly, heavier with the addition of a lamia and maiden, as she dragged herself along behind Dean, watching his broad back sway like the mast of a ship in rough seas. He walked like a bulldog, one shoulder, then the other, and while it had originally caused Ink to scoff, the movement was almost hypnotic when applied to his new, sculpted physique. It made her feel warm in her big, sloshy belly.

What was wrong with her?

“Creek up ahead.”

Startled from her thoughts, Ink didn’t see that Dean had stopped. Her stomach rammed into his back, causing him to stumble, and as Ink lunged to break his fall, the extra weight in her belly caused her to surge forward, burying him in her mound of lamia pudge. Dean’s head

popped up between her tits. Looking at him beneath her blindfold, Ink could see that he was blushing.



“She went straight to my chest,” Ink said.

“So I noticed,” Dean said.

They went silent for a minute, neither moving. His heart was thudding fast, like prey or a lover, and hers was thumping fast as well. She was sure that it was just a bit of indigestion that made her take her time climbing up over Dean’s body, letting it slide over her tail, past her sensitive belly, before yanking herself upright. Dean brushed himself off and picked up their packs. He cleared his throat.

“We’ll probably reach the phoenix by this afternoon,” he said.

Ink bit her lip. What was this frustration bubbling within her? She wanted him to acknowledge what had just happened, but why did she want him to acknowledge it? She certainly wasn’t going to.

“Great,” she said, harsher than she intended. “Awesome. The sooner we get this over with, the better.”

“Great,” Dean repeated.

Ugh! Ink slithered off toward the creek, leaving Dean behind. Mist rose from the forest floor as the sun burned away the dark and the damp and the smell of the loam made Ink think of the night before when Dean had saved her.

He punched a full grown lamia so hard that she went flying. Just how strong is he? Why did he let me eat him?

It was clear now that Dean was not a normal human, nor was he weak as Ink had previously supposed. Having spent most of her life looking down on humans (quite literally in most cases), it was a shock to find one that could stand up to her. In her culture, the men were subservient to the women because the women could swallow them whole, but here was a man who didn’t need to be coddled, making their relationship…what? Equal?

No way!

Ink filled her waterskin with the cold, clear water from the creek. Dean was crouched further downstream, a look of concentration in his eyes. Like a flash, his hand pierced the water, coming back up with a

wriggling fish which he raised proudly before stuffing it in his bag. Ink's mouth went slack. Her stomach burned.

What was wrong with her?

"We should get moving," Dean said, approaching with the packs. "I wanted to talk about that elf bodyguard, Leandra. Gladdis said that she had a reputation."

"I don't know her," Ink said, "but I know a bit about elves. I'll tell you on the way, but right now I need to excuse myself."

"Why?"

Her stomach gave an impatient gurgle. Dean bit his tongue.

"Oh."

***

Far happier and a few hundred pounds lighter, Ink crested the hill that led into the southern valley with Dean at her side. The bottom of the valley was covered in a thick bank of fog leftover from the morning. Through the white tufts, Ink could see the glint of a river and the reddish-brown rock formations that dotted the landscape.

"Elves," Ink said, "are perverts. They've lived such long lives that the only pleasures left to them are the pleasures of the flesh and they delight in coming up with new and contrived ways to please themselves. For instance, I once knew an elf who got off on humiliation, both giving and receiving. She'd get into compromising situations—stuck between rocks with her ass in the air, trapped in a slime with her cunt hanging out—and hope for seedy adventurers to come by and fuck her while she was immobile. Then she'd eat them for their indiscretion and shit them out in the mouths of-"

"Whoa, whoa, whoa," Dean said, cutting her off. "I think I got the picture. Elves are freaky, got it."

"And this elf guarding the phoenix is supposed to be freakier than most," Ink said. "Leandra. Gladdis called her a sadist which in elf terms makes her…what's worse than a sadist?"

Dean scratched his chin.

"A…disciple of Beal," he said, invoking the name of the dark god.

"A disciple of Beal," Ink agreed.

Both shuddered. They had just reached the bank of fog. Descending into it felt like descending into the afterlife. Everything became indistinct. All shapes were shadows and they huddled close to each other, keeping their wits about them.

"Could you beat her in a fight?" Dean asked. "If it came down to that?"

"Maybe," Ink said.

"Maybe?"

"Again, elves live a long, long time and this one has chosen to be a bodyguard. It's possible to think that she might have spent hundreds of years studying weaponcraft, in which case neither of us is a match for her. Combat should be an absolute last resort."

"Very wise," someone whispered.

Ink swiveled, eyes narrowed. Her tail lashed automatically toward a shape in the mist, but the feathered end clanged painfully off of a pile of rocks. Dean tensed, fists raised. The voice had come from their left. Now it came from their right.

"Lost travelers? One must presume that you didn't come to stare at the rock formations. Here to see the phoenix? I'm afraid he doesn't want to see you."

"Show yourself," Dean shouted.

The mist swirled as the wind at the bottom of the valley picked up. Ink wrapped instinctively around Dean, keeping him close, nose raised for any hint of the hidden figure. A twig snapped over to their right. Ink turned to look and when she did, she found a sword pressed to the front of her neck. The elf was sitting on her scales, light as a feather, sword in one hand and knife in another. Dean tilted his head back as the knife's blade tickled his chin.

"Now," the elf said. "What to do with you?"



She was a wiry girl with pale, green hair. Her face leaned towards youthfulness, featuring rosy cheeks and wide, emerald eyes

that were only eclipsed as her most predominant attribute by the size of her massive breasts. Ink eyed them pensively as she took in the rest of the elf's garb; a fine leather belt secured around the waist, a scabbard and elvish sword, and a loose-fitting tunic that accentuated *everything* while masquerading as modest. A cloak completed the ensemble, no doubt hiding pockets full of herbs and poisons. Leandra lifted her blade. The edge nicked Ink's cheek.

"I asked you a question," she said. "What shall I do with you, hmm? A basilisk and a half-dragon make for odd petitioners, honestly there are enough monstrous qualities in you both to merit execution, but I'm willing to let you make your case."

She spoke with a breathy quality, stringing her sentences together, eyes darting between the pair but lingering on Dean. Ink didn't like the way she licked her lips. The sword bit into her jugular as she leaned forward.

"We're here to see the phoenix," Ink said. "We aren't looking for a miracle."

"Monster hunters then," Leandra purred, tapping her knife on Dean's collar. "Repugnant, irredeemable, traitors to your own kind. I ought to slaughter you both, but the thought of dirtying my blades right now fills me with dread, with dread I say, and besides the half-dragon looks…durable."

There was a pregnant pause before the end of her sentence. Her chlorophyll eyes, upturned at the ends, were locked on Dean's chest. Dean let out a nervous chuckle when she lowered her blades. Ink moved protectively in front of him as Leandra jumped to the ground.

"What Ink is trying to say is that all we need from the phoenix is a bit of its spit," Dean said. "It would cause no great inconvenience-"

"Oh, how well for you to decide what may or may not inconvenience my master," Leandra breathed, sheathing her sword. The knife stayed out. "For your insolence I should enslave you for ten years, no, twelve years. You can serve me and service me and if you put one toe out of line you will be…reprimanded."

Ink's coils tightened around Dean's shoulders. He had to tap her to make her let go.

"That's a, er, great offer," he said, "but perhaps we could speak to your master."

At that moment, a distressing squawk sounded in the distance. Leandra's pointed ears perked as she looked into the lifting fog. They were standing in the middle of a rock formation. A shallow creek led deeper into the valley.

"You're in luck," Leandra said. "My master beckons and though he trusts me to make decisions for him, you happen to have piqued my interest, yes, piqued it and while that doesn't guarantee that I won't kill you both, I shall go to him and bend his ear and if he is merciful then we may negotiate. Stay here or run; it matters not. Should you have offended him, I will hunt you, and should he wish to speak to you, I would go to the ends of the earth to bring you to your knees…in front of him."

Again, she stared at Dean. His eyes flicked to her tits.

"Men do tend to like these," Leandra said before disappearing into the valley. Ink was too taken aback to say anything until she was out of sight, but, regaining the power of speech, she whirled on Dean.

"What?!" he asked, raising his hands as Ink brought her head level with his. Her tail rose like a rattle behind her. She backed him against one of the rocks. "Ink, you're beginning to scare me."

"Am I?" Ink hissed. "Have you lost your senses?"

"Huh? I thought that went well. She didn't kill us and said she'd talk to the phoenix. That's what we wanted, right?"

Ink turned in a huff. Dean, confused, lay a hand on her flank.

"What's wrong?" he asked.

"You were staring at her tits."

"Well she has… nice tits."

His voice trailed off as Ink's tail coiled around his leg, but before Ink could pick him up and toss him all the way back to the mouth of the valley, Leandra appeared once more, manifesting like the fog in

the space between the boulders. Her pigtails bobbed knowingly as she looked between the pair. A small smirk played on her thin lips.

"Come," she said. "My master will speak with you."

Ink released Dean, ignoring him as he glanced at her pleadingly. He picked up their packs from the ground and followed the elf to the creek which, despite its narrow width, ran deep and fast, cleaving through the stone. Ink could feel it surging beneath them, winding into vast, underground corridors. The rock formations were getting more frequent, towering on either side of them. Spiky bushes grew in their shadows. Leandra cut them aside, leading them down a hidden path into the heart of the valley.

"So, the phoenix," Dean said. "What's he like?"

"Noble," Leandra said. "Majestic, powerful beyond your comprehension. He's just accomplished another glorious rebirth, but do not let his size fool you: he is a creature of legend and one whom I am happy to dedicate my near eternal life to."

"He sounds great."

Leandra's pointed ears twitched.

"Was that mockery?"

"No."

The knife in her hand went back into her sleeve. Ink took a deep breath and made a mental note to slap Dean for his insolence at the soonest opportunity. The man had his arms behind his head, whistling off-key. He was way too relaxed for the situation they were in.

Eventually the rock formations thinned out again and the party came to an oasis in the stone. The creek emptied into a shallow pool lined with short, broad-leafed trees under which a large nest of sorts had been built. The elf raised a hand for them to stop. Dean almost bumped into her back.

"Master, I have returned with the interlopers, as requested."

"Very good," came a high-pitched croak from the nest. "I shall grant them an audience. Send them up."

“My master has granted you an audience,” Leandra said as if they hadn’t been standing right beside her. “You shall stand where you are told and should you make any move toward him, I will decapitate you on the spot. Hurry now, he doesn’t like to be kept waiting.”

Ink looked at Dean who rolled his eyes and pointed at his mouth like he was gagging. She hit him with her tail. He was going to get them killed.

“Right away, your highness,” Dean snickered.

There was a shallow ramp that led up to the top of the nest. Leandra went first, swords drawn, followed by Dean and then Ink. Just before their heads crested the precipice, Leandra stopped them, placing her sword on Dean’s chest.

“My master has just undergone a glorious rebirth,” she said, reusing her words from earlier. “No mention shall be made of it.”

“Why?” Dean asked.

Ink slapped him. He put a hand on his cheek, amused.

“Just listen to her,” Ink said.

Dean grumbled, but agreed, and Leandra removed the blade from his lapel, standing aside so that they could see over the lip of the nest.

The inside was crafted from hundreds of luxurious cushions sprawled across the floor. The air carried the faint scent of lavender, emanating from some of the cushions that had been infused with the soothing fragrance. Sitting in the middle like a prince upon a throne was the phoenix. Dean burst out laughing.

