

“Okay, so we’re all aware this place is trapped to hell and back, right?” Ciri asked as they crept inside the hidden vault under the monastery.

“It’s very unlikely that anything here would lead us to the hells,” Astarion quipped.

“Don’t even bloody joke about that,” Karlach muttered.

“So there are nine hells, right?” Luna asked. “What are they all like? Harry showed me your memories of Avernus, Karlach.”

“Then you know that it’s a fiery nightmare,” Karlach muttered. “I’m not entirely sure of the others, to be honest. I know there’s one really icy one.”

“Two, though one is icier than the other,” Gale explained. “The next one is Dis, a realm taken up almost entirely by a sprawling city of the same name, also known as the City of Pain.”

“Not a vacation spot, I take it?” Harry drawled.

“Depends on who you ask,” Astarion chuckled. “I know that the next one is called Minauros, and it’s a giant, revolting bog.”

“It’s followed by Phlegethos, which is like Avernus but even more fiery, and then comes Stygia, the ice hell,” Gale replied. “It’s an utterly frozen wasteland whose ruler, a devil whose name I’m blanking on just now, is actually trapped in ice himself; a punishment for pissing off the lord of the nine, Asmodeus.”

“The sixth level is called Malbolge and is ruled over by his daughter, Glasya,” Karlach chimed in. “I only know about it or her because I heard Zariel bitch about her more than once. She’s loathed by pretty much all the other archdevils, save for daddy dearest, presumably, which probably either makes her the best or the worst of them.”

“It’s purportedly the most barren and lifeless of them, though there’s actually significant scholarly disagreement about what it’s like,” Gale continued. “The seventh layer is called Maladomini, the only one whose name I couldn’t remember for a quiz one time; still pissed about that. It’s a giant maze meant to rob you of all hope, and its skies are apparently so polluted that breathing there is generally ill-advised.”

“The eighth layer is called Cania,” Lae’zel piped up, happy for the distraction. “It’s ruled over by Mephistopheles, an archdevil I read about in a dusty tome I came across in the library of Creche K’liir. His level of the hells is apparently even icier than Stygia.”

“True,” Gale nodded. “Some say it’s the coldest place in the universe, though others contend that, oddly, its icy planes are broken up by rivers of magma. A place of magic, to be sure. The final hell is Nessus, the deepest, darkest, and most terrifying of them all, if only because of who rules over it. The archdevils are all terrifying, but Asmodeus is in a class of his own.”

“There is something terribly funny about having this discussion about the hells in a place dedicated to Lathander of all gods,” Shadowheart muttered as they came to a magical barrier. “Hmm.”

“This is tied to a physical object, like the stone back up there,” Gale replied. “Look around and...oh, here we are.”

He pointed at a glowing blue crystal that jutted out in three directions from a bronze sconce of some sort, and as Harry reached out to feel just what sort of magic was emanating from it, he quickly nodded.

“It feels the same,” he murmured. “If one of you would like the honor...”

“By all means,” Astarion grinned, pulling out his bow.

“Will arrows really break it?” Luna asked.

“If we hit it with enough of them,” Shadowheart said as she drew her own.

“It doesn’t look terribly sturdy,” Wyl murmured.

“You were quite quiet as we were discussing the hells just then,” Luna murmured, and he laughed humorlessly, feeling his horns.

“Not a subject I like to think about much at the moment, to be honest,” Wyl sighed.

“You just need to figure out how to accessorize them properly,” Luna said. “We have a friend back home who I’m sure could whip up a look that would work with them. She’s great at that sort of thing.”

“Thank you, but no,” Wyl chuckled, amused by how genuine she was being despite how ridiculous she sounded.

“There!” Astarion exclaimed as the crystal shattered and the barrier disappeared.

Pleased at the sudden ability to make progress, the party ventured forth, only to immediately see another, identical barrier.

“This might take a while,” Karlach sighed.

“I don’t see the crystal controlling this one either,” Shadowheart murmured as she looked around.

“Hold on,” Astarion said sharply, eyeing an odd-looking bronze and crystal contraption on the ground. “This is a trap, and I’m going to need to deal with it.”

He carefully snuck forward and disarmed it before gesturing for them to follow.

“There was a plaque back there that warned us death would follow if we went inside,” Wyl murmured, “though I’m sure we all guessed that already.”

“It wouldn’t be a treasure room without traps, but that’s half the fun,” Astarion grinned, earning an eye-roll from the other man.

“There are quite a few of us here, and we’re not exactly weak,” Gale murmured, and Wyl nodded.

“We’ll fly around and look for the crystal,” Luna said. “It has to be somewhere.”

Harry nodded, and the pair split up, exploring the somewhat larger corridor. Luna ended up finding the crystal, tucked away in a little cavern roughly carved out to the left of them. She destroyed it

with a simple blasting curse, and Harry flew in the moment the barrier disappeared, quickly finding and destroying the next crystal himself.

He had hoped to save spells here, figuring they were going to come across something dangerous later on, but with the crystals after the first one being hidden, he figured it was better to just save time instead. As he flew over the trap in that room, he didn't set it off, and Astarion quickly disarmed it just in time to see the third barrier disappear.

"End of the road," Astarion murmured as he peered inside. "That's troubling."

"Why would that be troubling?" Ciri asked.

"Because treasure vaults that don't truly make you work for it to reach the end usually hide a truly remarkable trap there," Astarion replied. "Of course, those are the ones that generally contain the greatest treasures."

"That dais couldn't be a more obvious trap," Gale murmured.

"Beautiful mace sitting on it, though," Shadowheart commented.

They were both right, and as Harry and Luna looked around, they marveled at the architecture of the place. Far more ornate than the rest of the monastery had been, it was a round room made of pale grey stone inlaid with gold. Sharp golden spikes rose up from the room around it, each pointing towards the raised platform on which a truly beautiful weapon stood. A spiked mace, its shaft was black and its center a glowing amber that radiated magic plainly.

