

Lortian drummed his fingers against his chest where he lay, looking up at the ceiling of the room. After spending so much time, so many nights out beneath the blanket of the stars with no real roof above his head, he understood that he couldn't really feel *too* upset about being confined to one of the nicest rooms in his family's manor, but... he didn't have everything. By far, no. The past three days he'd been restricted here, sleep had come reluctantly, and all because of those few things he didn't have.

The elf pulled in a breath – warm, tasteless domestic air; no cloying sweetness of algae on the lake or moss along the tree trunks, no gentle marigold, no soft, hot spice tingling at his nose and the base of his spine – and rolled onto his side, shifting his gaze from the empty ceiling to the empty wall. It was... amazing, really, how much things had *changed* for him in these eight or nine weeks, since first encountering her in the woods at the edge of his father's land. Two months ago Lortian wouldn't have ever thought about *speaking* to a wilder like her, somewhere between animal and human with that short, soft fur covering her body and the tufted lynx ears, the little stub-tail, the short muzzle and whiskers that tickled at his neck and collarbone, those delicately sharp teeth that made him tingle whenever she sank them into the side of his neck or his upper thigh-

He squirmed where he lay. Two months ago he wouldn't have ever thought of speaking to one, much less loving one. That was the truth of the thing as it currently stood: put simply, what he was missing while trapped here in the manor was *her*. Such a new and unexpected feeling for him, this ache in his heart, this cold knife that dug its way a little deeper into his chest and the back of his mind whenever his thoughts strayed back to her – and since he had nothing to do or to keep himself occupied, his mind was always wandering.

At least it hadn't gone as badly as it *could* have, he figured. Just about every time he closed his eyes and squeezed his pillow against his chest, the entire thing replayed in his head, with his own mistakes standing out like bright sunbeams between the boughs of the trees overhead. He couldn't help but wonder how it must have looked to one of the ones who had discovered them.

*Every day for the past several weeks, for most of the day, he disappears into the trees and does not return until sundown. That was what the old elf had told them, and it was up to them to find where he'd gone and what he was doing. Nothing out in the forest except for the lake, the river, and the savages, and the lattermost usually stayed to their caves and their logs. It shouldn't have been so hard to find Lortian, and yet for a full three days he had evaded them. Whether he knew that he was being followed was still unclear, but still the little group pressed on: three of the estate's best trackers and hunters, each trained by the old man himself. An elf who didn't know his bow and his land could hardly be called an elf, after all.*

*When they did find him it felt more by luck than anything else, but none of the three would ever admit that it had been anything more than their own skills. Good luck for finding him; bad luck for what they found him doing. At first it was... questionable, the young blond elf sitting by the lakeshore alongside one of those savages, a lynx by the look of it. The three of them watched for a moment and then moved back to discuss: was he kidnapped? Is he in trouble? Is it holding him ransom? So they waited, and they watched. And they heard him laugh.*

*It played out like something from a nightmare, or the dream of a deviant. He looked at it and it looked at him, both grinning and laughing quietly as if they could be a pair of lovers... and then it put its paw on his shoulder. That made one of the others raise his bow to shoot, but the leader held an arm out to stop it. Lortian rested his hand on that paw, still smiling. Then it leaned in and looked for all the world like it*

*kissed his cheek, and instead of moving away or recoiling like he was expected to, Lortian just... moved in, and returned that kiss.*

*He actually returned it. Lips to lips, mouth to mouth... tongue to tongue. That paw tightened on his shoulder, and the savage started to push him back and down to climb atop him. That was when they stepped in, two with bows raised and one with his hand on the shortsword sheathed at his belt.*

*Maybe he blinked right then. It was too hard to tell. As soon as they stepped through the bushes to approach, the savage had swept to its feet, unslung its longbow from over its shoulder, and had an arrow trained directly at his chest, or maybe his throat. That realization was enough to make his body hesitate, and that turned out to be all the beast needed. He wished he had drawn his bow as well, for in those few seconds he wanted nothing more than to put an arrow through its lung and quiet its snarling and growling, sounds that were supposed to be words but that he couldn't work out beneath the weight of its accent.*

*It took considerable coaxing and many softly-murmured words from Lortian to calm it down, and though it did lower its bow, it never put that arrow away. The young elf could not look any of the three in the eye, and a shameful blush burned his cheeks and the points of his ears. The shame he felt then should not compare to the punishment that his father would have for him when he found out.*

Lortian sighed again and rolled back over onto his back. What he'd gotten from his father had been a blistering cold, arms crossed and eyes shadowed. Two of the manor guards stood watch beyond the door of his bedroom, which itself was locked from the outside; his father hadn't yet figured out just what his punishment would be, but after three days of figuring it out, it couldn't be light.