“What is that?” he asked.

Ink had seen illustrations of a phoenix once while disposing of a merchant’s cart (after eating the occupants, of course). In the illustrations, the phoenix rose as tall as an oak tree, covered from head to talon in a cloak of fiery red feathers. What lay at the bottom of the nest looked more like a chicken fetus staring up at them with weak, brown eyes. It’s naked, pink skin wrinkled with displeasure as it drew

itself up. Dean stopped laughing when Leandra put her knife against his neck.

"What, what, what?" the phoenix squawked. "Who dares disrespect me? Show yourself! Show yourself to Phyric the Wise!"

He blinked incessantly, snorting through the tiny holes in his malformed beak. Leandra pushed Dean ahead of her into the nest where he was made to kneel. When he got close to Phyric, he let out another chuckle. The phoenix squinted at him, bouncing in a circle.

"You laugh, you laugh, you laugh," he shrieked. "You laugh at Phyric the Wise, he who foresaw kingdoms, whose advice is valued above gold itself! Leandra, who is this whelp? Why have you brought them here? Kill him, kill him, kill him!"

"Wait!" Ink cried.

Dean had flinched backward at the command, but Leandra's hand was faster, collaring him as her blade rose shimmering in the air. Ink flowed into the nest just as the sword began to fall. The phoenix shrieked.

"Halt!"

Leandra stopped. Ink, heart pounding, came sliding to a halt as Phyric squinted up at her with his wormy little eyes.

"A basilisk," he said. "Interesting! I haven't seen a basilisk out of her cave in…millenia! You're a long way from home, oh yes, oh yes, and with a half dragon. Interesting! Leandra, let him go."

Leandra pushed Dean toward Ink. When she wrapped her tail around him, he was shaking.

"Idiot," Ink whispered.

"I know," Dean gulped.

Why did he have to toe the line the way that he did? Why couldn't he stay quiet? When she had swallowed him for a month, he had spent every day jabbering about his adventures, his interests, the places that he'd been. She had been sick to death of the sound of his voice, but if Leandra killed him, Ink realized that she'd miss the muffled narration coming from her guts; the comforting reverberation

of his voice when she was at her lowest point. She pulled Dean closer to her body. He must have felt her relax because he looked up.

"I'm sorry," he said.

Those eyes. Curse those eyes. Ink could see them through the bottom of her blindfold and they stunned her.

"We'll get what we need for Gus," Dean said. "No more mucking around."

Ink nodded, but her throat was dry. Augustus, the perfect specimen that he was, was still petrified in her cave, waiting for her return. Suddenly she felt filthy and she didn't know why. She pushed Dean away as the phoenix returned his attention to them. Leandra had picked him up.

"I have determined that I shall grant you a favor for the sheer novelty of your appearing before me," Phyric squawked. "A basilisk and a half-dragon make odd travel partners nowadays. It's a combination I haven't seen in hundreds of years, though it used to be quite common, oh yes, oh yes, at least by mythical standards."

"Common?" Ink asked.

Leandra rapped her forehead with the butt end of her sword. Ink fell back, clutching her scalp.

"Do not speak unless spoken to," Leandra said.

"I was speaking to her," Phyric reminded her.

"Oh right."

Ink curled her lip at the elf who shrugged, leaning on her sword. Dean came forward and raised his hand.

"You're saying it was common to see half-dragon and basilisk pairings," he said, "but as far as I know, half-dragons are pretty rare to begin with and so are basilisk."

"That's why I said it was common by mythical standards," Phyric shrieked. "Listen, listen, for I am wise beyond wisdom, and this knowledge I offer for free: back when dragons roamed the valleys and the giants had yet to make their exodus, human/dragon offspring were a frequent occurrence. Some dragons thought that it would

promote alliances with the budding kingdoms of mankind; some dragons merely captured their would-be slayers and used them before eating them, unaware of their compatibility. Half-dragons tended to live split lives, in tune with the monstrous, yet human in their empathy, strained between two loyalties. Those who sided with the monstrous, however, often ended up with basilisk."

"Why?" Ink insisted.

Leandra gave her a lethal glance, but the phoenix in her hand merely snorted.

"Why else?" Phyric said. "Half-dragons are resistant to the basilisk's petrifying gaze, as I'm sure you know, but they're also incredibly durable in both body and mind, able to weather a basilisk's mercurial moods and gluttonous outbursts. They make natural companions."

Dean tensed against Ink's stomach. She could tell that he was trying not to look at her and she was trying not to look at him. What was this phoenix talking about? Was he out of his mind? Basilisk and half-dragons pairings had been going on since the time of giants. Had Dean known about this?

"Enough charity," Leandra said. "Ask your favor of my master and be done with it."

"Right," Phyric said, preening himself. "You may ask for a favor! Most humans ask for one of my feathers, though those are in short supply at the moment, given their ability to heal and to prolong life, but perhaps you are looking for a particularly rare bit of information; many nuggets of lost knowledge remain in my long memory. Spells, lore, the lineage of kings. I could tell you the location of the Giant's Grave or the exact recipe for a potion of-"

"Just a bit of your spit will do," Dean said.

Phyric shook his head, taken aback.

"What, what, what?!" he squawked. "My infinite wisdom at your disposal and you ask for bodily secretions? Whatever for? Wait, wait, don't tell me-"

His eyes rolled back in his head. Ink shuddered, trying not to think about how much he resembled a dead bird when he convulsed and his eyes rolled into their proper places.

"You're looking to unpetrify someone," Phyric said. "Ah, you found the true recipe! Not the first time this has been requested, I'm afraid, or else I could give it to you for free. The more times a favor is asked, the more it costs, but seeing as this is a rare one, I suppose that the price should reflect that."

Ink bowed her head so that she was level with the phoenix.

"What are you asking for?" she said.

"Oh, I don't handle that. Leandra?"

The elf set Phyric down in his nest where he immediately closed his eyes and went into a fitful sleep. Putting a finger to her mouth, Leandra led the pair from the nest, waiting until they were back near the creak to sheathe her swords. There, a tent had been set up next to a campfire. Leandra snapped her fingers and flames shot out of the ground.

"Sit," she said. "Let's discuss."

Now that the business with the phoenix was over, her shoulders had relaxed. Dean and Ink came to sit around the fire.

"So," Dean said, "what do you want for the phoenix's spit?"

"Well, like my master said, the price is determined by the amount of times he's been asked the favor," Leandra said. Her ears twitched. "Villagers who ask him where to find troves of hidden treasures, for example, are asked to pay with their lives.

"Oh, not all at once," she added as Dean and Ink blanched. She ran a hand over her flat stomach or, no, not so flat. Her loose tunic covered a small bulge. "I usually let them enjoy their spoils before returning to me, happy as larks. Humans don't value their lives the way that I do. Why should they? Their lives are so short that they tend to throw them away on frivolous things and they play fast and loose with the concept of time, but I make sure that I get my money's worth."

Dean was watching her stomach too, watching the way that her hand pressed against the bulge, rolling it between her fingers. There was something inside of her; many somethings. Ink got the impression that Leandra wanted them to look. The fire crackled quietly.

"You, however, are lucky," the elf continued. "Phoenix spit has only been requested a handful of times, always by a basilisk, and the last request was ages ago, so the price has come down. Supply and demand, supply and demand, the humans have mastered this as well, but the elves keep the score."

"So what are you asking for?" Dean asked, impatient.

Leandra's lips barely moved, but her eyes narrowed like a cat's as she untucked her tunic and exposed her pale, white belly. The bulge that they had been watching was not one bulge, but many circular objects nestled beneath her breasts. All of a sudden, Leandra's throat swelled and one of the orbs came out onto her tongue. It looked like…a clear ball with a miniature human in the center of it.

"Ingenious devices," Leandra said, rolling the ball across her palm. The human inside looked up. They were naked and sodden, their body covered in a thin layer of mucus. "These were originally conceived of by elven spies wishing to hide tools in their stomachs, but these have been modified with phoenix feathers to keep their contents fresh…and conscious. A human placed in one of these will survive for eternity—for life—and all the while feel the effects of their constant digestion. I have a few stored inside of me at all times, some in the stomach, some in the intestines if their occupants have been naughty, but every once in a while I let one out to play."

Her long nails curled over the ball and it expanded until a full-sized human male lay gasping next to the fire. Eyes wild, he lunged for Dean.

"Kill me," he croaked.

"We'll have none of that," Leandra said, snapping her fingers. The human let out an anguished howl as his body twisted and shrank until it was once more encased in the clear orb. Leandra put the ball to



her mouth and kissed it, then slowly and lovingly shoved it down her gullet. Her gulp was audible throughout the valley.

"What-" Dean said.

"-the fuck." Ink finished.

"A fair price," Leandra reminded them, licking her fingers. She kept her tunic untucked so that they could see the orb join the others in her stomach. "The phoenix gave them what they wanted. They have nothing to complain about."

"Well if that's the price, then we aren't paying," Ink said, jerking herself up to her full height. Leandra's bored expression remained even as Ink hissed and bared her teeth. "Come on, Dean. Dean?"

Dean was sitting with his chin in his hands staring into the fire. She had seen him that contemplative only once before when he considered the ice maiden's deal.

"Dean," Ink said imploringly. "You aren't actually considering this?"

"How noble of him if he is," Leandra said. "There's been a shortage of good men the last century or so, but if it's his eternal imprisonment that you're worried about, then you shouldn't be. Like I said, that's the price for common requests. What you're asking for will come with a lesser-"

She licked her lips.

"-penalty."

"Dean," Ink repeated, bending at the waist. She took his arm and shook him from his trance. Without thought, he kissed her wrist. The gesture was gentle, casual, and it was so tender that Ink almost choked up as Dean stood.

"What's the price?" he asked.

"Dean!"

"It's for Gus," he said, looking over his shoulder. "Your true love, remember?"

If he had intended the comment to be painful, he'd hit the mark. Ink flinched backwards, bringing her hands up reflexively. Right, how

could she forget what they were there for? Leandra watched the proceedings with devilish eyes, toying with the villagers in her stomach. Maybe it was Ink's imagination, but she thought she could hear tiny screams.

"I want him for a week," Leandra said, pointing at Dean. "I will use him as I see fit and once the week is over, he will receive his reward. If he's alive," she added.

"What?!"

"My stomach can be lethal," Leandra said. "It shouldn't be a problem for a half-dragon. I'm assuming you withstood her stomach, right?"

Dean nodded. Ink couldn't believe he was considering it.

"But I wasn't *trying* to digest you," Ink said, throwing her arms out wide. "She *will* be!"

"You wound me," Leandra said, twirling her hair around her finger. "I like to keep my toys in good working order."

Ink pulled Dean aside and set him behind a tree. Peaking to make sure that Leandra wasn't listening in, she hissed in his ear.

"Dean, she intends to kill you," Ink whispered. "I know it, I know it down to my scales. She's going to try her best to digest you so that she can renege on the deal or ask for an extension. These elves are skeevy and Leandra is one of the skeeviest."

The wind in the valley whistled as it passed through the stones. Dean let his head hang back, basking in the breeze, and when it subsided he reached up and untucked Ink's blindfold from behind her ears, sliding it down. Looking into his eyes, Ink thought of the phoenix's proclamation that basilisk and half-dragons were ideal mates.

"I want you to be happy," Dean said. "More than anything, more than I even want Gus to be happy."

"Why?" Ink asked.

Dean pursed his lips and considered for a moment.

