

Lady of Negotiable Virtue

By Kandrel

Just as Cheba had once told me, there was a hole between the roots of the old oak. It was well hidden beneath the crook of one jagged root, and twisted as it descended into the earth to obscure any hint of light from the far end. For a big dog like Cheba, it must have been a tight squeeze, but for a little fox like me it was cavernous. I didn't even touch the sides, though I did have to duck so as not to drag my back against the ceiling. Soaked into the ground beneath my paws was the combined spoor of countless visitors. They were signatures in the guest book—a nasal registry of the lady's suitors. Caught in the old oaks grasping root fingers that dove down from the tunnel's roof were little tufts of fur. White and orange and brown and red, decorating the hole like a festive entrance hall. Wolf, I smelled. And dog. Lynx, perhaps? Was that a lion I smelled, too? Must have been a juvenile male, still just small enough to fit beneath the roots.

In my mouth I carried a two rats, both dead. A crunch of the jaw yielded a few crackles. Ugh. Freezer-burned, again. Those idiot caretakers. Couldn't they tell that these were well past their sell-by date? The food here was a travesty. Reliable, but still a travesty. Not that it mattered, though. She wouldn't care. Cats didn't have the same refined palate that us foxes did. Anyway, I don't think she ate them. It wasn't a price. It was an offering. She was our goddess in white. Lay our sacrifices at the altar, and she might grant us our moment of divine bliss. For a moment, I had an overwhelming urge to eat them. Turn tail and head back to my enclosure. I'd be sated and full, and my night box was warm. Sadie would be there.

Yes. Sadie would be there. All teeth and no patience. She wasn't on season, so I'd better stay away. Vixens. If it wasn't their time, then it wasn't my time. A playful pounce while she was taking a drink and she'd nip my paws. A nose under the tail when she ducked to the bushes would catch me a swipe across the snout and bitchy whining for the rest of the day. No. Wasn't worth it. Sadie could keep the box tonight. And the lady could have her alms.

The tunnel terminated in the lea of a fake rock. There was a clean hole cut in the sharp wire mesh—there to keep the occupant from digging out. Obviously, since it was a leopard enclosure, it was leopard proof. Her delicate jaws could never have bit through the wire. Unfortunately for the caretakers, they'd only built the enclosure with a mind to keep her in. None of them had figured on keeping us out. The wire was leopard proof, but they hadn't designed a mesh yet that was hyena-proof. With jaws like a vise, they'd pulled and twisted and shorn until there was a clean break double my body-width wide. I stuck my nose through, and sunlight and grass greeted me.

Out like a bolt, hidden in a bush before anyone could see me. I dropped the rats and tested the air. She was here, of course. But did she have any other suitors? No. Nothing fresh enough. Oh, I could still scent them all, but not within the last day. Or, maybe not within the last few hours. Someone had been here today. No, two someones. Hyenas. Through my nose, I could relive the scene. They were big boys. They'd probably only barely fit through. Their fur caught on the bent and broken mesh was fresh. It had been two hours ago? Three? It was in the lazy high afternoon. Their scents were close. Related. Brothers. One had stopped in this very bush and left his signature on the guest registry. It was still sharp in the air. Then they'd both turned the

corner into the larger enclosure.

I followed my nose out carefully. It wouldn't do to be seen. It was almost closing time, though, and the light wasn't good. On the far side of the glass 'hide', I didn't see any onlookers. It was an overcast day, anyway—no one wanted to go to the zoo when it might rain at any moment. It had already a few times today, but not one of those drenching downpours that soaks the ground and carries scent away. No, it had been one of those light drizzles, the kind that activates the soil and bring everything up to the surface to drift in fragrant clouds for anyone with a nose—a real, functional nose—to follow.

The hyenas had come this way. They'd caught the lady on her favorite rock. It was warm in the sun, and dry after the rain. It was also front and center for the visitors. What was it about them that so pleased her? Was it the way she could simply lay on her side and stare at the glass, and in return they would point their phones and snap their photos? She was a celebrity in fur. Outside, they worshiped her almost as much as we did here on the inside. Although, in very different ways. Outside, they printed her on leaflets and spread them through the town. Inside, we brought her offerings and worshiped at her feet. Then she'd accept our advances, and we'd leave our mark to tell her future disciples that she'd found us worthy. Of the two methods, I preferred ours.

