

The Lanterns was one of those inns that balanced on the cusp between being a sleazy dive and a pleasant, respectable establishment. It was on the docks, several doors down from the harbour master's building. The street outside was paved with neatly cut cobblestones and the city watch patrolled with reliable frequency.

It was still however a sailor's inn, the sailors however tended toward the Captains and officers of the merchant ships that used Trantho harbour. A lot of them were still a rough sort, jovial and loud at times, especially when they had just arrived ashore or during the evening. But during the day it was quiet, almost respectable with several private dining rooms and a good cook. There was even a luxurious bath house at back with steam room and piped hot water in place of a stables.

The shrew who ran the place, Madame Gerin was rightly proud that merchants would frequent her inn to conduct business with the trader captains. Tonight however was looking to be a moderately noisy night, there was a good crowd of officers around the bar and main tables. A convoy from the Sunset Seeker's Alliance had dropped anchor in the bay that morning.

Grinning across the table littered with coins, small jewels, folded parchments and one really nice tricorne hat Orel licked his buck teeth and smiled. Yarith the sun bear captain of the Sunset Seeker and his first officer Trevor a newt where sat across the table from him. Jormungandr, the purple and silver naga cobra who was Orel's own first mate was sat to the brown rat captain's left. His tail was coiled around the floor but he had balanced his lower torso over a stool so he could lean his arms on the table and sit level with the others.

Grinning over his cards Orel tossed a small sapphire into the middle of the table and grinned at Yarith, "Call," he purred, his own naked pink tail draped across the floor and curled around his stool.

Cards were laid down, and Jormungandr took the pot with four of a kind, aces high with Trevor coming in second. Laughing as he scooped the pile of coins toward him the cobra flashed a winning smile at the others, his striped blue and white shirt and bandolier filled with small vials and bottles his only pieces of clothing.

"Good hand, I really wasn't sure if you were bluffing Trev, another hand?"

The newt sighed and shook his head, standing up, "Not for me, I'm on the midnight watch, Captain?"

The big golden furred sun bear stood up slowly and smiled, shaking his head, "Nor I, I think I am going to turn in, good game Naralan," he complimented Orel, "You play a fun hand as usual, see you next time we're in port."

Gathering up the cards Orel shuffled them, the brown rat's pink paws shuffling them with ease, riffling and flipping the cards back and forth with practiced ease as he watched Jormy try on the tricorn hat.

"Too small," he muttered and tossed it on the table, "So Captain, game of strip?" the snake man hissed, his scaled muzzle splitting into a smile, "Loser has to go back to the winner's room for the night?"

Orel's muzzle lit up in a big smile as he squared the deck, "You know I'm always up for a game with you Jormy, usual rules?"

Nodding the cobra ran his fingers around his collar, straightening it, "Equal items of clothing each to start, I'm not falling for that again rat."

"Six pieces of clothing each then," Orel declared starting to deal the cards, "We can ante up cash and jewels to stay in but each starting bid has to be an item of clothing."

