

Hunger had been their undoing in the end.

As a pup, General Aniol Korba had been told fabulous stories of the riches of the city of Thypria. The wolf been raised on tales of the great quarries nearby it and the unquestionable skill of the Thyprian sculptors. Their masons were the envy of the world, and the impenetrable walls that rose high enough to blot out the morning sun promised safety and security for all of time. They had wealth enough to buy armies.

When Prince Saeed Sesay had sent an emissary to discuss surrender, Aniol's spear had not tasted Thyprian blood and his bronze armor had weathered no blows. He had waited, patiently, for the walled city to starve. Cut off from outside trade and the fertile pastures beyond the walls, they had lasted only weeks of siege. The priests would declare Aniol touched by the gods for laying low the city-state that dared buy an army and direct it at his home of Vashenes.

The emissary had offered anything the lupine general desired. Coin enough to furnish the Vashenes coffers for generations to come, rare art and texts from across the world, slaves to bring greater glory to the Vashenes Empire... nothing had been left to the imagination. Aniol had instead simply demanded an audience with Sesay to discuss the terms of surrender face to face.

He'd entered the city unarmored and without his spear, with only his short xiphos blade strapped to his left forearm and a small vial in a hidden pocket. It was a message to the people of Thypria, plain and simple. *I do not fear you*, it told them. The four most decorated phalanx captains of his force accompanied him into the city, though he left them near the gates to offer food and water to the city-folk. Aniol knew that they were not to blame for their lord's treason against the empire.

Only one Thyprian had dared raise a paw to Aniol. Warrior's reflexes spared him the baker's dagger, and the poor fox was left with a broken arm in return. Assaulting a general was an executable offence. Aniol instead dusted the dagger off, handed it back to the baker, and offered him the blessings of the god of war. The confused vulpine had babbled his thanks for the mercy as the black-furred wolf made his way to the palace.

Prince Sesay personally met Aniol at the palace gates and escorted the general inside. In spite of his captain's warnings, Aniol knew the old fox swathed in gold jewelry and robes of folded azure silk was no true threat to his life. The fifty-odd years he'd spent living in and ruling Thypria had left him full of belly rather than strength or wisdom.

The room Saeed had silently led Aniol to was obviously a dining room. The tall walls were adorned with rich tapestries and grand paintings, while statues of the gods set in the corners and shed a stony gaze across the room. Six more vulpines sat at the massive table that took pride of place in the center of the room, each with his head bowed and dressed in the same blue silk as Saeed. As Aniol was waved to a seat at the end of the table, he could see their resemblance to his host. These were his heirs.

Saeed smiled as he took his own seat at the other end of the table. "General Korba, allow me the honor of introducing my sons. Kaveh, Majeed, Darius--"

"Unless your sons speak for Thypria," Aniol interrupted with a raised paw, "my business here is with you. I trust that you alone are responsible for your city-state's attack on Vashenes?" The smile on Saeed's face began to melt into a scowl as the general spoke.

Saeed squirmed in his seat at the head of the table. "Dynasty is everything, General Korba. My sons are here because I wished them to see what is necessary to rule a city like Thypria." His voice was cold. Sharp. Alert.

Aniol unstrapped the short blade from his forearm and placed it on the table. He left it sheathed, but his eyes stayed fixed on Saeed. "You say you are willing to negotiate your surrender." The wolf waved a paw over the blade. "Negotiate."

The sigh that came from Saeed was little more than a hiss. "As my messenger conveyed, we are prepared to offer whatever you need in exchange for our survival," he ground out through gritted teeth. "Anything you require in gold, silver or marble?"

"Precious materials, but they are plentiful to you," Aniol said, cutting Saeed off once more. "Any gold, silver or marble I take from you would be replenished in mere months. Hardly true damage to your coffers, and hardly a worthy punishment for your crimes." His golden eyes narrowed as he leaned forward with flattened ears.

Anger began to tweak the muscles on Saeed's features. His muzzle twitched as his own ears tipped forward. "Slaves then, honored general. Our people are masterful artisans and would help elevate Vashenes from a city of men to the dwelling place of immortals." Again, his eyes twinkled with hope.

And again, Aniol crushed it with a shake of his head. "As immortal and unconquerable as your own city? Please. Cities fall. Art is destroyed. You promise to immortalize us with the slaves we take from your people, when they will only create for us what they do for you." The rage that threatened to boil over on Saeed's face only broadened Aniol's smile. "The people of Vashenes and our empire are *not* Thyprian. We have no need of *your* artisans."

Upon the table, Saeed's claws began to rake gently against the delicate wood. They left no marks, but that was perhaps just a matter of time. "If you have walked into the heart of my city only to tell me that we have nothing to offer you or your empire to spare us from destruction, then our necks collectively await your spears." He bared his teeth as he pushed himself up and out of his chair, and his tail lashed the air behind him.

"I have come not to slaughter, but spare Thypria the spear," Aniol replied, as he stared up at Saeed with amusement. "I do not want material goods or laborers. I want either of two simple requests to be fulfilled." When Saeed slunk back into his chair, Aniol slowly drew his xiphos and set it on the table. "For your crimes, your city's surrender and Vashenes' mercy, I ask only your life."