"Since I know there's no way we're leaving empty-handed just yet, let's move in slowly and see what you two notice," Wyl murmured, and Astarion nodded, taking the lead.

As a rogue, he'd lived for this kind of thing once, back when he lived, and while his memories of the time before Cazador made a plaything of him were spotty at best, he did know that he had, as a boy, longed to someday explore a hidden tomb or vault just like this and pilfer everything inside. He crept along slowly and carefully, keeping his crimson eyes peeled for any sign of traps and becoming rather unsettled when he found nothing.

"Either the people who hid this mace here were complete fools or they got very, very creative," he thought to himself.

"I'm not seeing anything," Shadowheart muttered.

"I'm not either, which is all the more troubling," Astarion drawled. "Ciri, you might want to open a portal back to the grove."

"You think there's a trap here, but it's beyond you?" Gale asked.

"That seems somewhat more likely than the idea of the Lathander worshipers hiding what is clearly a precious relic of theirs in a place they barely hid away at all," Astarion replied. "Our best bet would be to open a portal, grab that lovely-looking mace, and run for it."

"This trap, could it damage the rest of the monastery?" Lae'zel asked sharply. "Even if most of them would gleefully stab me in the throat just now, I don't want dozens of my queen's loyal warriors harmed because we wanted to steal a shiny mace."

“Rooms like these are usually set up to fill with poison or a flammable gas that is then lit aflame if someone takes the relic,” Astarion replied. “Keep in mind this is a holy temple of sorts, and religious types aren’t generally all that keen to destroy their blessed sites and relics.”

“Here we are,” Ciri murmured as she opened the portal. “Harry?”

“On...oh, wow,” Harry murmured as he held out his hand towards the mace and tried to summon it. “It’s protected against magic.”

“Let me see if it has physical protections,” Shadowheart said, grabbing her bow and using it to gently nudge the mace.

To her shock, not only did it budge, but it actually moved more than she intended it to, and as it slipped towards her, she reached out on instinct to catch it, only to freeze as a golden barrier, just the ones they’d found before, appeared around her.

“Shit,” Harry muttered, looking around for a crystal and coming to a halt when suddenly, from all around them, four pillars, topped by glowing golden, crystal-adorned, spikes, rose from the depths and started to emit beams of light that met just above Shadowheart inside a few hovering golden rings that they’d thought were mere decoration.

Before any of them could do anything, the beams merged and raced towards the end of room where a golden portal opened to let it through. They stood, watching in horror as a metal and crystal contraption outside the monastery rose up and turned around, its tip glowing as it was prepared to strike.

“What the fuck is that?” Ciri asked.

“I’m stuck in here,” Shadowheart fretted.

“If I had to hazard a guess, I’d say that thing is going to destroy this entire chamber and the rest of the monastery above if we don’t disarm it,” Gale grimaced, and Lae’zel glared murderously at Astarion, who winced.

“In my defense I did say ‘usually’” he replied.

“How do we stop this thing?!” Lae’zel demanded.

“If we destroy the glowing crystals emitting these beams, that should work,” Astarion said, taking aim at one of them, and Harry held up his hand.

“I’ve got it,” he said, focusing inward as he conjured a spell he hadn’t used in a little while. “*Pestis Incendium!*”

A gigantic flaming dragon emerged into the room and flew through the first of the crystals, destroying it on impact, before continuing on. Gale’s jaw dropped at the display of high-level magic and the rest of them merely watched in silent hope as the fiendfyre swept around the room, destroying pillar after pillar, until, in less than a minute, they’d all been destroyed. He took a deep breath and ended the spell just as Shadowheart was freed and ran towards them.

“Into the portal, now,” Luna said, and they all nodded, filing in and leaving the accursed monastery once and for all.

Harry followed quickly after them and sat down against the wall of the cave he’d carved out, feeling his heart race in his chest.

“That was a little more exciting than we expected,” Luna murmured.

“We could have destroyed the entire creche,” Lae’zel hissed.

“We didn’t, though,” Harry replied. “I’d have done everything in my power to prevent that thing from fully activating, I swear.”

“*For your sake, anyway,*” he thought to himself as she nodded, looking exhausted.

“This thing is more powerful than any weapon I’ve ever seen, at least that I recall,” Shadowheart breathed.

“You’re welcome to it,” Karlach sighed, removing her sword from her belt and going to set up her tent. “I’ve never really been a mace girl, to be honest.”

“I prefer blades,” Lae’zel added as Ciri nodded.

“Well, if you all insist,” Shadowheart grinned, looking down at the glowing mace covetously as she tried to get a sense of what it did.

“We should turn in for the night and then go straight to the goblin camp in the morning,” Wyl murmured.

“Agreed,” Harry nodded as he stood up. “Whether or not your father and the archdruid are there, we will surely get some intel on them at least, and if we can kill the people behind this operation, that should help these people immensely.”

“More than anything it will make it possible to get the tieflings out of the grove and along their way to Baldur’s Gate,” Wyl nodded.

“I’ll get supper going,” Luna murmured, sighing as she looked over at Lae’zel, who was sitting down and staring off at nothing, clearly lost in thought.

“*She needs some cheering up,*” she thought to herself. “*I’m sure I’ll think of something.*”

“So the creche turned out to be a bust,” Ciri whispered to Harry. “Have you found anything yet that might help with the tadpoles? I know you’ve been studying that preserved mind flayer head.”

“I swear I’ve only scratched the surface of its potential so far,” he muttered. “These things are frighteningly intelligent, and studying that brain has been incredible. If I could figure out how to duplicate it...”

“Huh?” Ciri asked.

“To be able to think on the level of one of them would be incredible,” Harry murmured, “and I have been studying a field of magic that can be used to physically alter people’s bodies...”

“I hope I don’t have to say that experimenting on your own brain would be incredibly stupid,” Ciri muttered, and he chuckled.

“I’m not an idiot, even if I seem like one next to that thing,” Harry replied. “It would be a project for another time, one which would require rigorous experimentation before I’d ever attempt to touch myself.”