His ears perked a bit – not quite the way Rayya's did; sometimes it happened when he had his nose and lips against her head, and her ear-tufts would tickle against his cheeks and make him giggle – at that little rattling sound against his window again, the same that had been happening on and off for the past few minutes. This time, though, it didn't stop; after enduring it for another few seconds he sighed yet again, hoisted himself up out of bed, and went over to push the window open.

Right after he did, though, he recoiled away from that window as something smacked him in the cheek, something small and hard. It clattered to the floor, but just as he started to lean over to pick it up, a noise issued from further out in the darkness of the evening.

"...I am sorry," called a gentle voice from out there. It took his eyes a moment to focus and adjust to the night, but sure enough there was Rayya, sprawled across one of the branches of the tree out there like any other forest cat. "I was not expecting you to-"

Before could stop himself, Lortian braced his hands against the sill and leaned out as far as he could, making a quick scan of the manor grounds nearby before hissing, "What are you *doing* here? You could – I don't-" Then the tension fell out of him, and he slumped against the side of the window. "I missed you."

Her grin seemed to glow in the moonlight right then. The lynx shifted her position, swung down from the branch, and dropped to the ground. Lortian peered down to find her, three stories below and blanketed by the night; his eyes scanned back and forth, every now and then catching some flash of movement, but nothing solid enough to grab onto. Then he looked over his shoulder towards the door

of the bedroom, suddenly worried it might burst open – and when he turned back towards the window, there she was leaning in close to him, that same smile in place.

“I missed you too, puppy,” she said, and pressed her lips against his cheek. “I am here because you are not out there. In the trees, where you should be.” Without bothering to ask if she could come in, the lynx swung her legs in over the windowsill and scooted forward. “With me.”

“You can’t-” Again he looked back towards the door. “You can’t *be* here, Rayya. My father, he-”

“Sent his little group of hunters to find you and bring you back like a king’s deer? Yes, I know. I was there, remember?” She poked a sharp-clawed finger against the middle of his chest, just barely hard enough to push him back a half-step. Over the weeks Lortian had learned those claws to be semi-retractable, even though it often felt like they were *always* out, always scraping across his skin and his lower back. “I followed you back here that day. I do not think they noticed.”

“That was – that was dangerous! You could’ve been-”

“But I wasn’t.”

The back of Lortian’s legs bumped against the bed, and then one of those strong, warm paws had gripped down on his shoulder to push him the rest of the way down. The springs creaked under his weight; Rayya remained standing at her full height, which still didn’t put her head that much further above Lortian’s where he sat. One time she’d gotten him back against a tree in this position, where he found his head squeezed between her thighs and the trunk behind him; Rayya had hardly given him space to breathe.

She leaned in, one paw on her waist and the other still on his shoulder. “Was I?”

Just as the lynx started to push him down further and lean in so she could climb atop him, a thick cloth bag swung down from around her shoulder and bounced against the edge of the mattress, causing something hard inside to clatter around. The elf looked down at it; Rayya stopped, visibly struggling to hide that grin.

He pointed, keeping his elbow braced against the mattress. Lifting that up would cause him to fall fully down onto his back, and he already knew where that would lead with Rayya on top of him. “What is that?”

Just like all the other times, her little pink tongue flicked out over her lips before she spoke. The lynx settled both of her paws on his shoulders and pushed him with a bit of force, causing him to bounce back against the bed; then, those paws started to work their way down his chest, and to lift the hem of his shirt so they could touch and press against the smooth, soft skin beneath.

“I have come to need you,” she rumbled; Lortian winced as those claws poked their way against his belly. It was a pleasant pain. “That is why I am here. You know that, don’t you?”

There was no way she expected a coherent answer to that. Before giving him a chance to speak, she pressed her nose in against his neck to take a deep whiff of his scent; then he had small sharp teeth on his shoulder along with those claws spreading out towards his hips, teasing at the waist of his pants. The

lynx very deliberately pressed her thigh up between his legs as well, that simple hide skirt she always wore not quite reaching.

“Three days is too long for me, puppy. I have missed you, and I have needed you, and now I will have you.”