A flash of anger lit Saeed's face, but it was quickly tamped down as he tilted his head up. "A fine choice you give me, oh *merciful* general. If it is my head you wish, I will not give it to you." He nodded once. "We are a proud family, Korba. I will not be threatened. I take your other option."

One of Aniol's eyebrows lifted, but he shrugged and traced a finger slowly down the flat of his blade. "Your family is proud and dynasty is everything. If you will not show honor and offer your life for the lives of your people, then I take instead your first-born son."

Five vulpine heads lifted and locked eyes immediately on the sixth. That sixth fox's eyes went wide as they rose to meet Saeed's gaze. For his part, Saeed simply sat in stunned surprise. "That is all you ask from me?"

"Father, you cannot!" hissed the fox under the gaze of his brothers. He glanced back and forth between Saeed and Aniol as he hugged himself tightly. "I don't-"

"Silence, Kaveh." Saeed waved a dismissive paw toward the younger vulpine as he smiled at Aniol. "Kaveh's life for the life of a city? I find this... agreeable, though I'd prefer he live."

It took all of Aniol's control to keep from glaring at the patriarch. Saeed's concern was not for the salvation of his people, but that he could sacrifice one son and save himself. His ruthlessness was disgusting. The plans Vashenes had for Thypria no longer seemed so underhanded and vicious, when faced with the traitorous merchant prince.

Still, his self-centeredness was all Aniol had hoped for. "Of course, by the terms of your surrender to Vashenes, Thypria will become a vassal city-state under Vashenes rule. You and your sons will be allowed to continue to administrate the city, so long as you

administer Vashenes law.” A flick of his paw set the general’s xiphos spinning on the table. “Decide now, before the blade is still. Your life, or your son’s.”

Almost immediately, Kaveh stood from the table and turned to Saeed with angry eyes. “Father, please! You can’t do this to me! You cannot let him-”

“I told you to be silent, Kaveh!” Saeed stood just as quickly, a whole head taller than his son. “The decision is not yours to make! It is mine, and it is made!” He returned his attention Aniol’s spinning blade and nodded. “You need not wait for it to still, General Korba. Kaveh is yours, in the name of peace.”

Aniol glanced up at Kaveh as the blade spun on. The fox looked devastated and betrayed. A quick look at Saeed showed the patriarch’s face was lit with a grin of jubilation. Any guilt Aniol might have felt was vanquished with that momentary glimpse into Saeed Sesay’s heart. “Very well,” he announced, as he pressed a single fingertip to the sword’s hilt. It stopped its spin instantly, blade pointed up the table toward Saeed.

Aniol snatched the weapon up and sheathed it once more as he stood. “Upon my return to Vashenes, an archon will be dispatched to serve as your connection to the imperial capital. You will disregard his words and safety at your own peril.” The wolf strapped the blade quickly to his arm as he strode around the table. “The surrender of Thybria is accepted. We will ride for Vashenes immediately.” Aniol paused for a moment as he stood beside Kaveh. “Come.”

Kaveh lifted his eyes from the table long enough to meet Aniol’s gaze for only a moment. Then he turned pleading eyes on Saeed. “Father... please...”

The miniscule shake of Saeed’s head was all Aniol needed to see. The heartbreak on Kaveh’s face was palpable, and the younger fox stumbled as he stepped away from the table. “Father, I don’t want to go! I can change! I promise, I can-”

“Silence, Kaveh!” Saeed snapped, and the force of his voice caused his son to recoil and cringe as if scalded. He jabbed a finger at the younger fox as Aniol approached him, one paw dipped into his hidden pocket for the vial within. Kaveh wasn’t just going to leave, it seemed.

Aniol reached Kaveh before he could muster the courage to appeal to his father again. One arm wrapped around the fox’s middle and tugged him back, while the other uncorked the top of the vial and swept it up under his nostrils. Kaveh’s surprised gasp did exactly what Aniol hoped, and the powerful fumes that had been trapped in the vial shot up his nostrils. The fox only managed a single, pitiful whimper before his brief struggle against Aniol ended and he keeled forward into unconsciousness.

As he lifted Kaveh and gently slung him over a shoulder, Aniol tossed the empty vial to the ground and took a couple steps toward the door. Only then did he dare breathe in again, and only enough to say, “Remember what your son has done here today, Sesay. He has given his life to save yours.”

“We all make sacrifices for the good of family,” Saeed replied, and Aniol could hear the grin in his voice as he headed for the door. The prince even began to laugh, and it was the sweetest mercy to the disgusted wolf when he fled that room and a door silenced the patriarch completely. What he had done started to feel less like stealing a life than saving it.

And perhaps, in time, Kaveh might agree.

Another gasp marked Kaveh’s return to consciousness. He sat bolt upright, and his head swam with the suddenness of the motion. His gasp melted into a groan as a paw lifted to clutch the side of his head. It rubbed there gently for a moment as he heaved a tired sigh.