“Dinner’s ready!” Luna called out, and the two of them joined the others.

“What’s this?” Astarion asked as he took his bowl.

“Beef Stroganoff,” Luna replied. “It’s another favorite of ours.”

“It smells wonderful,” Gale gushed.

“Lae’zel?” Luna asked, and the Githyanki looked at her in confusion for a moment, not having heard a word of that.

“Hmm?” she asked before staring down at the bowl of stew being offered and scowling. She didn’t feel hungry in the slightest, but she knew better than to let herself go a night without a meal, and so she forced herself to take it.

“We may well be attacked this night, and I will need my strength,” she thought to herself, knowing full well that her people would come for her until she managed to prove herself to Vlaakith.

She dug into the meal almost mechanically, feeling too maudlin to truly enjoy it, even though it was fantastic, and as she sat on her own, purposefully ignoring the others as they chatted with each other, she racked her brain trying to think of her next move.

“The artifact will keep me from becoming ghaik, so that gives me time to think,” she thought to herself, trying desperately not to feel the sting of betrayal that threatened to consume her. *“It’s a test; it has to be. I just need to prove myself to my queen somehow. Perhaps getting to the bottom of this cult of the absolute might work, as it is entirely possible that the vile ghaik are involved in it, or I could try to retrieve Mother Gith’s blade. That would surely earn her favor and forgiveness.”*

She closed her eyes at that, hating that she even needed to do so, and as she did, she couldn’t help but feel tiny little doubts in the back of her mind. The fact that the strange entity helping them accurately warned her that Vlaakith was going to seek her death made things even worse. She’d been sent to kill that creature, whatever it truly was, despite the fact that it alone had held her ceremorphosis at bay, and her queen, either sensing that she would fail or not caring either way, ordered her death in the aftermath.

“Stop!” she hissed at her own mind. *“Vlaakith’s will is not to be questioned. This is a test, one I will pass, however I must.”*

She glared at the remnants of her stew, hating that she found herself doubting her queen at all, and she sighed, thinking, *“I need a distraction, something that...”*

She trailed off as she eyed Harry and licked her lips. That would be one way to drive these treasonous thoughts from her mind, and hopefully all others.

“Holy fuck,” Harry groaned as Ciri bobbed her head up and down, taking his cock deep into her warm, wet, heavenly mouth over and over again while doing her best to suck his soul out.

“She has a point, Harry,” Luna grinned, hugging him from behind and pressing her full, perky breasts against his muscular back. “You saved us all today.”

“You...shit...would have if I hadn’t,” Harry moaned, his legs twitching as she swallowed him to the hilt and massaged his glans with the tight muscles of her throat.

“Still, it was you, and that deserves a reward,” Luna grinned, resting her head on his shoulder and smiling down at Ciri. “You really are very good at that.”

“Tell me about it,” Harry grunted, making her giggle as she ran her hands over his abs.

The three of them had gone into their tent for the night after they finished eating, knowing that they’d need their rest for what they intended to do the next day. That didn’t mean they couldn’t have fun first, though, and after the day they’d had, they really needed some fun. The creche hadn’t turned out to be anything like they’d hoped, and their adventure in tomb raiding afterward had nearly gotten them all killed. After a day like that, passing out in each other’s arms, sweaty, exhausted, and utterly sated, sounded wonderful.

“Fucking hell, Ciri, that...” Harry went to say only to freeze when he sensed a presence just outside the door to their tent.

“Oh, I’ll let her in,” Luna grinned, knowing who it was. “I didn’t know if Lae’zel would come tonight, but she clearly needs it.”

With a wave of her hand, the front door unlocked and Lae’zel walked in, going still as she saw all three of them naked and Ciri with Harry’s cock in her mouth.

“You seemed happy about the idea of me joining you for a night the other day,” she said. “Is that still true?”

“Of course,” Luna beamed, floating over to her and taking her hands in hers. “It’s going to be okay.”

“My one condition would be that we not discuss anything that happened today,” Lae’zel said firmly, and she nodded.

“If you need a distraction, we’ll be more than happy to give you one,” Harry grinned, looking her up and down as Ciri let his cock slip from her mouth.

“That’s exactly what...the fuck?” Lae’zel gasped as she saw his cock. “Are you a minotaur in disguise?”

“There are minotaurs here?” Harry asked. “Giant half-bull creatures.”

“There are,” Lae’zel replied. “They mostly live in the underdark, as I understand.”

“Why the fuck would they be called mino...not exactly a question worth pondering when I could be having a foursome instead,” Harry thought to himself.

“Harry’s all man,” Ciri purred, wrapping a hand around his shaft and grinning at Lae’zel. “Think you can take him?”

“I can take anything,” the githyanki said, bristling at the obvious challenge, and Ciri grinned.

“I’ve got him more than warmed up for you,” she purred, standing up and padding over to her.

“You are a more impressive specimen than I realized,” Lae’zel breathed as she looked Harry up and down while he stood up. “I can see why Luna is willing to share. How better to boast that you claimed such an incredible man as yours than to allow others to know the pleasures of his touch for a night?”

“Mostly, I just like seeing my friends be happy,” Luna smiled, “and Harry makes women happy like few things I’ve ever encountered; even chocolate.”

Ciri giggled at that while Harry rolled his eyes affectionately and approached Lae’zel.

“You want a distraction?” he asked, his voice low and rumbling. “Say the word and I’ll fuck you until you can’t think straight.”

“Bold words,” Lae’zel grinned, trailing a finger down, along his muscular form and smirking as she felt just how solid he was, “though I think you’re a little confused about who’s going to be on top and who’s going to be mindless by the end of this.”

“One of us is,” Harry smirked, and she jumped, wrapping her arms and legs around him as she claimed his lips with her own.

She kissed like she fought, hard, roughly, and demandingly, and Harry grinned, grabbing her by her arse and returning the kiss with equal bruising passion. Their tongues dueled for dominance in their mouths, something he figured was going to be a feature of their night together, and when Luna vanished her clothes, making her gasp in shock, he took full advantage of the opportunity to kiss and nip at her neck.