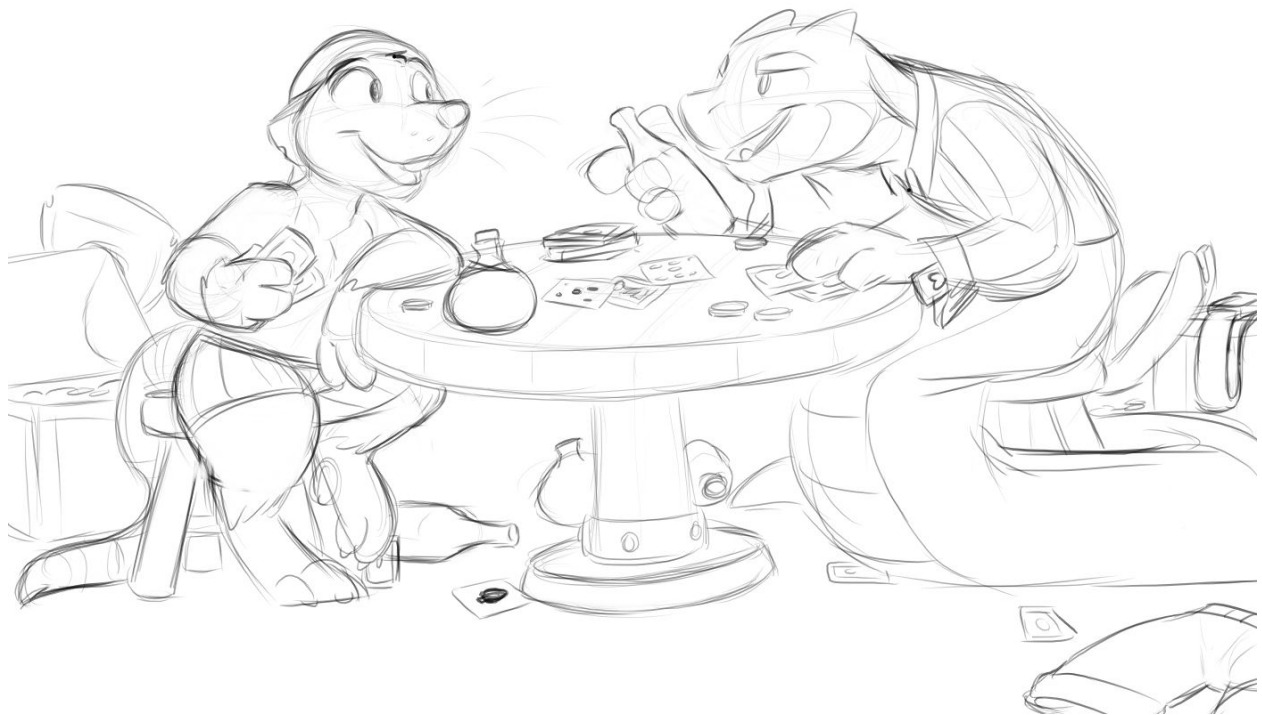
Nodding his head the cobra grinned and flicked his long tail, "My shirt, bandolier, necklace, both rings and scarf."

"Ok, Orel nodded, trousers, under-shorts, bandana, shirt, necklace and my toe ring," the rat offered as Jormy flagged down a serving man. The young goat in the shorts and vest of the wait staff clopped over and took their orders for wine and ale whilst Orel arranged the contents of his belt pouch in front of him on the table.

After that the game began in earnest, coins and jewels shuttled back and forth across the table and items of clothing were discarded. Around them the

Lantern's common room continued in its usual manner. Loud, noisy, the scents of so many beasts, alcohol and food mingling together as the rat and snake played.

Hands passed back and forth, Jormungandr's bandolier went first, followed by Orel's shirt, then the snake lost both of his rings before Orel was forced to abandon his necklace and toe-ring. Laughing, drinking, relaxing into the ambience of the room and the alcohol the two friends continued to gamble.



By the end of the first hour Jormungandr was down to just his shirt and Orel had only his bandana and under-shorts left. The pair of them were cheating outrageously, never quite catching the other though once he lost his shirt Orel lost the use of a hand set of sleeves to hide cards in.

Shuffling the cards back and forth Orel grinned across the table at Jormy as he waved his bottle at him and leant forward, "You're not taking my shirt Orel," he hissed, "I'm watching you rat, cut the deck eight ways before you deal it."

Squeaking out a laugh the big rat smirked softly and obediently started cutting the deck, "It won't help Jormy, you are awful at bluffing when drunk."

"I'm not drunk," the snake declared swaying up high, poising atop his coils, "I am merely merry, but before you deal I think we are have to listen to an interruption."

Turning Orel grinned up at the tall, broad shouldered otter who sauntered out of the crowd. He had deep rich brown fur and a creamy coloured underside. He also had a black tribal tattoo encircling his right arm and was dressed in dark black trousers and a loose fitting shirt that hung open, exposing his chest and stomach.

"So decided to stop watching and come over," Orel stated with a grin, it was satisfying to see the otter start. He'd been lurking around the edge of the common room since they discarded their first items of clothing.