A quick glance around once the dizziness had begun to fade showed that the fox was in a tent. It was dark, with firelight through the tent's open flap the only illumination. He sat up, and a glint of light on metal caught Kaveh's eye. There, in the corner of the tent and beside a simple bedroll, rested the xiphos of General Korba. The general himself was not in sight.

The thought that he could take the blade and bury it in Aniol's chest as he slept was quickly squashed. The rest of the army would hunt him down, and where would he run to if he somehow managed to evade them? Thypria was no longer home, now that he'd been traded for peace.

The sound of someone's approach twitched the fox's ears, and he quickly laid himself back down again. He thought to close his eyes to feign sleep, but he sighed again and shook his head. Playing games with the general wasn't likely to earn him any favors, either. Arms slipped through folds in the silk gown he still wore and ran over his belly as he waited.

But no one entered the tent. A few more seconds passed in silence, and then a minute, and then two. Kaveh lay there through it all, arms folded atop his chest as he waited for his abductor – Master? Jailor? – to arrive. When five uneventful minutes passed, the fox sighed and rolled gently up into a crouch. He crawled over to the tent flap, careful not to make any noise.

The general was outside; Kaveh would recognize that black fur anywhere. He had not expected that the wolf would be completely undressed as he sat before a small fire, seated on one of the many rocks that dotted the plains and hills around Thypria. Aniol stared into the fire, his spear at his side and not a scrap of linen or leather to protect his modesty. The sight widened Kaveh's eyes to blue saucers, and the fox tried to crawl closer to get a better look at whatever it was the general was doing.

An errant piece of bronze armor found itself under Kaveh's paw though, and it rattled as it slid across the ground and collided with its fellows. The sound that came from Kaveh was more a squeak than anything else, half from the surprise and half from the spear point that he found himself staring down a moment later.

At the other end of that spear, Aniol cocked his head to the side. The flickering firelight lit up Kaveh's face only slightly, but enough to confirm the fox was no assassin. "I was wondering when you would wake," he said, and drew back the spear. "Come on out."

The fox in the tent hesitated for a few more moments, but he eventually began to crawl out from the shadows. He brushed down his silken gown and delicately stepped into the light, though his eyes remained fixed on the ground. "I did not mean to startle you, honored general," he apologized.

"Think nothing of it." The wolf stood and brushed a paw down over his fur, and from his new perspective Kaveh could see that black fur hung heavily from the wolf's body. He patted that paw down on the rock he'd sat on. "Sit."

Kaveh found himself once more hesitant, but in the end he had no real choice. He carefully avoided some of the smaller stones on the way over and sat on the corner of the rock. The spot that Aniol had sat in was damp, and Kaveh finally understood why the general was naked. It wasn't his normal state of dress, the wolf had just been bathing.

Aniol caught the fox's stare and dropped one paw to cover his sheath. "If my appearance disturbs or disgusts you, I can find something to cover myself with. I didn't know if you'd be up yet or not." He hesitated a moment and glanced down at the fire. "I apologize. Syphilian fumes are strong, but... you would not come."

With a sigh, Kaveh nodded and stared into the flames. A warm breeze sent a shower of sparks up into the night as he tried to force the memory of the trade out of his mind. "Father... did what he had to," he finally said.

With a slow nod, Aniol set his spear down on the ground and folded his arms. “And are you an equally cold male, Kaveh?” he asked with raised eyebrow. “Should I be concerned you might offer another’s life for your crimes?”

Kaveh turned to meet Aniol’s gaze before he remembered his place and glanced away again. Once he had been the son of a merchant prince. Now he was... well, he didn’t really know what he was. ‘Privileged’ was not an option. “Of course not, master-general. I accept responsibility for my actions.”

“Is this then what I am?” Aniol spread his arms out wide as the firelight flickered over every inch of his body. “When you look on me, do you see a master to serve? Do you think yourself a slave, to wash my linens and polish my armor?”

When Kaveh looked up again, he found it difficult to look away. Aniol commanded his attention, and the wolf bore a true warrior’s physique. He was a male who strode into battle alongside his fellows, shoulder to shoulder with spear and shield, and it showed. His was the body of a soldier. “Honestly, honored general... I fear what you will do to me, regardless of what I am.”

A chuckle rolled out of Aniol’s muzzle as his head cocked. His tail wagged for a moment with amusement as he looked over the fox. “I am stronger than you. My forces bested your father’s rag-tag mercenaries. I could break you had I the barest intent. I could kill you whenever I choose, and I could hunt you down if you run from me. Does this not demand respect?”

As he shook his head and turned back to the fire again, Aniol began to laugh. “Of course not. Not if brute strength is something you don’t respect. If I am to have your *fear*, strength is all I would need. I am not looking for your fear, Kaveh. I seek your respect, and I will never have it if I am merely a conqueror to you.”

The wolf’s arms fell back to his side abruptly as he stepped forward. One leg rose to plant a footpaw on the rock beside Kaveh. “Let me make something abundantly clear to you now,” he said, as the fox began to scabble off the rock. “You are not my slave. You are not my servant. You are not a prisoner, and you are in no danger from me. I will not harm you in any form. In fact, you are most valuable to me if you are pleased with our arrangement.”