“Fuck!” Lae’zel gasped, feeling heat pool in her core already. “I hope I can get those back.”

“Of course,” Luna chuckled. Sending her things floating through the air towards the side table, where they folded themselves and were neatly piled up. “I’ll even wash them for you.”

“Of course, if you were to walk around naked going forward, none of us would object,” Harry grinned, digging his fingers into her firm, taut bum as she leaned backward, giving him a clear view of her small, perky breasts.

She looked much like he’d imagined, lithe and lean all over, her yellow skin possessing few noticeable tan lines, which either meant that she sunbathed naked or, more likely, that her people did not tan quite as aggressively as humans did. The natural dark spots he’d seen on her shoulders before were on her elbows too, and along her hips, where they formed a trail down to her sex, which was obscured by a thatch of brown hair. She wasn’t curvy at all, but she was visibly strong, her abdomen flat and well defined, and he just knew she was going to be incredible.

“If you just want to stare at me, I understand, but there are a few other things I’d rather we do,” Lae’zel grinned.

Harry chuckled at that and walked her over to their bed, which he lowered onto.

“I intend to far more than stare,” he rumbled, returning to her neck.

She gasped and moaned, holding his head to her as he trailed hot kisses down along the slender column, tasting the salty sweat of her skin. Ciri and Luna crawled into bed behind her, and she looked up at them both curiously. While she did prefer men, as a rule, enjoying the feeling of being filled by a hard, throbbing cock immensely, she’d enjoyed taking women to bed before and knew all too well that fucking Harry was going to include the other two before she entered their tent. When Ciri leaned down to kiss her, she returned it eagerly, only to gasp and look at Luna when she started nibbling on one of her ears.

“I’ve wanted to do this since we met,” the blonde purred, ghosting the tip of her tongue along the shell of her long, pointed ear.

“That...gah!” Lae’zel moaned as Harry reached her breasts and wrapped his lips around her hard, dark nipples.

He sucked on the sensitive nub, grazing it with his teeth, while Luna continued to play with her ears and Ciri peppered her neck with hot kisses. Lae’zel had been enjoying the pleasures of sex for years, but while she was experienced, she hadn’t been with more than one person at a time before, and so having multiple mouths and hands on her at once was an almost overstimulating joy. She’d have normally been a far more active participant in bed, but as the three of them worked together to drive her insane, she found that all she could do was gasp and mewl on the bed, her brain swimming in pleasure and her cunt becoming a sweltering flood. When she felt Harry’s lips on her abs and saw him continuing to move downward, she looked down in shock, not having expected him to go down on her without instruction.

“You’re so wet already,” he grinned as he nuzzled her bush with his nose, making her shudder. “How long has it been?”

“Months,” Lae’zel breathed. “I did not have much time to rest after my last mission before I ended up on the ghaik ship.”

“Well, we’ll have to do something about that,” Harry grinned, spreading her brown curls apart and leaning in to give her a long, slow lick from hole to clit.

She cried out in pleasure as she felt his tongue brush against her taut little pearl, his touch teasing and light. Reaching down, she grabbed his head and pulled him in closer to her, moaning when he started to explore her slick folds thoroughly.

“You are...fuck...surprisingly good at that,” Lae’zel gasped, her heels digging into his muscular back as she tightened the grip of her thighs on his head.

“Oh, Harry’s been an incredibly giving lover since we started sleeping together,” Luna smiled. “Part of it’s that he’s always been worried about hurting women with that incredible cock of his, but the rest of it is that he genuinely enjoys it.”

“Thank...gah...thank you for this,” Lae’zel moaned, and Luna’s smile widened as she reached out and ran her fingers through the githyanki’s hair, stroking her scalp with her nails.

“Trust me,” the blonde purred as she leaned in, “I’m going to enjoy this as much at least as you are.”

She kissed her then, snaking her arms around her neck, and Lae’zel moaned into her mouth, feeling her orgasm build rapidly. While she could be rather difficult to please, possessing significant stamina and not truly knowing satisfaction unless she’d been made to cum repeatedly in a night, she was never one who found it difficult to reach orgasm. Even for her, though, it seemed fast, and she didn’t know whether that was due to Harry’s skill with his tongue, the fact that there were three people focused on her just then, or both. Either way, as he swirled his tongue around her throbbing clit, pumping two of his thick fingers in and out of her squelching tunnel, and Luna and Ciri sucked on her nipples, she felt it coming quickly and started clawing at the sheets above her head.

“Don’t you dare stop!” Lae’zel growled, and he chuckled.

“I wouldn’t dream of it,” Harry replied, giving her clit a kiss that made her thighs quiver. “In fact...”

“What are you...AHHHH!” Lae’zel shrieked at the top of her lungs as she came hard.

It had been building quickly, but she wasn’t right on the edge, and the suddenness of it took her breath away. Pleasure beyond anything she’d ever known before thundered through her entire body from her head to her toes in wave after soul-searing wave without end. On and on it went as she screamed, writhed, and thrashed in ecstasy. All thought of Vlaakith, her current status as hshar'lak, and everything else melted away as her brain marinated in pure, wondrous sensation.

“I will never tire of seeing women experience Parlsetongue for the first time,” Luna sighed as Ciri giggled.

“You say that like we ever truly get used to it,” the other blonde murmured.

“True, but it stops being a surprise after a while,” Luna said as Harry finally relented and Lae’zel collapsed on her back, panting for breath.

“What...in the cosmos...was that?” the githyanki asked, staring at Harry through glassy, unfocused eyes.

“Her eyes are nearly black,” Luna thought to herself, having quite enjoyed watching her slitted pupils dilate.

“A gift of mine,” Harry replied. “That thing I did back in the grove, where I spoke to that druid woman’s snake, when I do it, my tongue vibrates.”

“Vibrates?” Lae’zel gasped, her eyes going wide as saucers as he demonstrated, hissing out a few words. “Oh.”