“Because you deserve it,” he said. “Because Gus is a cheerful guy and let’s be honest, you’re a bit of a mope.”

Ink laughed. She couldn’t help it. She still felt like crying, but Dean was holding her close and his scent was soothing. All she wanted to do was wrap him in her tail and keep him like that for a year, maybe two. Instead she wiped her eyes, nodding.

“I’ve been a handful,” Ink said.

“Ah, only a little,” Dean said, letting go of her. She missed his touch as soon as it was gone. “To be honest, I like that temperament of yours. You wear your emotions on your sleeve and you’re passionate about your friends and loved ones. I’ve kept worse company, Ink, so if freeing Gus is what it takes to make you smile, I’ll brave a hundred sadistic elves.”

It would have been hard to tell with his dark complexion, but Ink could literally smell the blood rushing to his cheeks. She gave him a swift kiss, pulling him close with her tail.

“Be careful,” she said.

“I will.”

“She’s going to want to fuck you. To tire you out.”

For once, Dean didn’t make a joke. He looked in the direction that Leandra was waiting and rubbed his hands together nervously.

“Right,” he said.

“Then take this,” Ink said. “For good luck.”

She pressed her lips to his neck. His skin was sweet and it was warm and when she took him in her arms, he relaxed against her, and it was everything. His breath tickled her ear as it hitched. Ink could have let the moment last forever, but Leandra was waiting and she needed to make sure that Dean came back safe.

Her fangs pierced his shoulder and injected their venom.

Dean’s body grew hot with need.

Dean

The thing about basilisk venom is that it does not discriminate between the senses. As soon as Ink bit him, touch, taste, sight, *everything* was enhanced to the point where Dean felt like he could hear the blood moving in Ink's veins and the needful whisper of her stomach as she pressed him against it. Were her feathers always so soft; her skin so smooth? His body remembered the sensation of being swallowed, from the way that her throat grasped him on the way down to the sway of her hips as she shook with pleasure. When he looked into her eyes, she gave him a half-hearted smile. His cock strained against the front of his pants.

"Go get her," Ink said, pushing him out of the cover of the trees.

Leandra was waiting with her hands on her hips. In his current state, it took everything Dean had to approach her normally.

"So I guess you're going through with it," Leandra said, licking her lips. She extended a hand and Dean shook it, biting his tongue as her nails dragged along his wrist. "This agreement is binding, you know. I can do anything I want to you this week. Do you understand what that means?"

Dean gasped as she grabbed his cock through his pants, bringing her mouth to his ear. With his enhanced hearing, he could just make out the screams of the humans trapped in her stomach.

"Take off your trousers."

Leandra's eyes wandered off to Dean's left. He turned his head to see Ink standing there, watching as the elf's nimble fingers undid the buttons on his pants and tugged them down to his ankles, exposing his aching erection to the caress of her thumb. Leandra knelt. When she kissed him through his underwear, Dean flinched.

"Oooh, eager," Leandra laughed. "You want to do it right here in the dirt? What about your friend? Is she going to watch?"

The wrap holding Leandra's breasts strained as she pressed herself against Dean's waist, kissing along his stomach. Her tongue lapped against his skin and he jolted. Leandra pushed his cock between her tits and squeezed.



"What a reaction," she purred as a dark spot of precum stained the fabric of her shirt. "I've never had a half-dragon before. I assume that I can be rough with you, big boy, so don't be afraid to be rough with me because the minute you stop pleasing me, I'm shrinking you and shoving you up my ass."

"What happened to being swallowed?" Dean asked, shivering.

"I think you'd like that too much."

Leandra giggled as she rolled on her back, holding her arms out for him to join her on the cloak she had laid out in the dirt. Now that she was no longer guarding the phoenix, her personality was completely different. Dean was unnerved as he knelt between her legs,

taking off her boots. Her plump thighs parted for his pleasure. On a whim, Dean kissed them, earning a delighted squeal.

"I thought I was going to have to prompt you on everything," Leandra said, "but I guess you can do things on your own, you lug."

Was Ink still watching? Dean didn't want to look over his shoulder to check. The elf was waiting for him with her knees to her chest, grinning as he peeled her panties off over her ankles. He kept her thigh-highs on. Leandra was quick to notice.

"Oh, you're one of those," she said, stroking the skin where the socks squeezed her thighs. "Keeping a bit of mystery does add some spice, but I hope you're not so conservative in your loving, because I'm hoping to get railed."

"Alright," Dean said. "Here I come."

Leandra's eyes widened as he pulled his underwear down, then narrowed to fine points as he held himself against her tight, pink pussy, letting precum leak onto her belly while he got his breathing straight. The venom was making his heart pound too fast. His balls felt like they were going to explode.

"I hope you know that everyone in my stomach can hear what's happening," Leandra said. "They've been through several lovers at this point, so they're used to it, but this is the first time I've gotten a cock this big. Maybe they'll be able to feel it when you stick it deep inside of me."

"Hush," Dean said.

Leandra smiled, spreading her legs.

"Fine," she said. "Go ahead."

The first push got him halfway inside of her. Leandra was tight, *much* tighter than Ink and Gladdis, and Dean had to grab Leandra by the waist to fit her around him as she bit her finger, waiting. If only he couldn't hear the desperate cries of the people in her stomach, begging for release. If only it didn't turn him on more.



Leandra let out a contented sigh as his cock slid into place. Reaching out, she put a hand on his neck, propping herself on her

elbow. She lowered him to her lips and kissed him twice.

"What are you waiting for?"

Dean needed no further invitation.

Drawing his hips back, he thrust into the elf, driving deep into her warm, wet pussy. *One,* he thought, keeping count.

SMACK!

Two.

SMACK!

Three.

Every time he thrust, he brushed against the silky skin of her thighs, bending them further, digging his fingers into her hips. His face was level with her knees, but he could barely see Leandra between her tits which sagged against their constraints, teasing him. The air was charged with sexual energy and Dean was getting close.

Basilisk venom was a hell of a drug.

Eight.

SMACK!

Nine.

SMACK!

"Quickshot," Leandra murmured as he spent himself inside of her.

Dean could barely hear her over the rush of blood in his ears. His seed spurted out onto the forest floor, but his cock was still hard, still throbbing, just as sensitive as when they started. Leandra stroked the balls in her stomach and nodded.

"Again."

Was Ink still watching? Dean didn't want her to see this. Leandra rolled over, sweat glistening on her perky, perfect ass. Dean took her by the hips and brought her forward to his cock, but when he pushed against her, she shook her head, reaching back and guiding him to her asshole. As soon as his cocktip kissed the puckered skin, Dean understood.

"Like I said," Leandra hummed. "You can be rough."

Challenge accepted.

Somehow, sheathing himself in her ass was even easier than her pussy. The hot folds of her bowels enveloped his cock, inviting him



further and Dean obliged until his hips smacked against Leandra's ass and she murmured lazily, resting her head on her arms as he plowed her. *One, two, three,* ***SMACK!*** *Four, five, six,* ***SMACK!*** Dean tried to pace himself; he tried to feel the rhythm, but his brain wasn't working and his balls were on fire and so he just fucked her like an animal, grunting and groaning, reaching around her stomach to grab onto her tits as he finished in her ass.

Leandra turned and prodded his chest.

"Again," she said.

She must have thought that she was draining him, because when Dean offered his erection, he saw a flicker of interest in her cruel eyes.

"Alright," she said, "this time I'll take the lead."

There was a dangerous smoothness to her movements as she pushed him to the ground and straddled him. It was as if every muscle in her body was poised to strike, a predator going in for the kill. When Dean didn't rise to meet her, she sat on his cock. He sucked in a deep breath as she ground her ass against his shaft.

"There are so many things I would like to do to you," Leandra said. The back of her nails ran over his chest to his shoulders. "If we had more time, I could get invested, but you half-dragons live what, 100 years? Hardier than humans, but no shelf life. Not enough time to break you, anyway, but I guess I can try. Is there anything off-limits? Come on, you can tell me, or should we skip right to you spending quality time in my colon?"

"This feels like a trick," Dean said. "You can do whatever you like to me, after all. It doesn't matter if I like it."

"Aww, so suspicious. That's probably smart. Well *I* like it up the ass, so let's have another go at that and see how we feel. Oh, and I kind of need to let my pets out every once in a while or they get cranky. Let me just-"

She tapped an orb in her stomach and suddenly expanded, doubling, tripling in size until a swollen mass of writhing flesh sat

upon Dean’s chest, pushing him into the ground. The human inside let out a pitiful groan. Leandra readjusted her hips, unphased.



“There we go,” she said. “You can fuck my ass now.”

Dean whimpered as Leandra leaned back on his hips. She reached beneath her, aligning his cock with her hole, then let her weight drive it in, sheathing him completely. Wiggling her hips, she pushed herself up on her knees. Dean watched in awe as her belly quivered overhead, blocking out the sun, her face, and everything but the sweaty underside of her skin coming down upon him.

PLAP!

One, Dean counted, pushing on her stomach so that it didn’t crush him. Leandra murmured her approval, clenching as the person inside of her squirmed.

“This is nice, but it costs a lot of energy,” Leandra said. “Actually, I think I’d rather you be on top.”

She rolled onto her stomach, squishing the person beneath her. If Dean looked close enough, he could just make out the outline of a woman’s ass pressed against the underside of Leandra’s belly.

“Just climb on top and start humping,” Leandra called over her shoulder. “Come on, we’re burning daylight here.”

Sorry, Dean thought to himself as he straddled her belly. There was no way to mount her otherwise. The trapped woman gave a groan while Leandra impatiently waited for him to shove his cock in her ass. Once he got it in, she snapped her fingers.

“Come on,” she said. “Just like before. I want it hard.”

Sorry, Dean repeated, grimacing as he thrust deep into Leandra. The elf threw her head back and bit her lip.

“Grab my thighs,” Leandra demanded. “Hold me legs as you fuck me.”

Dean did as she asked, taking her thighs and holding her steady as she balanced on her stomach, their combined weight bearing down on its occupant. The woman thumped against her fleshy prison as Dean pounded Leandra. Her struggles made for a decent rhythm. Dean grunted, driving his hips into Leandra’s butt, balls smacking against her skin as she shuddered and came.

“Yesss, just like that! I want you to pound her into mush!”

Mush? Dean hoped that Leandra was speaking in hyperbole because he was too close to his own orgasm to stop. Another hard smack had him digging his nails into Leandra’s hips. Two more and the tight, throbbing sensation in his cock released, flooding Leandra’s bowels with his seed. The elf slumped over her stomach. Her ears twitched.

“She hasn’t even gone soft,” she complained as the woman in her stomach wriggled against their hips. “I thought you were some kind of stud.”

“I have more in me, but I’m not trying to ‘pound’ anyone to ‘mush’.”

“Oh, that’s just a thing people say,” Leandra grumbled. “I wouldn’t have actually let her die.”

She drummed her fingers on her belly. It produced a loud, hollow sound, followed by a huge, shuddering belch. Apparently fucking drove a lot of air into the stomach. Dean slid off of her and stood with his hands on his hips.

“What now?” he asked.

“So clinical! I swear, do you treat the basilisk this way when you make love? Like it’s some kind of chore?”

“Ink?”

Dean tried to sputter something, but his tongue had tied itself in knots. Eventually he managed to get out:

“We aren’t that way.”

Leandra glared at him over her shoulder, rolling so that she was sitting with her belly between her legs. A tap made the woman recede back into her orb. Normal-sized again, she brushed herself off and stood.