Kaveh stumbled a couple steps back, and finally lifted his gaze to Aniol’s. “Pleased?” he echoed with a snort. “You steal me from my home for my father’s crimes, and you want me *pleased*?” He shook his head and flattened his ears. “If I am no slave, what am I to you?”

In the face of the fox’s frustration, the general actually smiled. “You are the future ruler of Thypria to me,” he replied with a roll of his shoulders. His tail began to wag again in short, sharp twitches as Kaveh’s frustration melted into something else. “You are surprised?”

“Confused.” The frown returned to Kaveh’s features as he took a tentative step forward and sat back down on the edge of the rock. It took a great deal of effort to look past the wolf’s muscular legs and fat, furred sheath and instead meet Aniol’s gaze. It would have been a lot easier if they weren’t all but in his face.

If Aniol noticed the difficulty, he didn’t give anything away. “You heard your father when we negotiated his surrender,” he began to explain, as he rested both arms on his raised knee. “Dynasty is everything to him, and the people of Thypria. You are his eldest son. You are next in line.

“Vashenes needs a strong tie to Thypria, to prevent your family from trying to hire an army to attack our allies again. You are the first step in ensuring that we have that tie.” Aniol’s smile broadened slightly, though Kaveh’s confusion deepened. “You will come with me to Vashenes. A dozen high-born ladies of the empire will await you. You will choose one, and marry her.”

That was when Kaveh's eyes bugged out of his head. His jaw hung open for a moment before upper-class manners caught up with his shock. The fox shook his head as he stood up again. "You want Vashenes blood to rule Thypria within two generations," he said, as understanding dawned.

Aniol nodded once. "You will produce a son, and your son shall sit the Thyprian throne. A Thyprian father will keep the people happy, and a Vashenes mother will teach her son Vashenes values and loyalty. Cities and armies fall, but careful planning lasts lifetimes." He smirked as his head cocked to the other side. "You did not think it strange that I would siege the richest city in the region and not take a single coin purse for my trouble?"

"And you demanded my father's head in exchange for the surrender first, so that he would look more favorably on this trade," Kaveh continued, as his gaze drifted back to the flames again. They narrowed to blue slits as a growl slipped past his lips. "So selfish and desperate to retain his power as he is, he would be much happier to sell one of his sons into presumed slavery to save his neck."

"And he has five more right behind the one he's given up," Aniol added. "And in fairness, I have never once seen a father so quick to sacrifice his first-born son." The laugh that erupted from Kaveh's muzzle was as sudden as its bitterness was surprising. "I've said something funny?"

Kaveh nodded, unable to reply right away. He shook his head as he forced himself to take a deep breath and silence himself, but the smile on his muzzle when he turned back to Aniol was tinged with his anger. "The same reason my father would sacrifice me so is the very same reason why your plan is doomed to fail, honored general." He nodded to the naked wolf's malehood. "It's also why I am distracted, not disgusted, by your state of dress."

Comprehension dawned on Aniol a moment later, and he nodded as he immediately lowered his leg from the rock. "Ah, that does explain the looks. Apologies, Kaveh; I didn't mean to distract you." The general lifted an eyebrow again as he watched the fox waved a dismissive paw. "And Thyprian culture is as unforgiving as I am led to believe of such things?"

"I am alive only because it would be an embarrassment to my father for such a thing to become known," Kaveh replied. His muzzle twisted into a smirk. "It has also protected me. I had two older brothers, and I believe Majeed ordered their assassination to clear the way to the throne for him. Father knows that if I too were to die, my habits would be exposed by... *friends* of mine. It would shame the Sesay family, and father's power would be diminished. Majeed would get nothing."

As he nodded along, Aniol matched the vulpine's smirk. "And so long as you did not marry and produced no son, this Majeed would be next in line to take your father's place?"

Kaveh shrugged as he tilted his head up to look across the stars. "Only a married male can take the throne in Thypria, yes. Since I would not marry, Majeed was to be next in line even before you took me." His eyes closed as he sighed slightly. "I am afraid your plan has failed, honorable general. I cannot... uh... *produce* a son. Thypria will be Majeed's."

When Aniol remained silent, Kaveh shrugged again and hugged himself tightly. The fire felt diminished. "I never wanted to rule. So much pressure. So much ruthlessness. So much shame to endure in the name of power." The fox shook his head again as he opened his eyes. "Could you do it?"

Aniol had moved while Kaveh wasn't looking. The wolf was between Kaveh and the fire, almost close enough to touch muzzle to muzzle. They almost connected as Kaveh lowered his head again, and he blinked and slid back slightly. "Could I do what?" he asked.

The fox gulped as he glanced to either side of the large, naked general. "Could you do something that you found distasteful or wrong, all in the name of power?"

A moment of contemplative silence ensued, as Kaveh fought to keep his eyes on the wolf's face. "I have a better question," Aniol finally replied, as his paws lifted to squeeze gently at the fox's shoulders. "Could you father an heir to the Thyprian throne if you had help?"