“It’s amazing, no?” Ciri grinned.

“I must feel you inside me,” Lae’zel breathed. “Lie down and let me mount you.”

“As you wish,” Harry grinned, sitting down next to her and lying back.

Before he reached the bottom, she pressed a hand against his chest, pushing him down, and hopped onto him. She smirked down at him, her eyes black with lust, as she straddled his abdomen and shifted back until she was hovering above his cock.

“What a weapon you’ve been smuggling all this time,” Lae’zel purred, reaching down and lifting it up. “My fingers don’t even touch.”

“*I am so glad she’s warm-blooded,*” Harry thought to himself as he felt her hand around his cock.

“I’d taste you as you tasted me, and perhaps I will later, but after that, I need to know what it feels like to have you stretch me open,” Lae’zel breathed, lining herself up with his cock and gasping when she felt his bulbous head brush through her slick folds. “*Fuck me, he’s huge. I’d sooner die than admit it, but I truly don’t know if I’ll be able to take it.*”

She was beyond eager to find out, though, and after taking a deep, steadying breath, she pushed down and gasped when she felt him pop inside her.

“Fuck, you’re tight,” Harry grunted, and she stared down at him like he was insane.

“You feel like a damn fist,” Lae’zel muttered. “Of course I’m tight around you.”

He chuckled at that, and she tried to relax her inner muscles, sighing in relief as she felt the pressure inside her relent just a touch. The sheer girth of him was insane, and it took active effort on her part to keep her legs from shaking as she felt even just the first couple inches of him stretch her out. It burned, but in a good way, and behind that was a deep pleasure that she was more than eager to feel more of. She wiggled and rolled her hips, taking him inch by inch inside her as he slid his hands up along her body, stopping to ghost his thumbs over every pale scar he found.

“You are no stranger to bedding scarred warriors,” Lae’zel murmured, looking over at Ciri, who was passionately making out with Luna.

“I’m not,” Harry murmured. “I look forward to tracing each scar with my tongue later.”

Lae’zel barked a laugh at that and said, “You might not want to make that promise without knowing just where my every scar is.”

“There’s a story there,” Harry chuckled, and she effortlessly moved her right leg forward until he could see her foot.

“In one of my early training classes, one of my fellows intentionally struck my arm as I was demonstrating my stance with a dagger,” Lae’zel replied. “The blade fell and pierced my foot clean through.”

“Fuck,” Harry grunted, ghosting a finger over the old scar on her foot. “What happened?”

“My sa’varsh was disgusted with my carelessness, and I may well have been executed then and there, but I saved myself by taking advantage of my tormentor’s obvious pleasure,” Lae’zel replied. “He was distracted by his unexpected success in wounding me and did not notice when I moved to pull the blade from my foot and spin around until it was lodged in his throat. My sa’varsh praised me for my quick response and ability to tolerate pain and let me continue the lesson.”

“Did you at least get to have your foot checked by a healer?” Luna asked as she and Ciri looked at them oddly.

“Once I had finished the lesson, yes,” Lae’zel replied. “I made do with simple bandages until then.”

“Every time she speaks about her people I understand her a little bit more,” Harry thought to himself, grasping her hips as she lowered herself down onto the final few inches.

“Gods, you’re deep,” Lae’zel gasped. “I have never known a stretch quite like this.”

“Wait until you feel him in your arse,” Ciri chuckled, and Lae’zel whipped her head around to stare at her in shock.

“In my what?” Lae’zel squeaked, and Harry had to bite his cheek to keep from laughing.

“Is anal not a thing you guys do?” Ciri asked.

“It’s not like they need to worry about pregnancy,” Luna pointed out.

“Oh, right,” Ciri nodded. “For the record, while you do have to be more careful with it, especially with a guy like Harry, it can be fucking cosmic.”

Lae’zel, genuinely embarrassed by the sound that had come out of her just then, decided to drop the subject and look back at Harry, who sat up suddenly and hugged her to him.

Brushing her hair behind her ear, he smirked and said, “Are you ready?”

Lae’zel grinned ferally and pushing, him back down, digging her nails into his shoulders as she purred, “I should be asking you that. I will not be gentle with you, and I don’t want you to be gentle with me. If I am not bruised and sore in places I cannot reach by morning, I will be most disappointed.”

“You’re going to limp out of this tent by the time I’m done with you,” Harry promised, and Lae’zel felt her insides quiver around him at his words.

She lifted herself up, trying not to whimper at how good he felt scraping against her sensitive inner walls, and then slammed back down with a grunt. Quickly working up to a steady pace, she rode him hard and fast, delighting in how well he filled her. He grunted and groaned, clearly not used to being ridden so forcefully, and she grinned, eager to learn how he would look and sound when she made him finish inside her, once she’d had her fill, of course.

“Oh, gods, oh, gods,” Ciri moaned next to her, and she looked over to see Luna feasting on her dripping quim, her own heart-shaped ass high in the air.

“I will enjoy the two of them later,” Lae’zel thought to herself. *“For now, all I want is to ride this man until I can’t remember my own name, much less anything else.”*

“You’re so fucking big!” she cried as she picked up her pace, bouncing on his cock like it was her purpose in life. “I swear I feel you in my stomach.”

“I can see myself inside you every time I bottom out,” Harry replied, palming the little bump in her belly when she went still to check.

“Isk'va! It's a wonder you're not doing damage,” Lae'zel marveled, crying out when he started thrusting up into her.

She stared down at him in awe as he changed the angle of his thrusts slightly and started hitting a spot that felt even better than everything had so far. Her pleased moans and sighs turned to screams and cries.

“Don't stop!” Lae'zel screamed. “I'm so close.”

“I'm nowhere near done with you,” Harry grinned as he leaned in and captured one of her pebbled nipples with his lips.

“LUNA!” Ciri squealed, her back arching off the bed as she came hard and the blonde grinned, lapping up her fluids as she gushed before pulling her three fingers out and crawling over to Lae'zel.