The aroma of *her*, strong and rich in his nose; that was one of the things he’d deeply missed over this short period of time. His arm came up around her back to squeeze her down against him, so he could return that nuzzle: it swirled up into his head, electrified his thoughts, made him shiver sweetly. He was aware of her paw pressing down against him where her thigh had just been, fingers wrapping and squeezing around familiar warmth and comfortable firmness, but it took the elf another moment to *realize* it.

“Wait, wait.” Hands on her waist, trying weakly to push her off of him... and she responded by taking one of those hands in her paw, and slipping it down along her lower belly beneath that hide wrapping. That smooth softness turned to the shorter, thicker pubic fur, and then the heat, the faint slickness brushing against his fingers- “Rayya. We can’t. You know th-”

Her voice was muffled in his neck. “We can.”

“You’re-” He grunted, and swallowed. She’d removed her paw from his hand to keep herself propped up; for a moment there, though, her full weight pressed down against him from above. Not exactly an undesirable position. “-loud, Rayya. If they haven’t heard already – they are *right* outside my door...”

Before answering, she reached down to swing that bag over in front of her chest, and plopped it down against Lortian’s beneath her. He looked down at it again: the lynx, with no sign of concern or worry, flipped the flap open and reached inside. “I am not the one who will be making the noise tonight. Do you remember our first time?”

“I couldn’t forget if I tried.”

Golden eyes fixed on him. Rayya squinted. “That makes it sound like you did not enjoy it.”

The elf squirmed beneath her weight again. She’d closed her paw around something in that bag, though still hadn’t taken it out. “If I hadn’t liked it, would I have let you do it to me – what – four more times in the next two days?”

“Five. ‘Let’ me?” First to come out of that bag was what looked for all the world like an assemblage of leather straps, or a net or something. “Puppy. You could not forget if you tried; you could not stop me if you tried. There was no letting.” Then came a length of smooth, polished wood, rounded like a small pillar, blunted at the end with a rim and a-

Lortian realized what it was then. He swallowed again, watching Rayya fit it into place at the base of the harness. “How did you...?”

“Before our first time, you told me you were not sure you would enjoy being with a woman in *that way*.” Rayya shrugged, then moved to slide off of him and stand up again. Her eyes remained on him as she pulled the harness up her waist, taking a moment to drop her hide skirt to the side. A moment later

there she stood, paws on her hips, hard toy sticking out a good six or seven inches in front of her. “But you seem to enjoy it very much. So, why would you not enjoy being with a woman in *this* way? You have done this before, with another man, yes?”

“Well, I-”

“Raise your tail.” She reached down to seize his ankles, yank him halfway off the bed, and then roll the elf onto his belly, his lower half hanging off until she let go of his legs. Before he could respond, though, *I don’t have a tail*, she’d bent down to pull his pants halfway down his thighs; the cool night air from outside tickled in along his bare rump. Soon after, a different, entirely new feeling touched against that part of him: the smooth underside of that toy poking against him from behind, touching against the sensitive skin, the tensing muscles.

The elf looked behind himself at her. Rayya smirked; she kept one paw at the base of – of her length, and now reached the other forward to spread the male’s rump with a thumb. Then, flicking her golden eyes to his emerald-green, she brought that paw to her muzzle, spat into the palm, and spread that across the polished wood.

“I don’t even know where you...” Another swallow. “I don’t want any splinters.”

“I tested it out myself. It is fine.” There was that feeling again, warmer and slicker this time; she pressed against his pucker just enough to make him squirm and gasp, and for his body to clench back against the not-so-unwelcome intrusion. “Is that all? You cannot tell me you do not want this, puppy.”

“I never thought that it – that *you’d*...” He could remember it clearly, the night they spent beneath the trees instead of along the lakeshore like usual. Her taste lingered in his throat and along his lips, and she still panted beside him, both of their clothes in a heap against the nearby trunk. Some playful prodding, some whining, some nipping at him both figurative and literal, and Lortian was telling her about his fantasies and his interests. When he’d told her that he was, in his own words, ‘truthfully quite interested’ in treating a male wolf wilder the way she did him some days, her amber eyes had lit up. A part of him had hoped that she knew just who to talk to about that.