Discomfort set Kaveh squirming in the general's grasp, but he didn't shuffle away or keep himself from Aniol's gaze. He cleared his throat as he tilted his head up and gave a slight nod. "I, ah... I don't know. I've never... I mean, not with a female."

"There's a fine young hoplite under my command from Corskanan, named Narkis," Aniol continued, as his fingers firmly kneaded the tensing fox's shoulders. "As his captain tells me, the pup can only peak while being taken by another male. He is bred, or he does no breeding of his own." An ear tipped forward as he smiled thinly. "Would such a thing motivate you?"

Not a single word could be pulled from the surprised fox's muzzle. Aniol's smile twitched and widened as his paws squeezed once more at Kaveh's shoulders before they slid down the vulpine's sides. "Vashenes is more forgiving of such things than Thypria, and many soldiers grow lonely on campaigns. Few of my warriors are unwilling to partake of one another when the need strikes. It frees them to focus less on their loins and more on their warfare."

Kaveh's gaze dipped down again until the wolf's sheath came back into view. The ebon shaft that began to peek up from it was almost lost to the night, but there was enough definition to the shadows to cause the fox's eyes to widen. "And you... uh... you partake as well?" he asked. Despite his attempt to keep a waver out of his voice, it just about cracked all the same.

"No," Aniol replied, as his paws slid along Kaveh's shoulders. They drew the vulpine's silken gown along with them, red fur exposed to the night as the gown ran smoothly down his arms and chest. "I am their general. It would be irresponsible of me. I could bond with some soldiers over others and compromise my duty." Kaveh's arms came free from the gown as it fell into a pool around his waist. "But my duty now is to see you produce a Vashenes son, and you are not one of my soldiers."

With a slight nod, Kaveh forced his eyes from the wolf's growing malehood and instead to the general's face. "And do I have a choice in any of this?" he asked, as he pressed one paw delicately against Aniol's chest.

Aniol nodded back as he lifted one paw from Kaveh's side and instead mirrored the fox's gesture and pressed it to that bared, red chest. "Of course you have a choice," Aniol replied with a smirk. "If you would rather I *not* be inside you, you need only say. I will not take you against your will. Such a thing would only sully my honor."

The smirk slipped slightly as the wolf stepped forward, and the scent of his arousal hit Kaveh like catapult fire. "However, your life and those of Thypria depend on your ability to bear a son. If you will take no wife and produce no heir, you are of no use to Vashenes. I would not see you imprisoned or executed if there was an alternative." His hips swayed, and the shadow of his malehood waved over the fox's lap. "You asked after disgusting, distasteful ways of gaining power. What of pleasurable ways?"

For all the wolf's words, Kaveh could not look past what it all would mean. The general was handsome, yes, and the urge to cop a quick feel and see what exactly defined that shadowy shaft before him was great. Accepting his offer would mean accepting some *female* as his wife. It would mean he would have to make a son. His whole reason for living would be to smuggle Vashenes influence into his home city. Could he do all of that? "I don't... I don't know that I can..."

Aniol shrugged as he let his paw trail down the fox's chest and belly, and it stroked over that silk-covered lap as he smiled broadly. The shudder from Kaveh mixed with his

wide eyes proved to the general that the vulpine himself hadn't been aware of how hard he'd grown. "You need not make any decision on your future right now, Kaveh," he told the fox as he gave that hidden shaft a warm, tight squeeze. "But you could, if you were so inclined, see what I could do to help *motivate* your breeding urges."

When a groan was all the response that Kaveh offered to the invitation and the gentle stroking through his gown, Aniol took it as an affirmative. He smiled as he dropped his other paw down to Kaveh's hip and lifted him up slightly from the rock. A quick tug sent the silk gown melting off his hips and down his legs, and it puddled in the grass as the fox's traitorously excited shaft pulsed in the night air.

The paw that had rested on Aniol's chest migrated south. It trembled as Kaveh drifted his fingertips shyly across the wolf's almost invisibly black malehood. The fox's groan returned, louder, as his fingers strained to meet around the larger male's length. "W-will you even..." he stammered, even as he leaned in toward it and breathed deeply of its scent.

"I have had to endure three years with neither female nor male company," Aniol replied as he took a hold of the fox's hips with a grin. He tugged the smaller male closer to himself as he stepped back from the rock, only to turn Kaveh around and bend him forward. The vulpine's belly came to rest where his rump had once been, and Aniol's paws squeezed firmly at that bared backside as he grinned all the wider. "Trust me when I say that I will find a way."

The expectation of that tapered tip's press under Kaveh's tail was shattered when instead a long muzzle worked between his cheeks instead. A loud *yip* rang out in the night as cold nose chilled tailhole, and it choked off into a moan as a broad tongue began to work up between those cheeks toward the base of his tail. Kaveh shuddered as it swept across his entrance, and then again as it repeated the motion.