I followed the trails down to her rock. There were scuffs on the surface, trails claws had left that hadn't been washed away by the rain yet. They'd knocked her off of it. Hyenas only know how to play rough. I followed down onto the soft grass beneath. The scents were strongest here. They'd taken the lady right here, in full view of the window. Risky. We all knew the caretakers' schedules, but visitors? Any of them could have come by and seen. That was part of the thrill, though, wasn't it? I'm sure the lady had complained. Told them it wasn't safe here. They ignored her. Nose in the grass, I could tell exactly what they'd done. One had taken her, while the other signed her face. There were little splatters of it everywhere. She must have shaken off.

That hadn't been the end. They'd dragged her to the bushes. Maybe they'd heard some visitors coming down the path? I followed the scents. Here they'd changed places I could smell where the first one had circled them as his brother had taken his own turn at the goddess' shrine, stopping here and there. I could see it in my mind's eye. He would want to see it from every angle. The lady would make herself available to his eyes in her unique way; display to him each of his brother's wet oblations. He'd grow impatient for his own turn again. Of course. Here the sparse scrub is crushed. They'd scuffled. Hyenas had no class. They're practically uncivilized. They bickered. Then the lady had calmed them. There was rock under the dirt here. The scents had drifted away in the last drizzle. I couldn't tell. I let my mind wander. Maybe she had pleased the impatient brother while she let the other finish. Or had she found a way to let both worship her simultaneously? I couldn't tell, but behind my eyes I still let it play out. Oh, what a scene. I could feel my own need to bow at her altar rising by the moment.

I was struck from where I sat in the bushes. I looked up and saw her. Kohinoor, our lady in white. She was magnificent, with fur so thick it hung around her like a bright aura. *Panthera uncia*, the card underneath her enclosure window read. Snow leopard. Her name meant 'Mountain of light'. The card says that she was named for a region that her father had been rescued from, but I thought it was because just about every animal at the zoo had scaled her at one time or another. One massive paw pinned me

to the rock, while those deep blue eyes gazed down into mine.

“Stupid fox. What the hell are you doing here? It’s not closing time yet.”

I didn’t bother answering. She was a smart lady. She’d know exactly why I was here.

“They’re going to be coming around any moment. Fuck. There’s not enough time to sneak you out.”

She shifted her gaze up towards the glass of the hide. Visitors. Damn. It was a man with a camera. He was fiddling with a long lens. The lady didn’t hesitate. People might not notice me hidden in the bushes at first glance, but given enough time and a photograph... She wasn’t about to risk that. I saw her tail swing up over my prone form, and her rump descended directly onto me. What better camouflage could I have than a snow leopard sitting on top of me.

“I swear you do this on purpose, Ahanu.” She didn’t move. She couldn’t. If she did, people might take a photo of the fox she was sitting on. So instead she was forced to stay sitting in the bushes and glare out at them through the glass. And that was just where I wanted her.

I could smell the hyenas on her. Her rump twitched when I shifted beneath her. I stuck my nose around. Oh, she had accommodated the brothers properly. I could smell one of them all through her belly fur, and the other over her tail. She curled it around me so no one could see the little hints of red as I bumped my head across her hidden hindsection.

“If you get seen, foxy, I swear that’s the last time I let you in.” A potent threat! I gave her a little yip, but she decided to shut me up by sitting right on my muzzle. I could see her skin was still a little pink where the brothers had worshiped her. Her lips were slightly puffy from use. I gave her a lick, and she almost jumped.

One by one, I could feel her relax her muscles. Impulse and involuntary action would ruin us. Move, and we would be seen. I gave her another lick, and this time she didn’t budge a muscle. Good girl. Another lick, and I could taste hints of the hyena’s essence seeping from her. Actually, both of them. A refined tongue like me could separate the tastes. Both of them had been here and left their mark behind. Her pristinely white tail twitched and hugged closer around me. The whole world was a bright halo through her fur. The only color was in the occasional rosette in her pelt, and the pink glow of her femininity. She wasn’t going anywhere, so I savored her taste. Beneath her own sweet tang, I could taste her day. The hyenas hadn’t been her first. Someone sharper was beneath them—bitter with an aftertaste of cat. Oh, I’d know that taste anywhere. His enclosure was only two down from mine. That was Piq, our neighborhood lynx. He must have come to her in the pre-dawn glow.