“No?” she said. “I assumed this was a cuckold situation given that she’s been watching this entire time. Kind of ruins the experience for me, honestly, but I think this next part will make up for it.”

She nodded toward a stone pillar and Dean's eyes followed her. He was just quick enough to see yellow feathers disappearing around the corner.

So she was watching, he thought.

The weather had shifted while they were fucking. Dark clouds had formed overhead and the wind had all but ceased. Distant thunder boomed through the valley and Leandra looked up, unconcerned.

"Come on," she said. "Let's go to my cave."

"But Ink-" Dean started, then bit his tongue. What about Ink? He wasn't beholden to her, after all, and she was perfectly capable of finding shelter from the storm. Still, he made sure to kick his backpack toward where he knew the basilisk was hiding. If she couldn't find a cave for herself, at least she might be able to use his tent.

The storm broke just as they made it to the mouth of the cave. Leandra had made her shelter within shouting distance of the phoenix who, from Dean's brief glance into the nest, was comfortably nestled under a roof of sticks and mud. It felt odd to walk through the valley naked. Leandra made it look natural walking ahead of him, swinging her hips.

"So," Dean said as she pointed toward a bed of furs laid out in the corner, "how does this work?"

"You sit," Leandra said, "and I show you what's about to happen to you."

Dean knelt on the furs. There was a pressure in the air because of the storm, or maybe it was Leandra standing in front of him with her hands on her hips. Thunder boomed through the cave as the rain started in earnest, erupting against the stone until the entrance of the cave was obscured by a fine mist. Leandra snapped her fingers and a number of torches flickered to life on the wall. Her body looked radiant in the torchlight.

"You've been too nonchalant up till this point," Leandra said, stalking around the bed. Her nails brushed against the back of Dean's

neck. His cock was still hard between his legs. “I like it when men start excited and then slowly come to terms with their place in the food chain, but you already know yours thanks to the basilisk. Maybe I should kill her.”

Dean sprang to his feet, fists clenched as Leandra laughed, pushing him back down on the furs. She climbed on top of him and kissed his neck.

“Kidding,” she said. “I just wanted to see your reaction. Honestly, it’s kind of refreshing to find someone with your fortitude. I want to break you, Dean, but I doubt I’ll have the time to do so, so instead I’m going to focus on my own pleasure. I have you for a week, after all.”

She turned on top of him and presented her ass.

“Kiss it.”

Leandra’s ass jiggled as she swayed from side to side. It seemed softer somehow. Plumper. Her thighs too, curved delicately around his head, had more weight; indeed, they spilled out of the top of her socks, giving Dean a safe place to start kissing as he worked his way up to her butt. Leandra lowered herself on top of him. Her ass weighed a ton.

“Mmph!”

“Complete metabolic control,” Leandra said as Dean slapped her leg. She sat back, suffocating him under her rump. “I’ve actually digested a dozen humans since I started working with Phyric, but because elves have total control over their bodies, I can choose when and where to put them to use. Did you think that kissing my ass would be fun? I don’t feel your lips on my butthole, Dean.”

Buried under twin mounds of Leandra’s sweaty rump, all Dean could hear was the muffled aftershock of her words. Air. He needed air. The humid crease of Leandra’s butt was slowly smothering the life out of him, but she wouldn’t let up no matter how much he kicked and thrashed.

“Lick it.”



Dean complied.

Pressing his tongue flat against Leandra's pucked, he rubbed in small circles, earning a shudder from his efforts, but still Leandra pressed down on him. His lungs were starting to hurt, head pounding from the lack of air. Dean licked again, once, twice, a dozen desperate, swirling slurps until at last Leandra sat up.

Dean gasped.

Her stomach hung far over his head. At first he thought he was hallucinating as it wobbled too and fro, but as more oxygen raced to his brain, he figured that Leandra had released another prisoner in her gut. No, it was too squishy. Had she already digested them? The elf was looking at him between her legs, a smug grin splitting her face from ear to pointy ear.

"There we go," she said. "That's the look I wanted. Why is your cock still hard, Dean? Do you really like being tortured?"

“Only by beautiful elf maidens,” Dean managed, getting a chuckle. “Did you digest someone?”

The proportions of her body warped and her stomach receded. Normal-sized, Leandra put her ass back on his mouth.

“I digested them long ago,” she said as Dean continued to lick. It was much easier now that he wasn’t smothering under a hundred pounds of melted human. “I can control where my weight goes on my body—a total authority over mass, if you will. That’s the magic that I’ve cultivated over years of practice. Why do you think my boobs are so big? Mmm!”

Leandra mashed her ass into Dean’s face, growing again to subsume him in quivering flesh as she ground his nose against her sweaty crack. Dean knew enough to hold his breath now, but what he didn’t expect was her hand wrapping firmly around his cock, jerking him off as he let out a gasp.

“Oops, there goes your air,” Leandra said. “You should have held onto it because I’m going to be here for a loooong time.”

She wiggled, indicating his escape path. Dean began licking as Leandra stroked him. Ink’s venom was still in his veins. It didn’t take him long to cum on her stomach.

Stomach?

“Felt like putting on a little weight,” Leandra said, lifting herself so that he could see her round, bulbous gut. His cum glistened on her belly button, right beneath the orbs where she kept her prisoners. “Some men are into this, you know. ‘More cushion for the pushin’ as one intrepid gentleman so eloquently expressed right before I swallowed him.”

Dean thought of Ink’s belly after a night of digesting the troll. Something about her doughy white gut had put a craving in him, but Leandra was not Ink and her ass had grown again. She plopped down on his chest. His cock was consumed by her vast, rumbling stomach.

“I could give you a gurglejob,” Leandra said, sneering at her prey. “You might like that.”

“Gurgle…job?” Dean asked.

It was hard to get a word out with 300 pounds of elf on his chest. How many people had she eaten over the years? Were they all stashed in her body, waiting to crush him?

“It’s something I usually do for pairs of lovers,” Leandra said. She bundled her stomach in her arms. It was so vast that the bottom drooped, draping itself over Dean’s cock. “There was a man and his wife who owed me their lives. Phyric gave them the cure to their son’s illness, after all, and they were grateful when they approached me, ready to spend the rest of their days in my service. Well, you should have seen the husband’s face when I ate his wife in front of him, digesting her while forcing him to rub my stomach. Once she was nice and mushy, I sat on his face much like I’m sitting on yours and let his wife’s post-digestion gurgles work him to an orgasm. He sobbed the entire time.”

Leandra let out a vicious snort, grinding her ass on Dean’s chin. More of her stomach slipped through her fingers, burying his hips. He could feel the gentle vibrations stirring her innards. His cock twitched against the mound of fat.

“There we have it,” Leandra said. “Yeah, the husband twitched just like that. Are you feeling tired yet? Spent? If so, I could always-”

Her asshole, slick with sweat, slipped over Dean’s chin. He shoved his arms into Leandra’s ass, stopping her right before she could sheath him in her bowels. She quivered. Her stomach was starting to gurgle in earnest, the vibrations getting harder to ignore. Dean twisted back and forth. Leandra leaned forward, mashing her gut against his cock.

“Think about how many people have passed through here,” she said, stroking her belly. “How many hundreds of pounds of meat I’ve processed in my tenure with Phyric. Humans whose every last wish had been fulfilled—who willingly gave themselves up to me for a handful of treasure or a miracle cure. They all deserved to digest,

Dean, and now I get to play with them every day, but I only get you for one week. We have to make up for lost time.”



The gurgling of her stomach was getting violent. Was she digesting someone in there? He couldn't see anything under her butt, but he could feel the doughy skin conforming to the shape of his cock, pressing down on him until the tingling sensation became too much to bear and his hips bucked. He was thrust back down by the jiggling mass of Leandra's stomach. He moaned into her ass as he came.

"That was fun," Leandra said. Her stomach receded to its normal size. She rolled off of Dean, laying next to him on the furs. "How was it for you?"

Dean glanced at the cum that glazed her abs. Leandra dragged her finger through it, then licked her finger. His cock was starting to deflate. Ink's venom had run its course.

"Shame," Leandra said. "I thought you were supposed to be durable, but I guess you can't go all night."

The storm was still raging outside. Somewhere in the gloom there came a rumble. Some stone had toppled in the wind, slamming into the floor of the valley.

Dean hoped that Ink had found a safe place to sleep. Leandra was looking at him, so he smiled.

"What's next?" he asked.

Leandra snorted.

"Impudent," she said, stalking over to the mouth of the cave and drawing a sigil with her hand. The sound of the storm ceased. All Dean could hear was the crackle of the torches and the rustle of the furs as Leandra stood over him. "Alright, Dean, if you're so keen on keeping the festivities going, then I shall make good on my original promise."

"Which was?"

Leandra's nail swiped across his chest. Dean winced as a strange sensation swept over him, an intense pressure squeezing at every inch of his body. His surroundings seemed to tower above him, the torches of the wall retreating as the walls themselves elongated. Leandra was growing taller; no, he was getting smaller as prickles began to shoot

through his skin, twisting and nipping as his limbs contorted and his stature dwindled until he was only six inches tall. Leandra reached down and picked him up. Her mouth was as wide as his chest.

"To shove you up my ass," Leandra said.

She lowered him past the mountains of her breasts and the plains of her stomach, flat once more, until he came to the pillars of her thighs and, finally, the lush hills of her ass. His new diminutive height gave him a fresh perspective of the sordid curves and delightful textures of Leandra's body, but for all his human lust, Dean dreaded his fate as she pried apart her asscheeks and let the heat waft over him. Would she force him into a ball like the others? She must have guessed his thoughts, because she chuckled.

"You're going in raw," she said. "You're a half-dragon. You should be able to endure a little time in my bowels without going…soft."

Dean wasn't sure about that. There was no stipulation in their agreement that said she couldn't digest him—an oversight he was beginning to regret. Leandra let him linger between her cheeks, sweating, anticipating the moment when he would be thrust into his nasty, new home. She rubbed his face on her asshole. Her pucker twitched, bathing him in her crude, internal air.

"It's going to be a tight fit," she said. "Intestines, they wind and wind, and unless you've seen them before, you can't anticipate how long of a journey it is up to the stomach. That's your ultimate destination, of course, but I'd be remiss to omit the fact that all of this playing has done a number on my gut and my acids are *very* potent. The basilisk was going easy on you; that much I know. She likes you a lot. If you survive the week, maybe you should consider shacking up with her. You wouldn't be the first half-dragon to love a basilisk."

"I don't love her," Dean said.

Leandra pulled Dean between her legs so that she could stare down at him. Her cat-like gaze was filled with amusement.



“I can feel your heart thumping like a field mouse,” she said. “Life’s too short to lie to yourself, Dean, which is why I act on every dirty impulse. Speaking of dirty impulses-”

One finger bent her asshole sideways, revealing the wet, pulsating tube of her intestines. Clutching Dean around the chest, Leandra pushed him in and up, encasing him within the throbbing flesh. Her asshole pulled close with a snap.

“-enjoy your stay.”

Ink

Ink huddled down in the nest. The storm had broken just as she had sidled up to the cave where Leandra was keeping Dean and she had slithered to the nearest shelter that she could find: Phyric's dwelling. Cramped did not begin to describe the inside of the spherical shelter. She had to keep her coils painfully retracted lest she squash the little bird who would not shut up.

"I insist that you find your own accommodations," Phryic squawked, bouncing against Ink's belly as she sucked herself in further. "It's far too cramped in here, far too cramped! You're going to bury me!"