Aniol felt the vulpine's legs shuffle further apart as his back arched. A glance upward showed the fox's tail curling up and over his back with delight, he smiled against Kaveh's rump as his tongue made warm, slow, wet passes across a surprisingly unyielding tailing. He pressed that tongue against it, squirming and wriggling as he reached up to give Kaveh's hips another little squeeze. The wolf tugged him back and against his muzzle, and the *yip* from the fox broadened his hidden smile.

The fox began to loosen up under Aniol's efforts, but the going was slow. He squirmed and writhed in the general's grasp and under his tongue's work, and that tight little ring of muscle gradually relaxed only by the slightest increments. Every lick helped though, and Kaveh's saliva-slicked entrance eventually relented to the point where his tongue slipped inside.

Muscles immediately squeezed down around it as Kaveh's back arched. Aniol could only marvel at the way the vulpine gripped down on and bore back against him. Those 'friends' he'd mentioned earlier must have had the time of their lives with that backside before the wolf had taken him away. The thought of what it would feel like to sheath himself inside it sent a pulse of wanting through Aniol's body as he squirmed his tongue shallowly up into Kaveh's body.

All at once it was as if the fox had melted into goo. He sank back heavily against Aniol's muzzle, and it was only the wolf's grip on Kaveh's backside that kept himself from being pushed back. The vulpine's entire body relaxed under the sensations delivered by the general's tongue, allowing it to spread his tailing gently out around it. Long, wet laps between Kaveh's cheeks kept him trembling, while Aniol's muzzle relaxed his backside for what was to come.

So greatly did Kaveh appreciate Aniol's efforts that the fox's moans slipped into whines when those efforts paused. He ground back and found his rump met only air, and it

was then that Kaveh realized that he'd begun to pant in the warm night air. "Wh... why did you-"

"Because as much as you were enjoying yourself," Aniol replied as he slid one muscular arm smoothly around the fox's waist, "there is something else we *must* get to." His hips shifted forward, and the absence of muzzle heat against Kaveh's backside was replaced instead by a different, firmer warmth.

The memory of the wolf's size in his paw didn't prepare Kaveh for the very real possibility of it spreading his backside open. He slumped down over the rock and spread his legs wider as a shiver – equal parts wanting and trepidation – as he reached back with one paw to tease Aniol's tip right up to his spit-slicked entrance.

The general didn't simply lunge forward and spear the fox on his thick shaft, no matter how his own long-suppressed lusts tempted him. He held them in check as he stroked over and squeezed Kaveh's hips, furrows in his fur left from errant claw rakes as he pressed lightly against that slick tailhole. Aniol didn't push forward so much as lean into the fox, a gentle increase in pressure as he shifted side to side.

It wasn't enough to slide in, no matter how much of the wolf's slick fluids leaked from his tip and rubbed against that sensitive ring of muscle. Kaveh was just too tight and too tense to allow the general inside. His legs spread wide as he groaned and shivered under Aniol, and he squirmed back to apply just a little more force to the spear that threatened to split him open.

That too wasn't enough to drive Aniol's shaft in, but Kaveh's growing eagerness helped. Aniol kept his hips in motion, little rolls and rocks to press against that hole and then relent again. The fox's rump slowly became soaked with Aniol's pre, and it mixed with their combined, firm efforts to start to open Kaveh up.

The moment where Aniol slipped inside Kaveh didn't come suddenly. It was smooth and slow, as the fox's entrance finally gave in to the massage of the general's tapered tip. Half an inch parted that ring and sank into Kaveh's heat, only to pull back and out again. Aniol rolled his hips forward once more, and pushed gently back into that pre-soaked warmth for another brief moment before he drew back again.

Each time Aniol dipped himself into the fox, he slid in just a little further and spread him just a little wider. Always he pulled himself right back out again to kiss Kaveh's tailhole with his tip before entering again. Always he squeezed at the fox's hips and drew a panted moan from his conquest. Always he felt Kaveh squeezing around him and bearing back, eager to be filled further. Always could he see the vulpine's shaft leaking steadily, pulsing over his belly as it stood firm and tall in testament to his pleasure.

Aniol grinned at the sight of that throbbing length. He reached up with one paw to trace a finger down the side, and was promptly rewarded with a shiver from Kaveh and a squeeze down around his own shaft. "I think you look ready to breed, Kaveh," he said as he leaned over the fox with a smile.

For his part, Kaveh simply whimpered back a wordless reply. It turned into a deep moan and his back arched as Aniol pushed forward in a long, unrelenting, slow thrust. The smaller fox twitched and cried out as inch after inch vanished into him and spread his inner walls wide. Eyes widened as he wondered for a moment if Aniol's malehood simply went on forever, before he felt the thrust bottom out inside him. The wolf's engorged knot bumped against Kaveh's tailhole, and he groaned with momentary relief and a surge of lewd pride. He'd taken the general fully!

As Aniol ground that knot up against the stuffed fox though, it served as a powerful reminder of how much further Kaveh had to go before he really felt everything that Aniol had to offer. The thought of that knot stretching him out at once terrified and thrilled him, and he ground himself back against it before the wolf was able to draw back again. "I feel ready to

be bred,” he managed to shakily reply. When he met Aniol’s eyes, he couldn’t help but smile broadly up at the general.