“What are...oh, fuck!” Lae'zel cried as she reached around her and started stroking her clit with her wet fingers.

“I want to hear you scream for us again,” Luna purred, nipping her pulse point as she rolled two of her fingers around the githyanki's taut little pearl.

She let go with a wordless wail, feeling the pressure in her core explode in release that made her vision go white, and she barely managed to catch herself as she fell forward, writhing in pleasure. Harry groaned at the feeling of her inner muscles spasming around him as she came and sat up, holding her steady as he continued to fuck her through it.

“More,” Lae'zel moaned the moment her orgasm passed, and he chuckled, standing up and carrying her to the nearest wall.

As he pushed her against it, hooking his arms under her knees and pounding into her, Ciri pulled her favorite strap-on out of a nearby chest and grinned at Luna, who bit her lip.

“On your hands and knees,” she grinned as Lae'zel started to cry out again. “That way we can enjoy the show together.”

“I love you,” Luna sighed, kissing her softly, and they both giggled as she got into position, entirely certain that this was going to be a very long night.

“What in the...” Lae'zel went to ask as she woke up the next morning, feeling entirely too warm, only to freeze when she realized where she was and who she was with.

Actually spending the night in their tent had not been her plan, as she generally preferred to enjoy herself and then go sleep on her own, but she'd been so exhausted by the end of the night that as she rested her head between Luna's plump breasts, the sheer warmth and softness of the blonde lulled her right to sleep.

It had been a long, wonderfully pleasurable night, and as she carefully moved out of bed and stood up, the lingering soreness in her core and between her legs made her smile. For hours, she'd not thought at all about Vlaakith or her people or what in the world she was going to do next, and that had been almost as blissful as the sex itself. Even as she stood there now, it all seemed more distant than it had before or was in truth, and she honestly didn't know if she'd ever felt more relaxed.

So naturally, that was the moment that a loud, incredibly annoying alarm started to sound through the tent.

"Oh, fuck off!" Harry exclaimed as he flew out of bed and hit them all with cleaning charms before dressing them with a wave of her hand.

"What is that?" Lae'zel hissed, reaching for her sword the moment she felt it at her hip.

"The perimeter alarm," Luna replied. "Someone wandered into the cave."

"I swear if it's that devil bitch again," Harry grumbled, heading outside and immediately tensing when he saw Voss standing there.

"I suppose I should be honored that Vlaakith sent you of all kithrak to slay me," Lae'zel sighed as she stepped out of the tent.

"Why send only you and a single other Githyanki, though?" Astarion asked.

"The jhi'stil kithrak could slay you all with one arm tied behind his back," Voss' companion hissed, and he silenced her with a single look.

"I am not here to kill you, child of Gith," Voss replied, drawing his blade and holding it out in front of him as he knelt. "I have come to aid you."

"No one move!" Lae'zel exclaimed, eyeing the older knight curiously. "You rest your blade before me?"

"Mother Gith compels you to listen," Voss nodded.

"And so I shall," Lae'zel said.

"Vlaakith did not send me; she does not know I'm here, in fact," Voss smiled. "I know you have the astral prism, and I am glad for that."

"What?" Harry asked.

"You have kept it from her so far, and I want you to continue to do so," Voss murmured. "Inside that artifact the key to Vlaakith's demise rests, and I intend to help bring that about."

"What?" Lae'zel breathed. "That is heresy of the highest order. This treason..."

"Vlaakith is the one who committed treason against our people and our Mother," Voss said calmly. "She has held our people in bondage for too long. Together we shall break our chains!"

"I am not in chains," Lae'zel growled. "Vlaakith is my freedom. She is the one who will cleanse me of this wretched ghaik taint, and grant me ascension."

“She said so, I know,” Voss replied, “and then she ordered one of her inquisitors to kill you. She was furious to learn of his failure.”

“Why did Vlaakith order our deaths?” Shadowheart asked. “I understand we didn’t do as she said and kill the one inside the prism, but she gave that order before we decided that.”

“She knew that you would either succeed in killing them and become ghaik, or defy her, and the lich is not one to tolerate defiance,” Voss replied. “It is good that you did not kill the one inside the prism, for if you did, not only would you have become monsters of the worst sort, but the success of their vile Grand Design would have been assured.”

“What is this heresy you speak?” Lae’zel asked, shaken by having Voss of all githyanki knights, parrot what she’d heard in Harry’s memory.

“Who is the one in the prism?” Harry asked.

“If they have not told you that, they must have their reasons, and I will not betray them,” Voss replied. “They are the key to holding back the ghaik, to preventing them from ever rebuilding their wretched empire, and they are also the key to freeing my people from their enslavement by Vlaakith. She ordered them killed out of fear, knowing what it would mean, because she cares not for us or the threat of the ghaik, only the godhood she covets. Her promises to you were false, Lae’zel, you must see that.”

“Stop!” Lae’zel hissed, her hand on the hilt of her blade. “I will hear no more of this heresy.”

“Lae’zel, you saw the memory as clear I did,” Harry said softly, resting a hand on her right shoulder. “He’s right about what she intended and the only way that it makes any sense if he’s right about the rest of it too.”

Lae’zel took a step back, her entire life of devotion to Vlaakith flashing before her eyes, and let her arms go limp.

“I’ve served her loyally my whole life,” she murmured. “I fought her battles and killed her enemies, and my reward for all that is to be named hshar’lak. You speak truth, jhis’til kithrak.”

“It is a difficult truth, I know,” Voss said with surprising tenderness for a githyanki. “There is one in Baldur’s Gate who will be able to help us make use of the prism. Meet me in an inn called Sharess’ Caress, and I will explain more. It is keeping you uncorrupted, and I would be more likely to be called upon by Vlaakith anyway, so the task of bringing it there falls to you.”

“I will meet you in Baldur’s Gate,” Lae’zel sighed. “I hope I don’t regret this.”

“You will not,” Voss smiled as he stood up and sheathed his blade. “Together we will free our people, Lae’zel. Be warned, though, Vlaakith will send warriors to end you and bring her the prism. Take this device; it will warn you about incoming astral movement and give you time to prepare or to flee from them.”

