

It would have been easier without the snow, in terms of ease of movement. On the other hand, the whiteness was a perfect camouflage for her, and the relatively mild temperature (just below freezing) allowed for a more protracted one-person siege.

Boneflower was thoroughly enjoying this. Her target was huddled up and miserable in his massive tent, encircled by four meagre, grey canvasses stuffed with supplies and the remains of several arrow-ridden lackeys. Gilt frills and draperies adorned nigh every flap of the Baron's portable palace, *Can't do nothin' 'alfway, can ye, Turbot boy?*

She glanced at the moon. *'Bout time for another arrow.*

A hushed whistle, a thud, and a new hole in the golden fabric. Baron Gerrard de Turbot was growing sick of this. How many weeks had he been trapped here, a veritable prisoner of ... of... who? Who?! A phantom, for all he knew; his stone-headed guards had been unable to explain the source of this rain of arrows, and had grown disturbingly quiet as of late.

"Sacré nom de puce! Roland! Roland! Viens ici! Je mourrai de froid!"

He pulled his head under the bed-covers again. *I will introduce a stake into ze fundament of ze infernal filz de putain 'oo 'az me entrapped 'ere*, he swore as he licked his ginger-furred belly clean for the umpteenth time.

"Monseigneur le Baron!"

The cat poked the top of his head out from the shadowy warmth. "Recouds ce trou là! Tout de suite!"

"Bien sûr, mon baron!"

He returned to grooming himself in private, confident in his valet's sewing abilities, if nothing else. After all, Roland was but a filthy little mouse, with the limited mental capacity to match; expecting inferior creatures to show proficiency in more than one task was the very height of folly! "Mais nous, les chats, sommes les êtres supérieurs, les choisis élus de Dieu, triomphant dans chaque entreprise, capables de toutes prouesses, de surmonter tous défis-"

His rambling was silenced by another whistle and thud, this time followed by a gurgle, a jet of something splattering onto canvas, and a second, more protracted thud.

He lay motionless, scarcely daring to breathe as the scent of blood seeped into the air. Moving muscle by muscle, one inch at a time, he pulled off the blankets and slunk to the door

Boneflower could hardly contain a snigger at the Baron's screaming and yowling as he berated the corpse of his valet for spraying blood all over his priceless fabric. She almost regretted having to put an end to the mission as she notched another arrow to her bow and took aim. It had been so much fun!