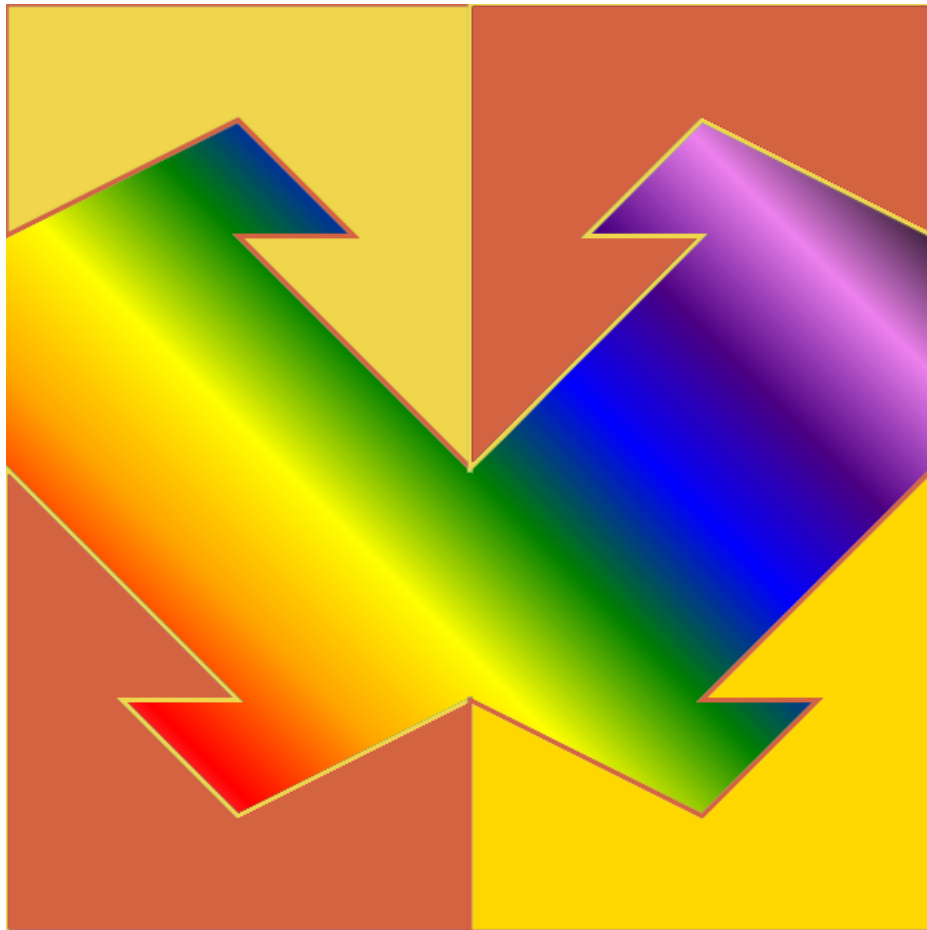


Mix-up Mixdown



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“Heeey!”

Gallows stopped as she wandered through the Red District of Capsicum Glade, noticing the familiar face following her. Her own red feathers tingled in the chill of the autumn winds, though she was thankful her hind quarters had plenty of fur to keep her warm. The only reason she was there was to pick up some items from the local Bridgestar store for an employer.

“Hey! Wait up!” Gilda repeated in her chirpy high-pitched voice, rushing up to the red gryphon. She herself was a multicolored hawk-lion gryphon, with a brown head and neck, black talons, a golden body, white wings and hind legs, a yellow tail, and a brown tail tuft behind her. Many called her a *sundae gryphon* because of her colors, and her sugary attitude matched that description quite well.

“What is it, Gilda?” Tera asked, looking over her fellow felavian with a bit of scrutiny. She was always wary of Gilda due to her habit of visiting Black Feather Glade, where pirates liked to pawn off fake goods on unsuspecting victims. “This better not be another bottle cap collection.”

“No! I found something really neat out in the tombs to the north from here!”

The hawk gryph reached into the bag around her waist and pulled out a fairly sizable talisman. It was shaped like a pair of wings, with one of the two being upside down to the other. Almost like a fan blade of sorts. Gallows had seen some weapons like it elsewhere, but never one that was attached to a golden chain like a necklace. And the chain itself was about a meter long, making it big enough for two people to wear it.

Tera looked over it with intrigue. “Okay, now *this* is a find. It looks similar to some of the armor I found on Kesashi Five. Same design and everything.”

“What’s it worth to ‘ya?” Gilda asked, grinning rather happily. “I know you’re always good on your appraisals.”

“Let me get a better look with my scanner. Might be worth even more than you think.”

She held out the object, and as Gallows put her claws onto it, the object began to glow. It glowed a bright orange, the light engulfing the pair in a matter of seconds. And when it finally died down, they found themselves with quite the problem. Where two gryphons were standing before, only one body was still there.

One very strange body.



On one side, Gilda's head was between the red hips of Gallows, facing out towards from the hawk's behind with her tail flailing overhead. On the other side, Gallows had her head between Gilda's white haunches, tail thwapping her in the beak. Both of them had their lion paws, only they were facing inward, with their lower halves meeting in the middle. On their left side was a red wing, and on the right was a white wing, each facing the other instead of being the same direction.

"G-g-Galley!?" The hawk called out, her paws flailing as she tried to get her bearings, panicking at the situation. "What happened!?"

Gallows managed to dig her claws into the sand to give them a little stability. She was the more calm of the two, and in her own panic, was keeping her cool under fire.

"Calm down, Gilda. Let me think!"

"Calm down!? How'mai s'poss'd calm down like *this*!?"

Looking around, Gallows managed to find the amulet and, taking a bit of control over their body, kick it closer to her face while she had the chance. The runes around the edges of the wings were old, some barely visible on the tarnished metal. But it was enough to read, even with her fellow gryphon's tail smacking her in the face repeatedly.

"*Keisetsi umaraou inga... Uh oh...*"

"*Uh oh*?" Gilda parroted back, trying to look at Gallows but only serving to put her head against the sand. "What'd'ya mean '*uh oh*'!?"

Blushing, the phoenix half of the pair quickly grabbed the amulet in her beak and flipped it over their joined body, letting it slip into her wider bag's open back compartment.

"Well... The good news is, it's temporary." She told Gilda, her face turning a bit redder. "The bad news is that it'll be a full day before it wears off."

"Sixteen...standard...hours?" The ice cream colored gryphon replied, panting and trying to catch her breath as the adrenaline died down. "Tha... that's not...not so bad..."

Gallows sighed. "*Aleros Three* time. They have roughly forty-two standard hours in their days, remember?"

The hawk didn't try to panic this time. Instead, she began to whimper. Questioning why she didn't use gloves or something to handle it like most adventurers, among many other thoughts.



“Come on, Gildy.” Gallows said, getting her legs standing again. Even she was beginning to lose a bit of composure, her paws wobbling. “Let’s... Let’s try to get back to my place. There might be something to help us in Omega’s library. If they ask what happened at Unity Station...I’ll use my Shirohoshi credentials and say it’s classified.”

“Oh...O-okay...”

Standing wasn’t too much of a problem for the pair. But having to walk with one backwards and one forward? That was the tricky part, but they got going, as slow as it was.

Gallows only hoped there was something to help them in the underground library. If anything, at least it was an interesting experience. She just wished she knew why her mouth tasted so salty...