“Thank you,” Harry murmured, summoning the odd metal contraption.

“I must go,” Voss said and with that, he and his subordinate disappeared through a portal.

"I'm sorry, Lae'zel," Ciri murmured, and the githyanki sighed.

"So am I," Lae'zel muttered. "Let us be off. I could use a good fight right now, and I'd wager we have one waiting for us in this goblin camp."

"More than one of you looked oddly tense when Voss first knelt," Harry said. "Did something happen?"

"The one protecting us warned us not to trust him," Astarion replied, "which is odd, considering that he spoke about them in an almost reverent tone."

"Whatever the answer there is, we won't find it now," Lae'zel muttered. "We should leave right away if we want to have any hope of getting to the camp today."

"Actually, given that this isn't a search for a place we don't know the location of, I should probably just fly Ciri over to just outside the camp," Harry said.

"Then you can teleport us all over there directly," Wyl nodded. "That will save time."

"It will also stop us from having to deal with the myriad monsters between us and them too," Luna smiled. "Have fun."

"Getting flown around in Harry's arms?" Ciri asked with a grin. "I think I'll manage."

"This place is rather...large," Gale murmured as he looked up at the camp. "I'm going to assume it was once a temple."

"It has a far darker use now," Wyl scowled. "Did you get a sense of how many are in there?"

"In the exterior alone, I'd say around twenty," Harry replied. "Inside, I have no idea."

"Wonderful," Astarion murmured. "I don't suppose we could try sneaking in. We only need to assassinate a few people and free, hopefully, a couple prisoners."

"We don't know who we're here to assassinate or where the prison is," Harry replied. "If we fight our way in, at least we might have a chance of dealing with them group by group, but if we sneak in and get caught, we'll be completely surrounded."

"At least they'll all be eatable," Luna said, and Astarion snorted, shaking his head.

"I don't know if I'll ever get used to being around people who care so little about what I am," he murmured. "Did you at least find a side entrance of some kind? Frontal assaults aren't exactly my style."

"We'll have to look around and agh!" Harry cried as suddenly an immense psychic pressure weighed down on his head.

The others all reacted at the same time, staggering around and clutching their heads. It felt like what he'd experienced when they came across the dying mind flayer in the wreckage of the Nautiloid only a thousand times stronger. That one he'd played along with, being arrogant and not

knowing quite what he was dealing with but this one he shut out immediate with an angry growl, looking over just as Luna and Ciri managed the same thing.

“What the fuck was that?” the former princess asked before noticing that their local companions were all still struggling. “Uh, guys?”

“My guess is that the tadpoles are making them unusually susceptible to this,” Harry said, reaching into Shadowheart’s bag and pulling out the astral prism. “Do I have to shake you? Do something!”

Whether in response to him or just by funny timing, the prism started to glow brightly just then, and the power that was weighing down on all of them vanished immediately.

“Well, that confirms that the mind flayers are connected to this Absolute cult,” Gale muttered.

“I felt like someone was trying to split my skull in two with an axe,” Karlach grumbled, rubbing her head. “You know, it would be really nice if my engine just burned this fucking tadpole, but I suppose that would be too useful.”

“Still think we shouldn’t sneak in?” Astarion asked quietly. “Goblins are one thing, but if there are mind flayers here...”

“Who goes there!?” a sneering little voice called out, and they turned to see a half dozen goblins coming towards them.

“Great,” Harry thought to himself, preparing to unleash fire on the little blighters when the one in the front went still, as did Wyl, who was the nearest one to him.

“Hold still,” Luna breathed, recognizing that reaction after having seen it so many times.

“Ah, a true soul,” the goblin nodded.

“A true...yes,” Wyl murmured, catching himself. “I’ve come seeking others. Who is in charge here?”

“Of course,” the goblin said. “There are three: the hobgoblin, Dror Ragzlin, the goblin priestess, Gut, and the drow, Minthara. You’ll find them inside. We could take you to them...”

“No, that’s alright,” Wyl murmured. “My companions and I can find them on our own and I’m sure you have important duties to get to.”

“Right, right,” the goblin nodded. “Back inside, boys, it’s nothing to worry about.”

“What in the world was that?” Ciri asked once they were out of earshot, and Harry silenced the area around them.

“That goblin had a tadpole in his head,” Wyl explained. “Mine connected to it like what happened with all us when we first met.”

“The prism didn’t break its hold though,” Shadowheart pointed out, palming the artifact.

“Probably because the guy in there didn’t think that he’d be all that friendly without it,” Karlach guessed. “He is a bloody goblin, after all.”

“If he has a tadpole in his head, why isn’t he exhibiting any of the symptoms of ceremorphosis?” Harry asked. “From your descriptions they aren’t subtle, and he didn’t appear to be at all ill.”

“That’s right,” Gale breathed, his dark eyes alight with curiosity. “Our lack of symptoms can be explained by the prism, but that goblin had no such protection.”

“Unless he has another prism which he can’t,” Lae’zel muttered. “This camp isn’t new, and that one spoke with authority, suggesting he’s been here for some time. It’s possible that he was only just infected, but to do that to one of their servants while keeping him on duty would make no sense. The ghaik don’t need to use tadpoles to make thralls of people. Something very strange is going on here.”

“At least we have confirmation that this cult is linked to the mind flayers,” Astarion murmured. “Does that change our plan at all?”

“I think it could,” Wyl replied. “They think we’re on their side, and we can use that to our advantage. Scope out the base, figure out where these captains he named and the prisoners are, and then go from there. With Ciri’s teleportation abilities, we should be able to take care of matters here relatively quietly if we’re able to move about unmolested.”

“That’s not a bad plan,” Shadowheart murmured. “It’s rare indeed to be able to invade an enemy stronghold without them thinking there’s anything amiss.”

“We know we’re looking for a hobgoblin, a goblin priestess, and a drow woman,” Gale murmured. “Let’s hope that most of the rest of them are simple goblins.”