“I’m sorry Ahanu. I didn’t mean to snap at you.” Of course she wasn’t angry. It wasn’t her style. “I wouldn’t throw you out. Never. Not as long as you’ve still got that tongue. Fuck.”

She pushed herself down for my attention. I could feel her purring. This was not my first time bowing at her shrine. I knew what the goddess wanted of me. I offered my

muzzle, and she gladly took it. She had already taken hyenas early today—a little fox wasn't so much of a stretch. I could feel her silky walls close around my nose and slide smoothly down towards my eyes. My gaze lost focus, but I didn't need to see her at this point. Instead, I could taste her every dalliance. She twitched when my muzzle split just far enough to push my tongue out, deep into her.

"Dear visitors. The zoo will be closing in fifteen minutes. Please make your way to the front and make sure to bring your belongings with you!" The loudbox made me curl my ears, even muffled as they were by the lady's rump.

The lady clenched around me. "Looks like you're down there for the long haul, foxy. Hope you don't get sore!" Her legs shuffled to give me just a little room, while her tail fluffed out to its luxurious fullest. I put my forepaws around her rump, closed my eyes, and pleased her. I could feel her fur shivering against me. She was trying very hard to appear still, but her hips gyrated subtly above my face. It was a practiced act. She knew how to appear passive and lazy for the onlookers. She had so much fur that anyone could miss the fact that she was slowly humping my muzzle. Her silky walls tugged at the short fur on my face.

She lifted for a moment. She knew I'd need to breathe, so she gave me a few seconds. When I was ready, I gave her a lick and she descended back over me. This time, she wasn't so gentle about her gyrations. Her whole body rocked above me as she pushed herself down against my face. Each time she lifted, I could feel a wet ring around my muzzle where her lips had kissed. Then she shook, and her rolling humps stopped. She shivered. She clenched hard around my snout. I heard her snarl and hiss. She must have been giving the visitors a good photo op.

Again, she lifted, then as the time ticked by she used me again. Inwardly, I was laughing. If only the caretakers knew that the blue and white squeaky ball they'd given her wasn't her favorite toy. Three times, four times she clenched around my snout and left dribbles of her sacred ambrosia running down over my cheeks and forehead. Then on the loudbox came my favorite phrase. "The zoo is now closed. Thank you for visiting, and we hope to see you again soon!"

I knew we still had a few minutes to wait, but only just. Carl would walk by in his red shirt and paw-shaped name badge, making sure all the guests had left. Then there would be at least an hour and a half until the cleaners made it this deep into the park.

She gave me the signal by lifting her tail. Her eyes looked down at me, still on my back and curled cutely between her hindlegs. "Okay, foxy, you've earned it." I smiled up at her and gave her another lick. Our goddess smiled down at me. I saw her nether lips flex, then a hot spray of her mark caught my muzzle. I know, there had never been any doubt. I had been here more times than I could count, and never had she turned me down. Yet still, every time I felt her acceptance and her ownership dripping down over my chin and filling my nose with 'cat', I feel that deep exaltation of spirit. At least for just now, she's chosen *me*. I nuzzled close into the spray, and her tail lifted to make room for me. I lapped at it, and felt the liquid splash across my front.

It didn't last long—a few seconds and no longer. Then she rolled. It was a complex motion, starting with her head ducking down towards the ground. Her whole body twisted in a wave, baring her belly up towards the dusk-tinged sky. This was the moment I'd been anticipating. It was buzzing right at the edge of my consciousness like

a bee. She wanted me to—no, she *expected* me to. I leaped to my feet and pushed my head against her belly.

She laughed. “Always so eager! It’s like you don’t get this every time you visit.” Her fur was hot beneath me, and she didn’t seem to mind that my face was wet when I rubbed it through her pelt. One of her forepaws came down and awkwardly pet my head and ran back between my ears. I stepped and felt her tail lift between my hinds. The wispy fur tickled my balls. Then it touched bare skin. Oh, I was already excited, dripping and poking from my sheath. She knew how to tease. I couldn’t help it when my hips gave a few lazy humps against her thick fluff.