An entirely different part of him felt thankful for a different reason. She’d only pulled his pants halfway down his legs, leaving his own cock hidden beneath the fabric. If she knew that bending him over the side of the bed and pushing up against him from behind had already gotten him hard-

Suddenly there was that warm weight against him from above and behind again, the heft of her breasts against his upper back. Her free paw came down around his body, traced her claws along his belly, and then pushed his pants the rest of the way down; then the elf squirmed again with that grip coming to close around him, giving a few slow strokes.

“Come on,” the lynx purred in his ear. She slowly, *slowly* worked her hips, never quite pushing into him, never fully pulling away. “You cannot tell me you *don’t* want it. So why not tell me you do?”

That was another thing she’d discovered about him, first when she’d sat just barely far enough on him to make him squirm and twitch and try to lift up into her. She loved to make him beg. That was part of her calling him *puppy*: *I can lead you around*, she’d rumbled into his ear once, *and you will follow me wagging your tail every time I smile*. She was right, of course.

Another squeeze and half-stroke. Lortian pressed back against that wooden tip, and Rayya pulled away a little bit. "Puppy..."

"Will you..."

Whiskers tickling against his cheek. "Mm?"

Such a strange change. The elf still knew about the guards outside the door, but his worry surrounding them had completely melted away. Again he worked his hips back, again to nothing from Rayya behind him. "I – I want you to."

She came around to the other side of his head, just barely putting more force behind her hips. There was that feeling again, that slight pressure against his body squeezing back. "Want me to what?"

Then another stroke from her paw, coming up along his shaft, squeezing there, sliding back down and drawing a small thrust out of him. Sometimes she purred or growled or just generally rumbled at him when she wanted something from him, and part of that tendency had rubbed off on the elf: he wriggled and did his best impression of that little rumble, a grating sound halfway between a grumble and a moan vibrating in his throat.

"I want you to – to breed me."

Silence from the lynx. Was that good enough? She drew back, pressed forward, drew back, pressed forward again, a little further, a little deeper. Lortian gasped with the sensation, that hard, smooth wood sinking in past his clenching rim.

"Come on, puppy. You can do better than that."

"I – want you to-" Another push, another gasp. Slowly she continued to press into him. "Come on, Rayya, *please*..."

"More."

"More, please..." His last syllable drew out into another breathy moan with that. The lynx shifted one paw to his shoulder, both for balance and to pull him back onto her toy as she continued to press into him – until hips bumped against rump. Lortian knew she couldn't feel it herself, but still he instinctively squeezed and relaxed and wriggled around that stiffness, working it as deep inside of him as he could, testing the limits of that leather harness. "I want-"

Before he could finish the lynx drew her hips back, tightened her paw on his shoulder, and then slid forward again, bumping her hips against him hard enough to make him jerk against the side of the bed. Then it came again, and again, and again, each time a little sooner after the last, each one just a bit smoother as well. Rayya adjusted her stance a bit, settling one footpaw back behind her and bringing the other forward so she could partially crouch over the elf beneath her, driving down into him with each thrust – and also so she could bring that one paw from his shoulder to over his mouth, to cover the moans and grunts she pressed out of him.

If *this* was how it felt for her, then really, Lortian started to understand why she always acted the way she did. He could remember having his arms held above his head against the trunk of a tree while her hips worked him down against the ground; or the times she'd pressed back on all fours against him, and he continually had to shift and adjust so he could keep on pounding at her; and the times things had started out with him driving the pace, only to have her grab onto him, push him onto his back, and forcefully fuck herself on him, one paw covering his mouth so she wouldn't have to hear his halfhearted complaints and the other digging its claws into his chest or belly.

Once Rayya had gotten into a slow, steady rhythm, she leaned in over him so that her belly pressed against his lower back with each churn of her hips forward into him; his body naturally responded by lifting up and pressing back against her, that girth pushing its way into him past his squeezing and shivering, then drawing back out almost to that rim and tip, then sinking back in. Hot breaths panted out between his covered lips and through his nose, warming her paw where it gripped, filling his senses with that faint scent. She wouldn't much like it if he were to bite down on her finger – she'd bite him back somewhere, surely – but it was hard not to. The elf had to grit his teeth instead, and that almost worked.

There was no way for him to fully keep down the noises, the panting and whimpering and low, shivery moans, all punctuated with a fast lurch forward and creak of the bed. Rayya squeezed her paw down around his mouth to keep him in place as much as she did it to keep him quiet, it worked much better for that: her other continued to stroke his hard cock, fast and urgent without being jerky or uncomfortable. He could feel himself shivering and shaking, tensing up each time that length pressed itself inside of him and then relaxing whenever she drew it back out of him.