"Hush," Ink said, keening her ears toward the cave. Through the rain and the thunder, she could no longer hear Dean. "Do you ever stop talking?"

"Never, never, it's the best way to process my thoughts, I find, and besides, I am far older than you and far wiser, so really you should defer to me on these things."

Ink thought about eating him. He'd taste like chicken, sure, but she doubted that it would feel nice when he combusted in her gut. He'd probably squawk the whole time he was digesting, over and over, until she finally let him out. Besides, the little fetus phoenix didn't look appetizing.

"It's just until the rain stops," Ink said. "Then I'll go."

"We're only in this mess because you were spying on your companion," Phyric said. "Would I be wrong in assuming that you harbor feelings for the young man?"

Great, the phoenix was a gossip.

"No," Ink hissed, letting her stomach droop further over Phyric's head. He gave an alarmed squawk as it rustled his feathers. "We need your spit to save my lover."

“Ah, ah, I misread the situation. I’m prone to do that, old as I am, but I always correct myself in the end. The wise are wise because they admit their mistakes, no? Well then, tell me about this gentleman…lady? The one who has caught your eye if you’ll forgive the pun.”

Thunder boomed overhead. The storm had closed like a lid over the valley and by the taste of the air, it wasn’t letting up anytime soon. Ink sighed. Phyric would keep pestering her unless she gave him something, so she decided to tell him everything.

It took over an hour for her to spin the whole tale. The nest grew warm as Ink spoke about Augustus, his gifts, his petrification; of Dean and his bravado and Gladdis’s insistence on eating him. She told him about their trip to the mountains, her business with the troll, and Dean’s sacrifice to acquire the tear of the snow maiden. Then, as the thunder let up, she came to the moment when she first met Dean’s eye; how surprised she was that he survived and the subsequent confusion she felt when realizing that he was ‘the one’.

“So you feel guilty because the standard that you used to assess your true love found Augustus wanting and Dean a perfect match,” Phyric summarized.

A salt wind blew through the branches that made up the nest. The storm had passed and the valley was at peace. Ink strained her ears for any sounds from the cave, but all was quiet in that direction.

“Yes,” Ink said.

“Even though, in terms of personality, you preferred Augustus over Dean whom you’ve referred to as-”

“-an enormous brat,” Ink reiterated, placing her chin on her arms. She had given up trying not to bury Phyric under her scales. He didn’t seem to mind so long as she was talking. “He’s got endearing qualities, but more often than not, he pisses me off.”

“And that’s not a quality you want in a lover?”

“Who would?”

“Leandra, if I’ve read her correctly,” Phyric chirped. “Though elves have always been deviant. It’s a known fact.”

That reminded Ink that right at that moment, Leandra was defiling Dean in a cave just a few snake-lengths away. Her coils tightened, squashing the poor phoenix. She recoiled apologetically as he blustered.

“I say, I say, you’ll kill me, you will, you great big oaf!”

“Sorry, sorry,” Ink said.

“Hrphm!”

Phyric plumped himself up, shaking his tiny head. Ink helped him find a comfortable spot in the nest, pushing her coils out to make room.

“Anyhow, that was an interesting story,” Phyric said. “I must thank you for it, so, in lieu of my lieutenant, I shall offer you a free bit of wisdom from a creature many spans older than you.”

“Yes?” Ink asked eagerly.

“There’s no perfect match for anyone.”

Phyric nodded as if he had just said something extremely profound, but Ink let out a frustrated snort, slapping her tail against the nest.

“That’s just…common fucking advice,” she said. “I thought you were supposed to be wise.”

“I am,” Phyric squawked, offended. “It’s common advice because it’s good. There’s no such thing as a perfect match. Anyone can get along with anyone so long as they choose to align their values. Everything else is just…chemicals.”

“Chemicals?”

“Lust, longing, passion, it’s all chemicals. You’re attracted to Augustus and that doesn’t mean that he’s a bad man or that you’re wrong to love him, it just means that you don’t have to fight your attraction to Dean. Both are meaningless. Both are everything. Hell, have both, form a harem. Those are popular among snakes, no?”

“I do not find Dean attractive,” Ink blustered.

“Ah, half-dragons don’t have the noses of their monstrous halves, so you might be able to fool him,” Phyric said, “but your friend, Gladdis, she seems to think differently.”

“Because she’s just as big of a brat as Dean is!”

“But you like that, no? There are many kinds of frustration, no?”

Ink really was about to crush the phoenix, but just then, she heard a cry coming from the direction of the cave. A long, drawn-out moan. She ground her teeth as she realized it was Leandra pleasuring herself. That sadistic, big-titted, pointy-eared…

“Shut up,” she snarled as Phyric nodded knowingly. “Shut up, you stupid chicken.”

“Chicken? Chicken?! I could have you smote for talking to me that way! Get out of my nest, you ungrateful serpent! Wisdom is wasted on the young!”

Ink pushed her way out of the top half of the dome, not even bothering to lower it again as Phyric cursed in ancient tongues. She thought about heading straight for the cave, but then she reviled herself for doing so. Hadn’t Dean looked so fucking content plowing the elf? Fine! Leandra could have him; Ink didn’t care. She was just using him to get the ingredients anyway.

She slithered off toward the mouth of the valley. If Dean was going to be gone for an entire week, she might as well gorge herself on some local fishermen.

Dean

The stifling heat and the sickening squelch of flesh against flesh were nothing abnormal for a man who had spent a month inside of a basilisk. He might have even gotten used to the stench of the elf's bowels with enough time, but time was a luxury Dean did not have and Leandra was intent on getting her money's worth.

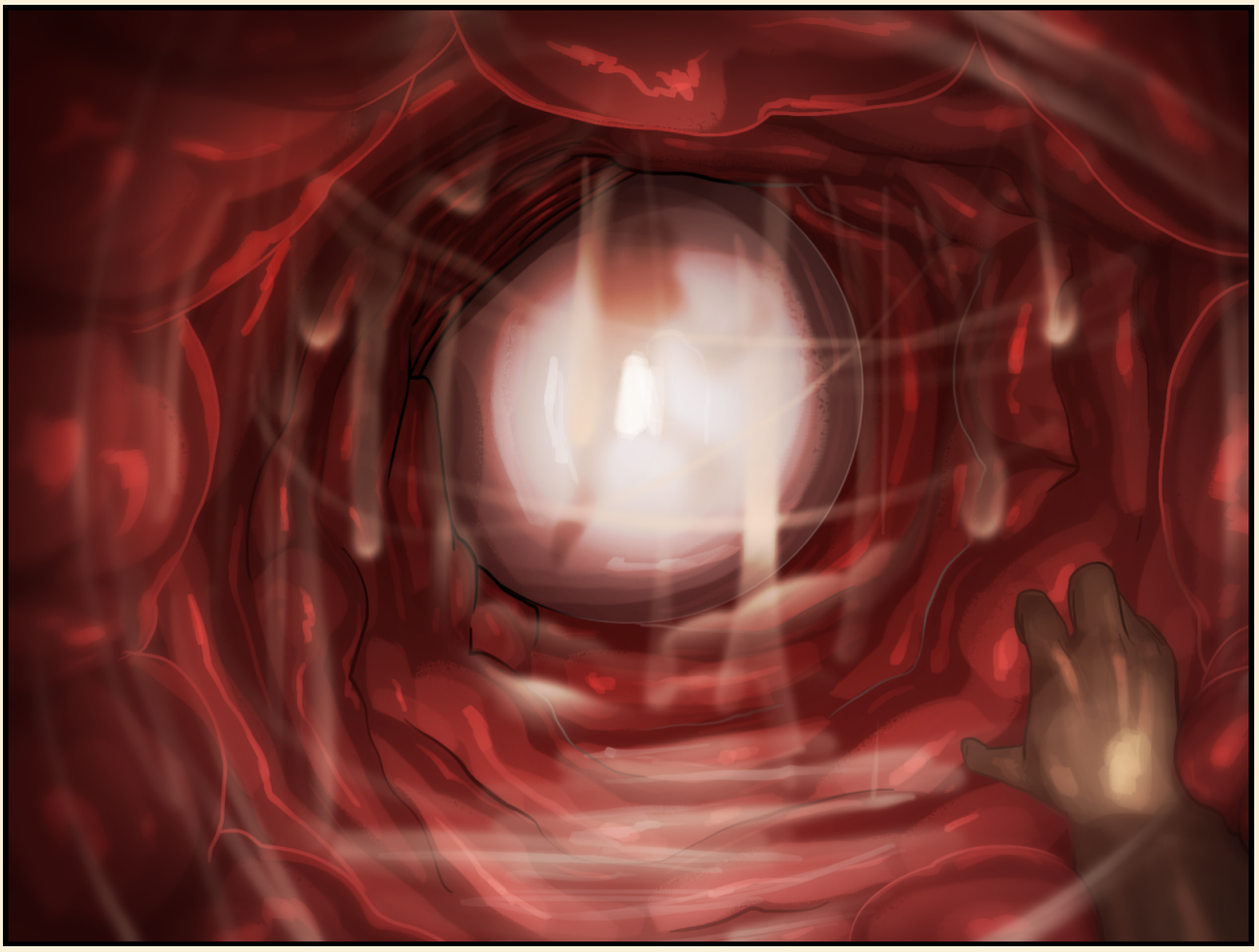
Every wriggle was met with a tightening of the abs, a collapse of the pulsating corridor in which Dean resided. He shoved his arms into the walls, elbows aching, retching as his face glided through another invisible bend in the endless labyrinth of intestines. Leandra moaned. She was leaning back on the pile of furs, one hand on her belly and one hand between her legs.

"You *are* durable," she soothed, rubbing her thumb against the lump of Dean's body. By his estimation, he was about halfway to her stomach. Muscular motions beyond the veiled flesh tugged at him, dragging him further into the claustrophobic depths of the elf. "I should have asked Phyric to let me keep you longer. He allows me some, *mmmph*, wiggle room in negotiations."

Is this what it felt like for all of the poor souls trapped in her gut? Dean could hardly imagine spending the rest of the week inside of her, much less eternity. He had already passed one orb lodged in her intestines, sliding past its glimmering surface as the occupant, a young man, begged for release. His hollow eyes haunted Dean as he slid through the rubbery, pink hellscape, up and up, while Leandra fingered herself causing occasional earthquakes. The walls tightened as her hips bent. Leandra clutched her stomach, gasping.

"Oooh, you don't know what you do to me!"

I think I know exactly what I do to you, Dean thought, disgusted. He idled the time away by imagining what he'd do when he was set free. A shower was in order—that much was non-negotiable—but his mind kept returning to the previous night in the tent with Ink, sleeping



beneath her gurgling belly, bathed in the warmth and the smell of her skin. He found himself hoping for another storm, not a bad one, just enough to force them indoors and maybe Ink had been a glutton while he was gone and her body was good and soft and…

The fantasy had gone too far. Leandra's finger settled on his erection, setting off a series of giggles.

"Well," she said. "Well, well, well! What do we have here? Do my senses deceive me, or do I have a little guest in my shitpipes, hmm? Do you get off on the smell of my bowels, Dean? Should I have done more than sit on your face?"

"It's not like that," Dean called. His voice would be nearly silent, buried as he was in mountains of organic matter, but Leandra had keen ears. "You know it's not like that."

Her finger kneaded the spot where Dean's cock was pressed against the wall. He gasped and he groaned, yet without Ink's venom, he was able to resist the pressure. Leandra left off, satisfied.

