

*Creaaak, groooan.*

Sounds echoed out as the charr woman strained with decreasing strength. “Mmmmhhh...” Severa moaned into the thick gooey coating that stuck her down to the corner of the cave. It had been preferable at first to her initial predicament; splattered against the wall. Yet rather than falling off and away from it, as time had passed she’d just dropped closer to the floor.

Her fears and struggles could only last so long before she’d slept. Waking to find herself still entangled but now directly on the thickly sticky ground, even more trapped than before. An eye and nostril had stayed exposed to the air, with the rest of her body smoothed out when it wasn’t completely obscured by the goo.

She’s been struck by a creature. Some amorphous monster that had been drawn to her. At first fear had ruled, the more she’d fought the more it had wrapped and coated her. She’d panicked and in doing so dropped the precious cargo she’d been tasked to deliver.

That had slowed the creature, its attention seemingly drawn fully toward the canisters she’d been carrying, allowing the brief lived chance to escape while it was distracted, yet the gooey leavings, thick like sticky dough, had clung to her, slowed her and resisted attempts to brush them off. Even costing one of her sandals in her flight.

When the creature had its fill of the canisters, prising them open and absorbing what lay within, it had turned and given chase, catching the poor charr before she could get to a place of safety.

She’d been engulfed. Totally swallowed within its opaque body and dragged off for long awkward and uncomfortable minutes to what she could only assume was its nest from how slick with sticky goo it was. It had brushed inside every pocket and opening, in what she could only assume was a quest to find more of the chemical substance it had stolen from her.

When it found nothing it desired it had tensed up, compressing and squeezing her from all angles before forcefully spitting her out. That had been when she’d been flung to the cave wall the day before.

With that done it had seemed wholly uninterested in her, either as prey or as captive. Not taking any effort to make sure she was secure. She didn’t know if that was better or *worse*.

Her groans had been ignored, though it likely lacked the capacity to understand her and instead it had gyrated and quivered back out of the burrow to look for more.

Nevertheless she’d tried to fight free, yet that had only succeeded in wrapping her limbs up more and tiring her beyond the point of exhaustion.

She’d felt an emotional low, giving up until she could at least recover. When her unsealed eye had opened again it was too dark to see, night time making her think for one moment that

both eyes had been blocked up. She saw a gentle rising and falling, the slime-beast at rest, still showing not even a hint of interest in her or concern at her presence.

Further struggles had done nothing she could measure. The cloying goop was now warmed by trapped body heat but that did nothing to affect the outward consistency.

That had brought her to the morning, when she woke again, almost a full day as a wall-stuck captive, now mired as a lump on the ground.

The gooey coating stretched with her arms and legs, not in danger of going rigid, yet it was still too heavy, too thickly gummed together for her to split loose, and with her pose going from stretched out to a more consolidated ball, what little leverage she previously felt in possession of had vanished.

“Mmmmgh! Ghmmh!”

Her complaints barely even echoed, the sound absorbed by the sticky spread.

A shadow passed through the trickle of light, the blob returning, she surmised, holding her breath in worry, thinking that now she was at its level it might have a fresh interest in her.

*Splat, splut.* Rhythmic wet noises approached. Her ears flicked, had she heard correctly. “Mmmh?”

The sound stopped before picking up speed. “Sev?” A voice called, a familiar one igniting a furnace of relief fuelled hope.

“Mmmh!” She called back, “Mmmh, mmmh!” Louder she strained as she heard the splashing carry away from her. The anxiety made her fight again, trying to reach out from what was essentially her cocoon. Yet if she couldn’t prise her limbs loose, what chance did she have of getting her whole back off the wall?

*Splat, splat, splat, splat.* Fast and strong, the shadow passing and growing as an impressively daunting form stepped between her and the entrance. “Sev!” She repeated in joy, removing all doubt of her identity.

Her partner, Sheytha, stood before her, shrouded in protective gear that put her in mind of a hazmat suit. Yet the sheer bulk of her form and the softness of her voice gave tell of who was in the otherwise anonymising garb.

“Are you hurt? Wounded?” Sheytha asked, moving to her side. Whatever the suit was it had been protected, sliding off the slime as though it were a set solid.

“Nmmhm.” Severa replied softly, head eliciting a creak as it tried to shake, sending her to more of a frustrated grunt than the desperate grumbles from before.

“Good.” She said, a bit tersely but from the ease in her shoulders she found the news encouraging. “Hold still.” She added, while she fished in a satchel for an edged tool. Similarly treated, it slipped through the goo, with her gloved hand following to hold the gap, slowly finding the charr’s limbs and raising them from each other, working on cutting them free. “Do you need out as soon as possible or shall we get to dry ground first?”

Severa gave a grunt and a look- with just muffled grunts and the one eye, how was she meant to answer. It was a problem Sheytha quickly remedied, with some embarrassment, peeling and pulling until both eyes and most of Severa’s head were free, enough that after a gulp of water, with an additional pull to swill out and spit from her mouth, she turned to Sheytha.

“Out... out of the cave first. In case the slime comes back.”

Sheytha caught her arm and guided her on soft and gooey feet to a trudging walk out to the source of the daylight. “There’s no danger of that. The thing’s been rounded up. It was an escapee they hadn’t noticed was missing.”

“How?! Are... ghh... are weird chem-slurping slimes common out here?”

“More than you’d think. It’s lab grown, one of several. They feed on those chemicals you had to deliver. When the delivery didn’t come through I was called. Found a few uh... signs... that something had happened.” Sheytha glanced toward her pack where one rescued sandal sat.

“And the get up?”

“They’re too ‘busy’- too cheap if you ask me, to get their team to look for you. They told me I could take a suit and find you myself, the bastards. All while their own team corralled and reclaimed the creature.”

The cave fell away behind them as they talked, falling with a flump onto the grass before Sheytha moved to extract more of Severa from it. “How long was I gone?”

“You’re over twenty hours late for the delivery time. I think the pizza’s free at that point.” Sheytha replied with a chuckle. “A gift for you, madam.” She added, fishing out the dropped sandal for the charr to slip back on.

“I’m gonna have some serious questions over what all that stuff is, providing they don’t make us sign some kind of agreement to keep silent.” Severa grumbled, feeling all the more flustered that she had to wait to be cut loose.

“Why, you thinking you want a bottle of it?” Sheytha teased.

“Hell no, what possible use would that be?” Severa demanded in retort.

Sheytha gathered up a thick scoop of the stuff before slapping it back over Severa’s recently freed hand, gripping it between her own palms. “What the-”

“Oh, I can think of a few applications for it in a more controlled and intimate environment.” Sheytha crooned. Severa could hear the wink in her voice, even though her head was totally covered.

The charr looked off to the side, cheeks burning hotly as she said nothing lest she tip her thoughts. After a moment to master herself she just said. “Hurry up and let’s get out of this...”

The important thing to both of them was she was safe. Any other thoughts would no doubt come provided she was given ample time to rest and recover...