It didn't take her long to figure him out. If she drew her paw back as she sank forward into him, then again, and again... her fingers tightened around his length much the same as his cock throbbed in her grip, each magnifying the other. The elf dug his fingers into the blankets of the bed while he rocked his rear under Rayya's rhythm, reciprocating her movements, pushing himself closer and closer to the peak by her urging-

Then her paw suddenly slipped down from around his mouth towards his throat, and once there forcefully pulled his head up and back to bare his neck. He sucked in a gasp that came like wind rasping through empty trees. *This* was an odd feeling, stinging pain from her claws digging into the side of his throat, and immeasurable pleasure from his backside as she continued to pound into him, now lifting him slightly up away from the bed with each thrust.

Her soft sandpaper tongue grated up the edge of his ear, and she whispered, "You will cum for me."

And he did. Didn't have much of a choice really, especially with that length buried inside of him and her paw, gentle yet confident and firm all at once, squeezing right at the base of his own cock... the lynx squeezed Lortian against her body, pulling him fully up off of the bed so that he knelt upright, and with her paw still tight around his throat, kept him in place as he jerked once, again, and again, unloading a few thick spurts across the edge of the mattress and then a couple weaker dribbles down along her fingers.

When she released him, he shuddered back against her first and then fell forward across the bed, chest heaving with the residual pleasure. The elf's body gave no resistance to her pulling slowly out of him,

and without her legs beneath keeping him up, his lower half slumped down to the smooth wood floor. Legs wouldn't quite work; they felt tingly, and shook whenever he tried to put weight on them.

"You furless ones..." Rayya rumbled from behind. It sounded like she was taking that harness off as well. "Cannot handle a joke, cannot handle a woman, cannot handle a good, hard breeding."

"Was I..." Lortian swallowed, and turned his head to the side against the mattress. His throat felt dry. "Loud?"

The lynx leaned in, grinning, and patted his cheek with the back of her paw. "You did not yowl, like some males have a tendency to. I can still make you sing, I think."

"You can't..." Another swallow. With considerable difficulty the elf managed to pull himself onto the bed, facedown. "Can't stay here, Rayya. My father might-"

"It is dark." The mattress sank beneath her weight; he felt a few wisps of warmth and fur against his body as she crawled over and then settled in beside him. "Other than the trees, the dark is one of the three places I feel most at home."

He managed to lift himself up enough to roll onto his side and face her. Rayya smiled, then draped her arm around his body and tugged him a little closer. Lortian did the same.

"Three? What's the other one?"

She touched her nose to his forehead. "Right here, near you."

"If I had the energy, I would laugh- ow!" He reached back to rub where her claws had just dug into his waist.

"Mm." The lynx pursed her lips. "Usually you moan when I do that."

"Would you st... I..." A shiver racked his body, still pleasurable, yet different than the fast, fervent few she'd given him a few minutes ago. Lortian squirmed and arched his back beneath where the lynx pressed her paws into his lower back, fingerpads kneading in against his lower ribs, pressing and pushing in all the right places – and also making him wriggle closer to her, at the same time. "Nnh. That feels... good..."

"You puppy." It was in her tone of voice; Lortian didn't have to look to know she'd rolled her eyes. "I should feel offended that you have tried to get rid of me so many times tonight. You are my mate."

That gave him a little twitch. Exhausted, he mouthed and half-murmured "I'm your..."

"...and you are my puppy, and you are entirely useless, so I must keep watch on you..." That nose came down along his cheek and nuzzled up under his chin, followed by a few gentle kisses against the skin there. "Well. You are not *entirely* useless. Just mostly."

He realized then that that was another thing he'd missed: the sound of her voice, soft and smooth. More pleasing than the wind in the trees and the cicadas in the branches. The elf settled his arms more

warmly around Rayya's body and squeezed her to him, taking slow, not-quite-steady breaths of her scent. That part calmed him more than anything else, really.

Whether the guards had heard or not, Lortian truthfully didn't care. He had Rayya with him now, and just about all of his other worries melted away with that. The lynx adjusted a little bit further, bringing her head out and resting her chin atop his; he returned the nuzzle, the kisses, the soft squirming. A low purr rumbled in her throat, even as she breathed in, held that breath, and let it out in a comfortable sigh.

It felt like it had been much, much longer than three days.