"I loooove men," she said. "Human men are just so…easy to control. A smile and a wink and they're as hard as a rock. I like letting them think they're in charge up until the point that my mouth closes around their heads and then I like letting their bodies marinate in my gut, full-sized, as I demand that they masturbate. I've trained a few belly-sluts at this point—men and women who've learned to associate my stomach with sexual gratification. I won't have time with you, but I have a feeling that your 'friendship' with the basilisk has instilled a certain…fondness for entrapment?"

How right she was and how wrong that she was right. Dean felt shame settle in his stomach like a bad meal as he recalled the night that Augustus had first told him about Ink.

"She's the one," he had said, beaming, and Dean had believed him, but when Dean visited the cave and first laid eyes on Ink, he knew that he was in danger and not of being devoured.

What was he doing here in this elf's stomach? Was it for the altruistic purpose of saving his friend, or was it to spend more time with Ink? As if sensing his dilemma, Leandra flexed, ending his conundrum by driving his head into a hot, throbbing pile of flesh and post-digestion mush.

"It's morning," she said, yawning. "You've made it a day and I'm proud of you! Only six more to go. Oh, one thing: I can't control my stomach while I'm sleeping, so I really might digest you. I guess we'll see. Goodnight!"

A rumble sounded from overhead. Leandra's stomach was getting closer and from the tremors reverberating through her body, Dean could tell that she was hungry. He braced himself against her bowels and against his own thoughts and tried to prepare himself for his inevitable dip in the elf's stomach acids. He hoped he was as durable as she assumed.

Ink

Four farmers in and Ink wasn't close to feeling full. They squirmed in her gut like a barrel of eels, begging and pawing, but already two were sludge in her tail and the third was getting soft. Her gut hung over her scales as she looked to the horizon, tasting the air for her next meal.

The area around the valley was lush with farmland. Many humans stirred in their huts, moving through the fields like ants in the distance as their children played in the streams and fjords, never straying close to the forest where Ink had made her residence. Three days had passed in the blink of an eye and Ink was wondering if she shouldn't pace herself as her fingers sank into the new layer of pudge on her waist. Every time she thought about stopping, though, she remembered that Dean was inside of the elf and the frustration made her seek out a new meal, imagining they were the dark-haired brat as they went down her throat.

Her latest quarry was a man fishing where the river met the woods in a shadowed alcove. Ink lounged in a tree above him, watching as the man, somewhere in his mid-twenties, dug into the dirt for the worms that he used to bait his hook.

Primitive, Ink thought, sliding down her wrap.

She had much better bait for her hook.

"Yoohoo," she said. "Human."

The man looked around, startled, then looked up. His eyes went wide as he saw Ink wrapped around a branch, tits hanging down as she curled a finger at him. If he wasn't so focused on her boobs he might have noticed her belly pooling around the branch or the thickness of her coils, but no, he came to her willingly, if sheepishly, and gagged as the end of her tail roped around his arms, pulling him up into the tree.

"Hello, lunch," Ink said. "Pleasure to eat you."

Oh no, she was devolving into puns like…like Gladdis. Ugh, what was wrong with her?

She silenced her thoughts by stuffing the man in her maw, ignoring his screams as his head was enveloped her gullet. Three gulps and only his legs hung out of her mouth, kicking feebly. Ink sighed as her gut drooped with his body. This was no fun.

BLECHT!



The man slid out of her throat, slimy and shivering.

"Oh thank you, thank you," he said as Ink turned her blindfolded gaze on him. "Please, miss, I have a wife."

"I want you to cum in my throat."

"What?"

The man blinked, nervously grasping at the front of his pants. He wasn't erect yet, but Ink could fix that.

“I want you to cum in my throat,” Ink repeated. “I want you to do it yourself. I won’t touch you. If you do, I’ll let you go.”

Only an idiot would believe a basilisk, but the man practically climbed back into her mouth and all Ink had to do was open her throat and let him slide inside. When his head lodged against the knot of her stomach, he forced his arms down to his hips and pulled down his pants. Ink hummed as the taste of his lust flooded her gullet.

This should do for now, she thought, closing her eyes. The motion of the man’s hands mimicked the struggles of prey enough that her instincts were satisfied. Her stomach was gurgling, though, and eventually the emptiness was too much to bear. Was the man close to finishing yet? He was grunting like an animal. Ink touched the front of her throat, accidentally brushing against the spot where the man’s cock was buried.

“Ahh…”

GULP!

As the man pounded against her gut, Ink slumped back in the branches and tried to ignore the ever-present thought that she hadn’t felt empty with Dean inside of her.

Maybe if she ate enough fishermen.

Dean

Three days had passed in Leandra's stomach, or maybe it was four? It was hard to tell time in the sweltering darkness of the elf maiden's guts, especially when she herself barely slept.

"You could be a little more enthusiastic," Leandra said as Dean rubbed his knuckles into the slimy walls. She was laying on her back with her stomach between her legs, squeezing Dean idly as she whittled. He was full-sized again. Since she couldn't digest him, Leandra had apparently decided to simply make his existence very, very uncomfortable.

"I'm trying," Dean said, shoving his elbow further into the squishy sack. It resisted his incursion—the whole stomach did—constantly threatening to contort back into a ball. Currently, he had one leg up near his head and the other bent behind him. A kink in his neck twinged painfully every time he moved. "If you shrank me down, I wouldn't have to fight so hard just to stay put."

"Mmm, but I love feeling you tremble," Leandra snickered. "Every time your muscles give out and my stomach wins I get a small thrill. Maybe if you'd stop resisting and soften like a good man, it wouldn't be so uncomfortable."

She was still pissed off about that. As soon as she woke up that first morning, Leandra had announced that she was going to try to digest him in earnest, but no matter how hard her stomach clenched and bubbled, all she had succeeded in doing was digesting two of her prisoners, both of whom melted into sludge as Dean watched helplessly. Now the rest were stored in her bowels for safety and he was alone in his torment.

"I'm feeling like berries for breakfast," Leandra said. "Keep rubbing as we stroll."

Leandra heaved herself to her feet. She was thin today, her slender stomach conforming to the shape of Dean's body. With every

step that she took, the flesh stretched and contorted, molding itself around him like a macabre second skin. The sensation was suffocating, but worse was the smell.

The stench of digestive fluids hung heavy in the air, a sour, nauseating aroma that only abated when Leandra belched. As the stomach refilled with oxygen tainted by her throat, the smell would once again arise from the bubbling muck that licked at his feet and legs, collecting at the bottom of the stomach like fond in a stew where Dean was the meat. He felt a shift in the temperature as she walked outside. Light filtered through the thin skin, turning his environment pink, and he could see the rhythmic lurches of her body's vast digestive mechanisms working below him, pumping, simmering.

Dean dragged his hands up across the stomach. It responded with a shudder, independent of Leandra, as if the flesh itself approved of his pampering.

"Hello, Phyric," Leandra said as she passed the nest. "Is the basilisk still slinking around?"

"She's out in the meadows today," Phyric shrieked, his shrill voice audible even in the confines of Leandra's belly. "Feasting on farmers, I suspect. Every time she returns, she's fatter than before."

Dean's ears perked at the mention of Ink. He tried to press his head further into Leandra's gut, but she used one hand to shove him back. Suddenly, the light stopped trickling through the walls. The stomach was getting heavier, heavier, until it felt like someone had packed a dozen sleeping bags on top of it, squashing Dean into the center of a very plump, overripe belly. The sloshing sound increased threefold as each jostle threw him into the opposite wall.

"Do you miss her?" Leandra said.

Her voice was distant now. Dean gritted his teeth, sifting through the fat. It was impossible to sit up without being buried.

"I thought I'd make you feel at home. Is this what it's like in her belly? I bet mine is softer, huh? Or is this more like that fat lamia you

were telling me about? Gladdy? Glenda? Hehe, I bet it's getting pretty warm in there."



“Sure is,” Dean said, though he wasn’t sure if it was true. At a certain point, his heat-resistance had kicked in, and from then on the stomach felt merely mild, though it paid to let Leandra believe she was tormenting him. “In fact it’s actually boiling. Can you let up?”

“No can do,” Leandra said, delighted. She squashed her belly down on his head, shuffling him from side to side. “I still have lunch to find, after all.”

She whistled as she walked through the stone and beyond toward the trees, as graceful at 400 pounds as she was at 120. Dean actually had to marvel at her innate strength to carry herself so calmly and wondered if the wondrous blood in his veins had any other effects aside from magic resistance, heat resistance, and durability. It had been a few years since he had visited his mother, but maybe it was time to give the dragon a visit, tell her about Ink.

Dean paused, letting the walls he had been trying to push away collapse. Why couldn’t he get her out of his head?

The answer was obvious enough, but admitting it, even in thought, was so dangerous that he focused instead on putting up an admirable struggle for Leandra so that she wouldn’t keep prodding him. After what felt like an hour, she crouched, her stomach pooling between her thighs.

“Found some berries,” she said. “A whole bush of them. Isn’t that wonderful?”

“Grand,” Dean muttered.

Her proclamation was followed by a series of long, wet gulps. The juice from the berries was cold and sticky and sweet, completely at odds with the hot, slick, and sour interior of Leandra’s gut. The space between Dean’s feet filled up fast as the pulp rose to slush against his cock. He shuffled, repositioning, and Leandra moaned as his feet dug deep into her gut.

“Mmm, if you keep that up, I might have to go at myself right here and now,” Leandra said.

There was a sly edge to her voice that Dean couldn't quite place. She sounded like she was making a joke, but at whose expense? A rumble shook her entire stomach as she belched. A series of muscular clenches followed.

"Yeah, yeah, this is good!"

The thud of Leandra's ass hitting the floor predicated another belch. Putrid air filtered out of her stomach and was replaced with fresh air still smelling of pine from the forest outside. It gave Dean a pang of longing as she proceeded to tug her shorts around her ankles.

"You as well," Leandra said, mashing her palm into her gut. "Come on, get stroking, I don't want to be doing this alone."

"I'm not exactly hard right now," Dean said, which was the truth.

"Alright, give me your cock."

What did she expect him to do, mash his cock into her gut? Apparently that's exactly what she wanted, because a second later, her belly receded somewhat, giving him the space to get to his knees. Dean winced as the head of his cock brushed against the gooey wall. It wasn't the first time that she had made him masturbate inside of her, but fatigue weighed heavy on his shoulders.

For Augustus, he thought, stroking himself.

Leandra chuckled. She was already gliding a finger over her clit, stalling, waiting for him to join her. Dean could still hear that edge in her voice; a tension in her muscles that had nothing to do with her impending orgasm.

Anticipation.

"I knew you were a belly pervert," Leandra said when the warmth and the friction managed to get him semi-hard. "Hey, press that big thing up between my tits so I can get a good look at it."

Dean blinked goo from his eyes, shoving his shoulders into the wall and thrusting his hips until he found the space between the two globes indenting her belly. Leandra pushed her tits together around his cock, getting a gasp. There was another sound echoing past the

beating of Leandra's heart and the bubbling of her stomach: a rustling overhead and a loud, aggravated hiss.

Ink, Dean thought just as Leandra's tits compressed against his cock, driving him to orgasm inside of her.

Ink

Ink had been watching for the last five minutes, knowing she needed to remove herself, and yet unable to look away. The elf was fatter than she had been when they had met, but it wasn't Dean she had digested because Ink could see the distinct outline of his cock between the elf bimbo's tits. Her teeth were bared and the flat of her tail shook the branch she was laying on, almost giving away her position.