"Yeah," the otter said, "I've been watching, you two have a fun game going, room for a third?"

Jormungandr laughed softly, "That's brave of you, you don't even know what we're playing for."

The otter smirked and leant his webbed and calloused hands on the table, "I know your Orel, Captain of the Naralan and Jormungandr his first mate. Everyone knows if you want a good time get in with Captain Orel and his crew."

Laughing loudly Orel thumped the table, "Well that's true, I also know you are Rudder, bosun on the pearl diving vessel Waveholt. Looking for some fun are we? Think you got what it takes to play with us?"

The otter bristled at Orel's words and he shrugged his shoulders and tugged his open shirt straight, "I can play by whatever rules you want to name and I'll clean you both out."

Leaning back and weaving his bottle from side to side Jormy shook his head, "Not me, I'm paying out," he pushed a stack of coins into the middle, "I only have one piece of clothing left."

Tapping his buck teeth with the rim of his bottle Orel considered the otter the nodded, "Ante is two pieces of clothing and coins or gems to stay in."

Rudder laughed and plonked himself down in a seat opposite the rat and nodded towards the retreating snake, "Same loser rules as with the snake?"

Laughing softly Orel riffle shuffled the cards then pushed the deck towards the otter. Leaning against the table he smirked impishly, the warm air of the inn against his bare brown fur felt good. It made a big different from saltwater, sea air and here was an otter willing to try his luck against him. Jormy made his goodbyes and slithered off into the crowd leaving the rat alone with the big rat. Well as alone as you could be in a room full of rowdy sailors.

As Rudder dealt the first hand Orel kept his eyes on the big brown water weasel's hands and nodded in satisfaction. He was good, his hands were shifting the cards with a practiced ease and Orel smiled as he took his first set of five cards and looked them over.

It was a crap, losing hand but then the otter had dealt them all from up his sleeves. He threw the big brawny beast his best pi-rat smile and folded instantly. After that the game moved back and forth, hand after hand, sometimes one of them stayed in, other times they folded. Rudder was good but so was Orel, it took real concentration to catch the other's hands switching cards or to work out if they were bluffing or holding a real hand.

Rudder was also arrogant, his sense of self importance over his own skill was the driving force behind attitude and he was determined to beat Orel. Wine flowed, tankards of ale happened and the pot grew bigger and bigger until a good half an hour after Jormy left Orel lost his bandana. Ruffling a hand through the thick brown crest of hair that ran between his ears and down his back Orel played up the worried captain is losing look.

It worked a treat, Rudder bought right into his trap and Orel sank him with a trio of sevens and took his shirt. Both bare chested, down to their last item

of clothing the game took a serious turn. Other patrons started to gather, wagers passed back and forth and as his ragged pink ears twitched Orel picked up some interesting conversation. Rudder was notorious as a card shark, picking on out of towners and usually getting his way. The wagers were split though, As captain of the Naralan, Orel had his own reputation and so he pushed the pot higher. Gemstones, gold coins, several platinum, Orel bought new cards at outrageous prices and then bet high. Rudder didn't waver, his eyes stayed fixed on Orel's or his cards and he matched the rat's bets item for item. Then the betting was over, pi-rat and otter grinned at each other, both supremely confident but Orel knew better, he had since he'd dealt the last hand.

Rudder's diamond straight flush, jack high made the crowd groan or cheer and then Orel laid his out. A five card straight flush, King high spades, a cheer went up and coins changed hands as Rudder's shoulders slumped.

"Damn it," he cursed, eyeing the rat with a mixture of respect and anger, "Where did you get that ten from?"

Orel didn't answer, the rat leant over the table and made a twirling motion with one pink paw, "I'd like my trousers please otter."

Rudder sighed but did it, he stood up in front of everyone and slid his black leather trousers off his body. He flaunted it, tail raised, shoulders back, pert rump on display for Orel and the crowd. His cock hung low without any visible sheath, it was smooth and thick and his nut sac nestled behind it was plump and thick. Orel smirked and nodded and waved over his nearest officer, Felinus was a good cook and he trusted him enough to take his winnings away.