“The presence of a drow is good news,” Wyl said as they moved closer to the camp’s main entrance.

“There’s a sentence no one has ever said before,” Karlach quipped, and he chuckled.

“Probably not, but it does make it more likely that, at least, someone here will know what happened to my father,” Wyl said, and she nodded.

They reached the main entrance and were stopped, as expected, running into the one obvious problem with their plan.

“These three aren’t true souls,” the goblin there scowled, pointing at Harry, Luna, and Ciri, and Gale just smiled.

“New recruits here to bask in the glory of the Absolute,” he lied. “They also have information that Minthara will find most interesting, and I wouldn’t suggest making us tell her that you delayed our arrival.”

“Right, right, be on your way,” the goblin muttered, paling slightly at that, and they continued on.

“Whenever possible, threaten people with the displeasure of a drow woman,” Gale whispered to Harry. “It seldom ever fails.”

“They’re that awful?” Harry asked.

“Let’s just say that if you find people working one, they’re terrified of them,” Wyl muttered, stopping as they saw a bard on stage, looking terrified and trying to sing for an audience that was clearly less than impressed with him. Wyl went to investigation, when a sudden squeal next to them drew his attention, and he saw Luna making a beeline for a small, very cute creature he quickly realized was an owlbear cub.

“What is this beautiful creature?” Luna beamed as the goblin next to it snarled at her.

“Who the fuck are you?” she asked. “Who let you in here?”

“She’s with me,” Wyl replied. “I’m a true soul here to meet with your leaders. Who are you and what are you doing with this owlbear cub?”

“A true soul?” the goblin asked, shrinking back slightly. “Name’s Krolla, and I run the chicken-chasing game here.”

“Chicken chasing?” Harry asked.

“Secret’s in the name, genius,” Krolla scoffed.

“This isn’t a chicken, though,” Luna murmured, kneeling down and extending her hand for the clearly terrified creature to sniff. Poking into his mind, she felt his fear and offered a sense of calming reassurance, having already decided to adopt him.

“He’s got a beak and feathers, don’t he?” Krolla scowled. “The little blighter ate our last chicken, so he’s gonna take its place is, he knows what’s good for him. If we don’t get a supply of new ones soon, he’ll be taking their place in other ways.”

“You would...eat this creature?” Luna asked slowly, and Harry winced.

“Oh, no,” he murmured to himself, reaching out to the minds of the others. “*Guys, you’ll want to get close to me.*”

“*Why?*” Astarion replied, standing by the merchant in the far corner.

“*Because things are about to get rather dicey here,*” Harry replied. He’d seen his wife truly angry exactly three times in all the years he’d known her, and it hadn’t ended well for the people responsible once.

“If we have to,” Krolla chuckled. “Owlbear meat can be tough, but the cubs are nice and tender.”

“Is there any way that I could persuade you not to?” Luna asked. “I’d happily buy him from you if you’re willing.”

“Fuck that,” Krolla muttered. “We lost good men killing the damn thing’s mother and took it fair and square.”

“I see,” Luna replied, closing her eyes and drawing on all the power she could.

“I will remind you that we were hoping to have a quiet look around the...by Mystra!” Gale exclaimed.

They all watched as dark clouds formed in the air in mere moments, blotting out the sun and covering the entire temple with pure darkness.

“What the flying fuck?” Krolla asked, looking up at the sky. “Did you see those blow in?”

“I didn’t see nothing,” another goblin muttered, hiccuping as he did.

“For fuck’s sake, if Gut finds you drunk again, she’s going to have yours,” Krolla scowled as it started to pour rain down on them. “Fuck me, this is AHH!”

Lightning struck the goblin woman, killing her instantly and blinding the others, who jumped back in fright. None of them had realized that it was a spell being woven until it was too late, and by the time the first bolt struck, it most certainly was. Dozens more lightning bolts fell then, striking down goblin after goblin as Harry conjured a shield above them all, under which that hapless bard jumped.

“Thank you for rescuing me,” he replied. “I am Volo and...”

“Probably best to keep the introductions until after this stops,” Gale muttered, watching in awe as Luna wiped out the entire outer goblin camp with a single spell. *“I wish she hadn’t, since this would all be so much easier then, but I can see why Mystra grew so perturbed by their appearance here.”*

Luna, through it all, had maintained a shield above herself, having pulled the owlbear cub in between her feet so she could protect him too, and as the very large, lumbering creature by the door finally fell, having taken four lightning bolts to put down as he tried to reach her, she ended the spell and reached down to pick up the cub.

“Oh, you’re so cute!” the blonde exclaimed. “You don’t have to worry about those mean old goblins anymore; I promise.”

The cub, seeing some of his late mother in this beautiful yet clearly terrifying creature, took an instant liking to her and chirped happily as she started twirling around, holding him out in front of her.

“She will name him George, and she will hug him and pet him and squeeze him,” Harry chuckled to himself, thoroughly amused by his wife’s antics.

“How do you know he’s a he?” Karlach asked.

“No, it’s...nevermind,” Harry replied.

“Well, needless to say the subtle approach is out,” Astarion muttered, sounding annoyed. “Now we have to kill everyone and hope that they don’t go after the prisoners out of spite when they realize they’re fucked.”

“You think better of our odds now than before?” Lae’zel asked with a slight smirk, and he rolled his eyes.

“I just watched half their forces get fried by an angry sorceress over an owlbear,” Astarion drawled. “I...”

“What the fuck is going on out here?” came a booming voice, and they all turned to see a large, hulking, red-skinned goblin march out, followed by an older goblin woman, a purple-skinned elf woman, and dozens of goblin warriors.

“I’m guessing that’s the hobgoblin,” Harry murmured, and Gale nodded.

“Kill them a...” Minthara went to say when a small stone from the wall above her, having been loosened by Luna’s thunderstorm, fell on her head, knocking her unconscious.

“I think she had the right idea,” Ciri grinned, drawing her blade as both sides prepared for battle.