She lay flat in a tree overhead, digesting the remnants of the last four fishermen. Eight men and two women had met their doom over the past six days and while Ink was bigger than she had ever been in recent memory, the emptiness inside of her persisted. She had been debating finding a family when she heard Leandra talking to herself in the woods.

It was obvious bait, but she took it nevertheless.

"What are you doing here?" Ink hissed.

Leandra looked up, ears twitching. Her stomach gurgled in protest as she pushed herself upright. Dean's cock was still between her tits.

"What are *you* still doing here?" Leandra asked, rubbing a thumb over her nipple. There was a wet spot between her legs. Her other hand was buried in her muff. "I thought you had slithered off back home."

"You said you'd keep him for a week," Ink said. "I'm waiting for the reward you promised us."

Dean said something that was muffled by the elf surrounding him. This small confirmation of life made Ink's heart beat faster than she was comfortable admitting as her cheeks went red with rage. The elf was sneering at her.

"I still have one more day," Leandra said. She reached above her head, fingers glistening, and stretched. Her boobs bounced around

Dean's cock. He spasmed inside of her. "I was thinking about testing the half-dragon's durability. He's been surprisingly resistant to digestion, but I haven't tried-"

She drummed her stomach.

"Suffocation."

Dean's struggles grew more pronounced. Ink lunged forward, but Leandra laughed, waving away the angry basilisk.

"Joking, joking," she said. "Honestly, we've had a lot of fun. I let him out for an hour each day for some light exercise and a quick fuck, then I pop him back in, miniature or not, and let him do his thing. His squirms are delightful, no? You must have missed them this last week given how badly you've been trying to replicate them."

She nodded at Ink's bulbous gut pressed against the trunk of the tree. Ink glared, placing a protective arm in front of her stomach.

"I was just hungry," she said.

"Is it a normal feeding habit for a basilisk to swallow ten people in a week?" Leandra said. "I don't think so."

How the fuck did she know anything about basilisk feeding habits? Damn this immortal elf and her smug fucking ears!

"Anyhow, piss off," Leandra said, settling back with her hand between her legs. "Unless you want to watch, in which case, be my guest. Dean, honey, please get back to rubbing yourself. If I don't feel you cum again in the next five minutes, I really will burp out all of your air."

Dean's hand moved feebly beneath her skin. Ink's ears went pink, then red, then purple.

"The seven days are up," Ink said.

Leandra sighed, looking at her through hooded lids.

"They aren't," she said, "and I don't appreciate you trying to interfere on his behalf. He agreed to the payment fair and square. This was his choice. Maybe he doesn't value your opinion as much as you think he does, snake, or maybe he knew he'd enjoy himself. You like being in here, don't you?"

She shook her belly. Dean sucked back a howl as it jiggled over his cock.

“See?”

Ink unwound herself from the tree, slithering down until her stomach touched the ground. Leandra kept masturbating, but her free hand disappeared behind her, no doubt reaching for a weapon in case Ink lunged. Ink continued forward until their stomachs touched. Hers was larger than Leandra’s.

And heavier.



“Here,” she said, draping herself over where Dean was pressed against the skin. “Use this.”

He jolted and jittered. His cock began to twitch.

“What are you doing?” Leandra spat. “Get off of me. Get off of him.”

She had stopped touching herself, both hands grasping at Ink's belly. The extra movement only incited Dean further. Ink felt a familiar bucking of his hips.

"He's close," she murmured.

"Get off—mmph!"

Ink pushed forward, smothering Leandra with her navel. The elf's hands flew to her belt, but just as her fingers grasped for the hidden blade, the tip of Ink's tail yanked it away, tossing it deep into the woods. She let more of her weight settle on Leandra's face. The elf's pounding grew desperate, as did Dean's squirms.

"Come on, Dean," Ink coaxed. "Come on."

Squashed between two stomachs, suffocating under the weight of both, Dean came. Ink pulled away, a smug smirk on her lips, as Leandra fell forward, dazed.

"The seven days are up," Ink repeated.

She picked Leandra up by the arms. The elf glanced at her, alarmed, as her jaw clicked open and her throat transformed into a dripping, pink tunnel. Venom dewed against the tips of her fangs between which her tongue spread to form a comforting pillow beneath Leandra's breasts. Ink sucked them into her mouth, one by one, licking Leandra's erect nipples as the elf tried to get her breath back.

"-kill you," Leandra wheezed. "I'll kill you."

"Oh really?" Ink asked. "Dean might be resistant to stomach acids, but I don't think that you are."

Leandra's face went pale. Her mouth slackened as she stared into Ink's throat.

"You wouldn't," she said.

"I would," Ink said, letting her tongue wrap around the elf's tender shoulders. "However, if you let Dean out early and apologize, I might consider a short excursion instead of a prolonged stay, hmm?"

Leandra sputtered and spat.

“We had a deal!” she said. “You can’t renege on the deal. I haven’t even harmed your stupid boyfriend. He’s enjoying every…second…of…huh.”



Her words faded as Ink’s tail wrapped around her legs, lowering her head down between her jaws until her nose brushed Ink’s uvula. Only when the rippling flesh of Ink’s throat began to close against her brow did Leandra relent, fighting the iron grip of Ink’s tail as she shouted profuse apologies.

“Wait, wait, alright! I’ll spit up your boyfriend and consider the pact finished. You’ll get your phoenix spit. Hey! Stop lowering me! I said that I’d-”

Ink dunked Leandra’s head into her throat long enough to let her know that she meant business, then pulled her out in a shower of spittle, the elf soaked and dejected as Ink held her upside-down.

“He’s not my boyfriend,” Ink said.

Leandra made a face like she had eaten something rotten, but already her stomach was bulging, writhing, preparing to eject its feast with mild, gurgling protests. Ink lowered her over the grass as her eyes popped and her throat ballooned outward, unrolling until an arm thrust its way out of her mouth, then a shoulder, a head of curly, black hair. Dean fell into the dirt. His bronze skin steamed as he chuckled.

"You couldn't wait one more day?" he asked.

"Shut up," Ink said.

She dropped Leandra and bent to inspect him. All of his limbs were intact, which was good, and despite the steam, his skin was undamaged, though the smell of the elf's stomach was offensive to her. Dean protested as she stuck out her tongue and began licking him. Ink ignored his cries. Only when she had washed away all the filth did she lower her blindfold and look him in the eyes.

"Hey, you," Dean said gently.

"Hey."

Something was twisting and turning in Ink's stomach and it wasn't the farmers. There was a magnetism drawing her forward. She lowered her face another inch. Dean raised himself up on his toes.

What am I doing? Ink said as she closed her eyes. His breath was on her chin. *Why am I-"*

SHINK! SHINK!

The metallic thud of steel on skin jarred Ink. She opened her eyes to see a trickle of blood an inch from her face where the tip of Leandra's blade had pierced through Dean's arm.

Leandra's mad cackle echoed through the trees, her voice seething with fury.

"Your lives are forfeit," she called. "I shall hunt you to the ends of the map. You shall never have another night's peaceful sleep knowing that wherever you run, wherever you hide, I will follow."

Another blade flipped out of the trees to their left. Ink deflected it with a swipe of her tail, smelling the air.

“She hasn’t washed herself clean of your scent yet,” Ink said. “I can track her.”

“Go,” Dean said. “We can’t have a psychotic elf following us for the rest of our lives.”

He stumbled forward. The blade in his arm had gone right through, tearing through muscle and skin, but the wound was barely bleeding. Was he that exhausted from his time in Leandra’s stomach? Had she been starving him?

A surge of anger washed over Ink. The elf was moving. Her scent was getting farther away. She slid forward, then looked back. Dean smiled at her.

“Go,” he said.

He was favoring his left side. Ink blinked, but there was no time to second guess. She charged into the forest after the elf.

It was a warm day, warmer than it had been all week, and Ink was in fine form weaving in and out of the trees. She wasn’t, as she had told Dean, following the elf’s trail because she already knew where the elf was going to be. If the elf was tracking her in the same way that she was tracking the elf, then they were going to have to meet in the middle.

The mouth of the valley came into focus after a few minutes of gliding. Ink paused, letting her muscles rest as she waited for Leandra to catch up. The elf was approaching fast from the left.

“Did you figure it out?” Ink called.

She slid down into the valley, making her way between the rocks. The smell of the phoenix was still fresh in her nose. It was easy enough to find the hidden path to the bird’s nest.

The elf was coming faster now, the breeze flowing through the valley marking her trail. All Ink had to do was wait behind one of the rock piles aaaand…

WHACK!

Leandra ran right into her outstretched tail, winding herself as Ink slithered out from her hiding place. A blade was held in her

outstretched hand. Ink tossed it aside, deftly stripping the elf while she wheezed and puffed.

"How many knives does one person need?" Ink asked, throwing away the last bandolier. Leandra was bare before her, thin again, with only her oversized tits as a testament to her vanity. "At least you're loyal. When I started moving toward Phyric, I thought you might give up on him."

"We have a contract…asshole," Leandra snarled.

Ink's tail wrapped around her arms. She made sure to bind her tight, winding and coiling until there was no chance of escape. Ink tapped her chin, wondering if she should take the blindfold off. Elves weren't resistant to magic. One good look and she'd be petrified like Augustus.

No. There was something she wanted even more.

Dean's scent coated Leandra's skin like a marinade. Ink licked her, letting her tongue linger between her breasts.

"You can't eat me," Leandra said.

"Why not?"

The elf bit her lip.

"Because…I'm immortal," she stated. "If you eat me, you'll simply digest me forever, and someday I'll escape and kill you."

"That just sounds like free food."

Leandra's jaw flapped like a puppet's. She was scrounging for excuses, but Ink already knew that elves were ageless, not invulnerable. They digested just as easily as anybody. She took another lick.

"Nothing I did was personal," Leandra said as Ink's coils tightened. "The half-dragon, he's fine. I didn't do anything that he didn't consent to. You should have seen him. I-"

"You fucked him," Ink said.

"I didn't-"

"In front of me."

Ink bent so that they were nose to nose. Her tongue flicked out, lapping at Leandra's cheeks. Her coils clenched so hard that she heard pop.

"You took something that belonged to me."

"I'm sorry," Leandra whimpered, but sorry wasn't enough for what she had done, and besides, Ink wanted to make her suffer. She kissed the elf on the brow before sinking her fangs into her shoulder; Leandra gasped as the venom raced into her veins, then moaned as it took effect, amplifying her senses.

"Now you'll be able to feel everything in full," Ink said. "Goodbye, Leandra."

"No, no, wait!"

Head, shoulders, tits; stomach, rapidly expanding as a last second deterrent. Ink didn't care. She tasted each with the same reverence she had shown the farmers and more malice than she had shown the lamia. She knew that every swipe of her tongue against the elf's naked skin was a torturous excursion; a pre-digestive dip while the walls of her throat slid closed over Leandra's rotund belly. This, she suckled like a blueberry, pressing the soft pudge up into the roof of her mouth, then squishing it down, causing the elf to gasp. Leandra's head vanished into her gullet at the same time her tits tapped against her throat. The overstimulated buds of her nipples made for interesting texture. The more Ink licked them, the more the elf writhed.

Dean should be seeing this, Ink thought as she threw her head back. She wanted to swallow Leandra slowly, to make her contemplate her fate, but her eagerness to get back to him made her take gulp after sloppy gulp, swallowing Leandra as a seagull would a fish; a rapid opening and closing of the throat.