"Come on Rudder, the next bit we'll both enjoy."

Rudder looked down at Orel for a moment as if considering refusing. He was a good foot taller than the rat but he nodded then gasped as the rat stepped forward and grab him by the dick. Holding it firmly in his smooth pink paw Orel grinned at the whistling, whooping crowd and winked before sauntering off with the otter in tow. His destination of choice was the steam room, down the back hallway, across the yard and into the bath house. Through the

double stone doors into the terracotta tiled room that was flooded with thick, cloying, warm, eucalyptus scented steam.

By the time the door slammed behind them Rudder was rock hard, Orel had been gently massaging his dick the whole way. Turning he let go of the otter's cock and admired his prize. Rudder gleamed, the steam was settling on his thick, waterproof otter fur and making him glisten.

Orel's own fur was just getting damp, scruffy and clumped together. He didn't care though, he never really cared about his appearance only having fun. Sliding his thumbs into the waistband of his shorts the rat slipped them down over his hips and kicked them aside, revealing his hefty rat balls and his thickening sheath.

"You play good Rudder," Orel squeaked, reaching up to grip his chin scruff and pull his head down, "But tonight you're mine."

Grunting at the rough handling Rudder pressed his nose the rats and smirked, "Yeah, tonight, how long you in port rat breath? I want a rematch?"

"You'll get your rematch before I sail," Orel purred, brushing his fingers down the otter's body until his hands settled onto his rump, "But for now," he leant up and kissed Rudder. Their muzzle's locked, tongues tangled and Rudder slowly, grudgingly let himself be pushed down to a kneeling position before the rat.

Breaking the kiss Orel took a step backwards and sat on the bench that filled the middle of the steam room. His fur was slick, his cock was hard and Rudder didn't need direction to lean forward and wrap his lips around the rat's prick and start to slurp and suck his way down its length. Leaning back and resting on his arms Orel lidded his eyes and groaned as the otter sucked.

"You're good at this," he complimented, lifting one of his feet to run it across the otter's hard cock, the slick nature of the steamy condensation clinging to his barely fuzzed pink foot allowed him to glide effortlessly across the throbbing otter flesh as he teased with words and limb, "If you're really good I'll let you have a turn on my arse."

Orel was rewarded by Rudder burying his snout deep into his crotch fur. The tip of his dick slipped into the warm, squeezing tube that was the otters throat and the rat squeaked in bestial pleasure at the sensation. What made it even better was the way Rudder stayed in that position. With his lips locked around the base of Orel's cock he sucked, he teased with his tongue and he held the tip of the rat's shaft prisoner in the back of his throat! Damn otter was holding his breath and Orel squirmed and shifted from side to side, rolled his hips and then grabbed Rudder's ears for support.

Humping his mouth, moaning and squeaking Orel couldn't hold off, it was too sensitive, that warm flesh twitching, squeezing, tugging around the tip of his cock. It sent him tumbling over the edge with a loud groan, toes twitching, tail curling as he fired off his pent up load. Quivering Orel fired jet after jet, after spending most of the day ogling cute things and then playing strip poker his nuts were fully loaded and he shot the lot into the otter.

Rudder didn't disappoint, he pulled his head back just enough to let Orel spill over his tongue. Then swallowed in just the right way to prolong Orel's pleasure until the rat slumped quivering and panting for delight in the thick, humid steam filled air.

"Damn boy," Orel purred, reaching out a hand to stroke Rudder's muzzle, "You otters are always fun, keep this up and you'll earn my arse yet."

"What," Rudder declared angrily as Orel slipped off the bench and wrapped his arms around the otter, "That wasn't enough!"

"Of course not," Orel grinned, grinding his half hard cock against the otters taut stomach, "That was barely round one, I'm a rat... and you're mine."

Rudder groaned but leant into Orel's aggressively possessive kiss, he'd lost the game but damn Orel was already getting hard again. It was going to be a long, steamy, exciting night and he was determined to win his prize, hopefully right after Orel claimed his in exchange!