“Then that will be enough for the moment,” Aniol replied, and he returned the fox’s grin as he ground himself firmly against that well-filled rump. Hips relented as he began to withdraw his malehood, though every squeeze of Kaveh’s body around him only made the wolf feel more strongly the need to sheath himself again. He barely managed to pull back a couple inches before he gave in, and his hips lurched forward to drive back down into the fox.

Kaveh barely had the time to cry out before another thrust pushed him down against the top of the rock. His belly ground against it as his back arched, tail curled high as his toes curled in the dirt. Paws squeezed at the rock, bracing as best he could as Aniol began to take him properly. The short, easy, gentle thrusts designed to open him up were gone.

In their place were longer strokes that set Kaveh’s fur bristling. The fox’s rump tingled with every thrust that Aniol made, kissing that fat knot against his already well-stretched hole. It promised Kaveh something he didn’t know if he wanted, but the more he felt it press against him the more he felt like it didn’t matter. It would be up to Aniol. It would be the wolf’s choice and his body’s surrender, not his mind’s decision.

As Kaveh clawed at the rock, Aniol slid one paw down under him. He only gave the fox’s neglected malehood a quick squeeze, but it told him all he needed to know. Perhaps Narkis was a special case, but there was no mistaking how much Kaveh was enjoying himself. The presence of the wolf’s shaft inside him, all but splitting him open... where his muzzle might have spewed denial, the way Kaveh’s length drooled and twitched and throbbed was proof enough. He was too wrapped up in his pleasure to even consider touching himself.

That was what Aniol needed. As much as duty might have taken second place to the feel of the snug fox wrapped around his shaft, the general had what he needed. Kaveh might need a push – a buck, a thrust, a grind and some more besides – but he *would* perform. The way he squirmed and pressed back to take every inch deep inside couldn’t be faked. The eagerness with which his hips ground him into each of the wolf’s thrusts was impossible to ignore. Were there a female trapped between Kaveh and the rock, Aniol had no doubt that the fox would fill her whether his mind wished it or not.

With that certainty, duty could be pushed as fully from Aniol’s mind as it had been Kaveh’s. He leaned over Kaveh as he began to pant, and his thrusts grew harder and more forceful as he worked his knot against the fox. The vulpine below him had begun to relax once he felt it collide with his body, only to tighten once he felt it fall away again. His legs shuffled as far apart as they could while keeping him in place. Aniol couldn’t doubt what Kaveh wanted, whether he could handle it or not.

That want was infectious. It drove the general to reach down to the base of Kaveh’s tail and give it a firm upward tug. The yelp from below turned into a guttural moan as a spasm worked through the fox. In spite of the way he tightened down around Aniol’s length, the wolf’s knot began to spread his tailring just a little bit wider before it pulled away again.

When it pushed forward again, it mashed just that much harder against Kaveh’s rump. Again the fox found himself spreading around it, and again Aniol was forced to pull back. Just as with the general’s initial penetration, he kept his lust in check by force of patience. Another thrust. Another grind. Another moan and another slight bit of headway.

By the time Kaveh realized what was happening, each long, deep thrust had seen a third of the wolf’s knot vanish inside him. His eyes widened as Aniol bucked forward again, and they then crossed as the insistent push of that knot sent fresh quakes through his body. His legs trembled as Aniol tugged at his tail again, and Kaveh opened his muzzle to say

something. The fox had no idea what he wanted to communicate, but it didn't matter. Nothing but a squeak emerged.

When half of Aniol's knot slid inside on the next thrust, the wolf knew he could end it right then and there. His body urged him to it; slippery pulses of his pre warmed Kaveh's spread passage and begged him to fill the fox entirely. He felt his balls trembling with the need to empty themselves. It even felt as though the breeze at his back was pushing him onward, ordering him to tie the fox and claim him.

Instead he drew back again for another thrust. Aniol could feel Kaveh's muscles give in to his efforts, but still he turned back from the tie. The general's peak was close enough that it would take little to send him over the edge, but still he held himself back. Claws raked down Kaveh's side as he teased the fox again, and again, then again.

The tease finally became far too much for Kaveh to handle. He waited for Aniol to grind himself forward again and bucked back hard into that thrust. His tailhole stretched obscenely wide one last time around Aniol's knot, before both males cried out as it slipped all the way in. Their twin moans split the night, as both wolf and fox shuddered and crashed into their respective climaxes.

Though he was firmly locked in place, Aniol's hips continued to pump and buck in an attempt to shift his spurting shaft inside the vulpine beneath him. Each tug from that fat knot sent fresh convulsions through Kaveh, as he painted the rock under him with thick streaks of white. Each new streak marked a fresh squeeze down on Aniol's malehood, a desperate milking for every drop the wolf had to give.

When at last the rolling tide of pleasure washed back out again, Aniol found himself slumped heavily on Kaveh's back. The fox was sprawled out across the rock, panting as heavily as the general above him as he squirmed lazily back against the fat length of flesh that plugged his thoroughly bred backside. His muzzle opened slightly, but only a contented groan of pleasure emerged.