Beneath me, she rumbled. Her crotch was wet and her lips were puffy when they pressed against my sheath. Then that single, electric moment struck. It’s the most amazing part—the moment that I dream about, that brings me back to offer my dinner in exchange for that one unbeatable sensation. It was the feeling of her slick lips kissing my tip, wet with her urine and my saliva, then part to swallow me inch by inch. It was the slick clenching as her grip pushed my sheath down across my length until she gripped as hard as she could behind my knot.

I’m never really sure what happens after that. I know I’m humping as hard as I can, sliding her hips across the dirt and making her pelt jiggle with my ferocity. I know I’m biting at the fluff over her belly and trying something to latch on to. But really all I care about is that she’s squeezing behind my knot, and that then I’m shivering so hard that I can’t control my legs. Then it’s as if the whole sensation crests into a jittery warmth in my head. I can feel her slick walls taking on a different sensation against my tip as I spray into her twitchy sex.

“Hey, Ahanu. Going to finish up there and make some room for us?” That’s a different voice—not hers. Slowly, the rush of orgasm faded, and it’s replaced with the lazy afterglow. I opened my eyes again. Cheba and his brothers were standing around us, watching as I fuck our lady. They’re pretty dogs, with patches of color in big splotches. African wild dogs, the sign outside their enclosure says. Painted dogs. They’re young, and their pack hasn’t let them mate yet. In Cheba’s mouth was a thick steak, stolen from their own dinner. Even over the sharp scent of the lady beneath me and the excited dogs surrounding us, I could smell it. It was enticing.

One of the brothers dipped beneath my tail and licked at her, catching me at the end of his swipe. She’s already lost focus on me. There’s a moment of frustration, but it faded as quickly as it arrives. She chose me. I had my moment, and now she’s choosing someone else, and they’re going to get their moment. She leaned out with her forepaws and pulled Cheba in towards her head. I could feel her relax around me. She was tight when she was squeezing, but she’s a bit too big to be a vixen. With a rush of my own liquids, my knot pulls free and lets the fluid run down over her tail.

She wanted to move on. I know she wanted to feel the next dog beneath her tail, but there’s courtesy. There’s customs. “One moment while I finish.” I said, and as I softened and pulled back to just lipstick hanging drippily from my sheath, the lady spread her legs wide for me one last time. Laying my sheath down against her soaked lips, I relaxed and signed the guest book. My hot mark jetted up over her belly and left yellow streaks through her white fur. I felt her shiver again beneath me, and the hot lips against my sheath flexed.

Then my moment was over. I shuffled back to make room, and one of Cheba's brothers took my place without hesitation. He was already excited and ready to serve his lady. Without any of the worship *I'd* given her before taking my place at her altar, he simply pushes his sheath to her crotch, then slides himself into her already stretched sex. Hmf! Amateur. I was the one who made those lips so wet and slick, ready for him to push into. So it was really my victory when he slid himself deep and teased his knot between her lips. He was a lot thicker than I was, naturally. Maybe he'd even properly tie her. His brothers wouldn't like that. Then they'd have to wait. On the other end of her, Cheba didn't seem to be paying attention. Our lady had her muzzle between his legs. I could see the subtle indentation in her throat where his tip was pushing as his hips rolled. She was swallowing continuously, but still a bit of Cheba's urine dribbled from her lips as he relieved himself down her gullet. The air became thick and heavy with the scent of dog.

No one was paying attention to me anymore. The third brother had lifted a leg to the lady and was leaving his signature even before he'd had his chance to pray at her shrine. I knew it was my time to get back to my enclosure. I took my two rats and laid them reverently to the side. No one who came to her would ever consider tampering with their offering. She was a goddess. It was unthinkable.

What was completely thinkable, however, was tampering with other peoples' offerings. It's not my fault that Cheba wasn't watching his steak while he humped himself between our lady's glorious lips. None of them noticed when I picked it up from where Cheba had dropped it in his haste to get into the action. A whole steak! Thick and juicy and dark between my jaws. It was the size of my head! I almost tripped over it as I stuffed myself back through the tunnel and loped back towards my enclosure with the barks and whines of dog's enthusiasm behind me. Sated, full, and spent, I curled up next to Sadie in our warm night-box. I knew I reeked of cat. She snarled at me, but half a steak shut her up so well that by the time she was full she didn't even complain when I curled up against her side. Light faded outside, and night claimed me.

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