When her belly drooped against her skirt, Ink belched and, still tasting Dean on her lips, slithered back up the valley to find him.

"Struggle all you want," she hissed as she went. Leandra was doing somersaults in her stomach, testing each wall with a punch or a kick. "You're not getting out of there."



Another belch made her hiccup. It seemed that Leandra, with several humans in her stomach, was more of a burden than any common farmer, but no matter how much the elf grew in desperation, Ink was a basilisk and her belly was used to stretching. She rested her elbows on it and watched as Leandra's face appeared and disappeared between the flesh of her tits, unremarkable now that she was food. Ink was just about to make a snide remark when she smelled something sharp on the wind.

Blood

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"Dean?" Ink whispered.

She shot forward, not caring about the twigs and branches digging into her scales or the chaotic bouncing of her gut. Leandra shrieked, jostled on all sides, but Ink didn't slow her pace, racing back to the spot where she had left the half-dragon.

He was there, of course, slumped against a tree. His bronze skin had turned an ashen gray and blood, red and sticky, had stained the cloak that he had thrown over himself. A needle and thread lay abandoned next to his limp right hand. He smiled at her, coughing.

"Tried to fix it up myself," he said. "I didn't think…she hit anything vital."

"What? No."

Ink bent at his side, smelling the wound. It had the nasty, sour odor of infection. She couldn't see it beneath the cloak, but the blood crusting the edges had turned black. Gently, she dragged it off of him, startled to see a jagged gash in his side.

"What?" Ink repeated, not comprehending. She went to touch the wound and Dean gasped, causing her to draw back. "The knife. It was in your arm."

"Two knives," Dean said, nodding off to his left where the blades were stacked on their bags. He must have found their gear in the

hollow where Ink had hidden it. “One was poisoned. Dragons are resistant to poison-”

He coughed again. Blood trickled over his perfect lips.

“-not immune.”

Ink pressed her forehead to his. He was burning up. His beautiful, brown eyes blinked at her as tears dripped on him from beneath her blindfold. She tore it off and held him close. Her stomach rumbled as he put a hand on it.

“Leandra?” he asked, smiling.

“Yes,” Ink said. She hated the elf and would do anything to make her suffer at that moment, but maybe if she had the poison, she also knew the antidote. “Should we ask her? Do you think she’d tell us?”

A massive, sloppy gurgle rang through the clearing. Huge bubbles formed in her stomach, followed by a flop as it went still, perfectly round and so soft that Dean’s face sank into it. He laughed. More blood trickled out, but he laughed all the same, clutching for Ink’s hands.

“You always had a huge appetite,” he said. “I haven’t known you long, but my time with you has been…precious.”

Ink shook him by the shoulders. His head was nodding. The light in his eyes was fading fast and the blood, it wouldn’t stop. She hugged him tight. She was hyperventilating. There was so much to say and no time to say it and the words, they were stuck in her throat. His heart was racing like a baby bird’s.

A baby bird.

“The phoenix!” she gasped. “His feathers cure illness. Dean, wake up. Dean? Dean, wake up!”

His heartbeat had slowed in the last few seconds. Ink shook him again. His eyes came open just long enough for him to look at her. He smiled.

“You have beautiful eyes,” he said.

No, no, no! Ink wasn’t going to let him die. He couldn’t die. The words, they were on the tip of her tongue if only she had time, but

time was slipping through her fingers and she had to do something. Heaving Dean into her arms, she pressed him to her stomach, doing her best to staunch the wound with his cloak as she shot through the trees toward the mouth of the valley. Foliage passed in a green blur, then yellow, then red as she wove through the rock piles. Dean was unconscious now, his heartbeat barely a tap of the fingers. Ink considered biting him, but it would only spread the poison. She needed the phoenix. She needed Phyric.

The nest was exactly as it had been when they first entered the valley. Not bothering to knock, Ink raced up the steps and into the cushioned interior where Phyric sat reading a scroll. He clicked his tongue, offended.

"What's this, what's this?" he squawked. "I get no privacy nowadays! Arck!"

Ink placed Dean down in front of him, startling him backwards. The phoenix sniffed the black blood crusting around Dean's wound. Ink had to stop herself from throttling him as he scratched his chin.

"Did Leandra do this?" he asked.

"Yes," Ink said, offering her stomach. "Now she's dead."

"I see. Bother. She was a good bodyguard and she knew her poisons well. I'm afraid there's nothing you can do about this one."

"What?"

Ink's head began to spin. Nothing to be done? What did he mean, nothing to be done? He was a phoenix! He knew everything! Phyric clacked his beak distastefully, going back to his scroll. Ink slapped it out of his wings.

"Tell me how to fix him," she barked.

"One of my feathers might do," Phyric said, nodding at his bald little body, "but as you can see, I'm fresh out."

"You don't keep spares?!"

Phyric sniffed again. He looked rather bashful.

"Not for free," he said.

"What?!?"

“My feathers are the most common thing people ask for! There are rules in play here, rules, basilisk! I can’t just hand out my feathers willy nilly just because you ate my bodyguard and dumped a body on my doorstep. Besides, the feathers don’t just cure folk, you know. They cease aging. It’s a high price, one way or another, and honestly, I think it’s better if you just let him-”

Ink’s bared teeth did nothing to deter him. He was a phoenix, after all, and even if she ate him and shat him out on the riverbed, his body would rise from the ashes. He had nothing to be afraid of and she was terrified. Dean wasn’t moving anymore.

“Shame, shame,” Phryic said. “I thought you two might last the ages.”

They might have, Ink realized.

She slumped next to the body, the fight going out of her shoulders. Dean, so large in life, looked tiny at the brink of death.

“What if…I become your bodyguard?” Ink asked.

Phyric, who was dusting off his scroll, looked up. If a bird could frown, he did.

“You?” he asked. “Bodyguard?”

“Why not?” Ink asked, drawing herself up. “I’m large, I’m intimidating, my gaze turns people to stone. I can make sure that the wrong sorts don’t come here and I can handle the negotiations.”

“It’s a lot of travel. Basilisks are used to living in caves.”

“I’ll learn!”

“And it’s a lifetime appointment,” Phyric said. “A week off every year, two weeks after twenty, not during festival times. I do love a good-”

“Yes!” Ink screamed, practically throwing herself at the phoenix’s feet. “Yes to everything, just save him.”

Phyric shrugged and rustled through the cushions until he came upon one with a golden trim. Ripping it open with his beak, he removed two, bright red feathers. One he handed to Ink. One he placed on Dean’s chest.

“With this you are bound to my service,” Phyric said, clearing his throat. “You’ll have to say goodbye eventually. I don’t need another retainer.”

Ink nodded.

“Do it,” she said.

Phyric raised his wings. From his throat emerged a warbled cry, soft at first, then louder and louder, a high, clear note that pierced the air and resonated through the nest. The feather in Ink’s hands began to glow. Abruptly, it stopped.

“There,” Phyric said, sinking back into his pile of cushions.

Ink lifted the feather. It dissolved into ash.

“That’s it?” she asked.

“Not all magic is flashy,” Phyric growled. “Immortality certainly isn’t, as you’ll come to learn. Anyhow, once he wakes up, get him out of my nest. And find me a cup of tea, black, from the nearest village. Ack. One thing I didn’t think about was how reticent the peasants would be to dealing with a basilisk. You’re lucky I’m a softie.”

He turned his back and disappeared deeper into the nest leaving Ink with Dean. Some color had returned to his face, but he wasn’t moving. Ink leaned down and sniffed. His mouth was slightly ajar.

“You don’t have to…smell me,” he whispered, batting his eyes. “Makes me think you’re gonna eat me.”

“I’m going to devour you,” Ink said.

She kissed him gently, then hungrily, sinking her body down on top of his. He grinned against her lips, unable to move, and the thud of his heart was like music to Ink’s ears. She hadn’t had time to acknowledge her relief, but now the tears came and she sobbed, hugging him tight. He kissed the cusp of her throat. His scruff tickled her chin.

“I really thought I was dead for a second,” Dean said. “It was peaceful, honestly, but also kind of sad.”

Ink pulled away and laughed, a loud, girlish laugh that surprised even herself. She tried to stop and ended up snorting, which made

Dean laugh so hard that Phyric stuck his featherless head out from his cushions.

"Do you mind?" he barked.

"Of course," Ink said, scooping Dean into her arms. He put up a meager resistance as she carried him out of the nest and a little ways away. It was mild out and the sun was high. It warmed the scales on Dean's back. He was naked, but the wound in his side was closed.

For a while they sat there, taking in the sun. Dean huddled close to Ink's belly, playing with it idly, and Ink stroked his shoulders. Neither spoke; they didn't have to. They were content to be alive and in each other's presence, but of course, after a while, it wasn't enough.

"Things have gotten complicated," Dean said.

He squirmed in Ink's lap. She was sure that he'd rather be standing, would feel less juvenile on his two feet rather than staring over the hump of her stomach, but Ink liked him there and she liked the blush spreading over his cheeks, so she didn't move.

"Oh?"

"Between us. Our…mission?"

"Mmm."

He frowned. A small smile played on Ink's lips, betraying neither approval or disapproval. She wanted him to say it himself. After all, she had done quite enough.

"I want to go the rest of the way in unpetrifying Augustus," Dean said. "He's my friend after all and your…?"

He waited, hoping she'd fill in the blank.

"My what?"

"Oh come on!"

Ink laughed. She couldn't help it. Dean crossed his arms as her stomach jiggled against his chest and her coils looped beneath him. After a bit, he began to smile as well, pushing Ink away when she tried to pinch his cheek.

"Fuck, alright, alright," Dean said. "I'll say it. Put me down, though. I feel like a damn infant being held like this."

Ink set him on the ground and lay in front of him with her cheeks in her hands. Her blindfold was clamped between her fingers, hanging over her wrist.

Dean took a deep breath.

“So, I like you,” he said.

“Like me?”

“Love you, actually, and you can wipe that smirk off your face because I think you feel the same way.”

“Do I now?”

“Do…you?”

Dean had flipped the script and Ink hadn’t been prepared. Her cheeks turned crimson as he looked into her eyes.

“Can’t I just eat you?” Ink complained.

“No, no,” Dean said, sweeping an imaginary hat off his head and doffing it. “You’ve obviously enjoyed teasing me, so now it’s your turn to suffer.”

“I really think I should just swallow you.”

“I would enjoy every second of it.”

“You really would, pervert.”

“I will gladly fill you if you’ll just…say it.”

Ink sighed and covered her face. Gladdis was going to kill her for this.

“Fine,” she said. “I love you. This is a problem!”

“I know!” Dean said.

“Augustus?”

“He’ll be heartbroken.”

“Can we just leave him stoned?”

“No!”

“I know, I know,” Ink said, stretching out on the rock. She swept Dean to herself with her tail. “Let’s get the spit from Phyric in the morning and then-”

She paused, remembering that she was bound to the phoenix. Did that mean she couldn’t come with Dean on their quest? No, it just

meant that they'd have to do it all in one week. How long did it take to stop a fairy war?

Dean noticed her pause and put a hand on her arm.

"It'll be alright," he said, "so long as we're together."

Ink didn't have the heart to tell him that she would have to leave him, so she kissed him instead. The rain had stopped and the valley smelled of earth and stone and in the distance, tiny humans went about their tiny lives, but coiled around Dean, everything felt right, and that meant the world to the basilisk.

End of Book 2





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