Aniol squeezed gently at Kaveh's hips with a smile, though that smile faltered when the tired fox gave his spent shaft a firm squeeze with his inner muscles. A chuckle rolled out of his muzzle as he lifted his head and looked up into the sky. The stars sparkled back down at him, and the general wondered if the gods had watched him do his duty. He wondered if they had enjoyed the show.

At least the wolf knew that Kaveh could be worked up. He would produce a son, even if the fox needed to be taken with each and every attempt he made. The satisfaction that flooded Aniol's body mingled with a pang of jealousy for whoever the lucky male was whose duty was to rut the fox until a child was conceived. "So. Do you think you could breed with that sort of incentive?" he asked in between panted breaths as he stroked down Kaveh's side.

Kaveh's head lifted slightly and tilted to bring the general back into view. With the fire's orange light behind him, it took imagination to see the smirk on those black-furred features. "I may be able to," he replied, as he arched his back and lazily bore down on Aniol's embedded malehood. "I think, however, that both Vashenes and the morning are a long way away.

"We have much time to be *absolutely* sure."

When the bronze-armored hoplites of Vashenes burst into the Thyprian throne room four years later, the fox seated on the throne rose with disgust and rage. "What is the meaning of this?" he demanded, and snapped his fingers. "Guards! To arms!"

Neither of the leather-armored spearmen on either side of the throne moved. They stared stoically forward as another fox, draped in silken robes of violet and gold, entered the

room. Kaveh smiled at the surprised fox on the throne, as Aniol stepped into the room behind him in his own full, untainted armor. "Good afternoon, Majeed."

Majeed's eyes went wild as he stabbed a finger at Kaveh. "You! What are you doing here? We thought you dead!" He backed against the throne as scanned the assembled warriors.

"Why? Because General Korba took me away?" Kaveh's smile only grew as he strode forward. "Silly, Majeed. I was not dead. I was in search of something... and I found it." He nodded to his brother and folded his arms. "My throne. I would like it, please."

When Majeed again glanced around at the gathered hoplites, his tail gave a nervous twitch. "You know the law of Thypria, *spear-hunter*," he hissed, barely loud enough to be heard. "You may be first-born, but you have no wife! No heir! You and your perversion keep you from-"

"No wife?" Kaveh interrupted with a smirk. "No heir? Oh, dear. Where are my manners?" He turned and tilted his head up to stare out over the gathered warriors. "Ino, my dear? Would you please bring little Aniol over to meet his uncle?"

Majeed's disbelieving eyes locked on a similarly violet-clad wolffess as she approached, with a russet-furred little bundle cradled in her arms. "It is a pleasure to meet you, brother-in-law," she said as she reached Majeed. "May I present your brother's son, Aniol."

A growl rippled out of Majeed's throat as he glared at the still-smiling Kaveh. "You would name a son after the general who stole you from your home?"

Kaveh's smile slipped for a moment, before he glanced back over to that general. The wolf offered him a soft nod, and Kaveh returned it as his smile grew broad once more. "No. We named our first-born son for the general who made it possible for me to return home. Little Aniol would not be here today if it were not for General Korba."

"This is a trick!" Majeed snarled as he sat back in the throne again. "A lie! You could not father a son! You were always too busy... doing..."

One of Kaveh's eyebrows raised as his tail wagged. "Doing what, dear brother? Do I sin against our gods? Do I engage in terrible acts that are unseemly? Am I an abomination to our people and our family?" His eyes narrowed as his tail stopped dead, and both ears tipped forward as he bared his teeth. "Such a thing would bring our whole family shame, *brother*... in front of so many witnesses."

Faced with the implication, Majeed's aggressive posture imploded. He sagged into the throne as his ears and tail drooped low. "You were always too busy... doing such fine work for our city," he muttered. "You worked so hard, you had no time to find a worthy female."

"And now that I have, my exile is over and I return to claim what is mine." Kaveh leaned forward and gave Majeed a sickly sweet little smile. "My throne, brother. I believe you're sitting in it."

As Majeed nodded and slunk out of the Thyprian throne, Aniol looked on with a satisfied smile. His duty was done. Years of war gave way to years of custodianship over Kaveh, and then years of helping the fox to find an understanding female to play a part in what was to come.

But there, to see Kaveh ascend to the throne and take his rightful place upon it, Aniol knew his work was complete. No longer the conquering general, he had been given a new task. Thypria needed a new archon to represent the will of Vashenes, and to oversee its defensive needs. If the Thyprian king desired that he stay close, he had no place to argue.

After all, dynasty was everything to the Thyprian people. One son would not be enough for Kaveh's family. Even if he hung up one spear to take on the duties of an archon, Aniol knew very well that the other would see plenty of action. Kaveh was a more

demanding lover than any Aniol had known, male or female. Some nights he wondered if he had conquered Thypria, or if the rightful king of Thypria had conquered him.

Those nights just reminded him that the spoils of peace seemed well worth the war.