

Introductions

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Emma opened the door and strode inside with the confidence of someone who owned the building. Inside, it was dimly lit, and her sensitive nose could make out a dizzying number of scented oils and perfumes that combined in her sinuses and made her want to gag. She didn't know how people could stand it, but she supposed note everyone was blessed with a draconic nose.

She casually strolled over to a pleasant-faced woman behind a counter who beamed a quick, genuine smile at her. "Mistress Emma!" she cried with good cheer, "This is a rare pleasure. To what do I owe the honor? Here on business? Or did you want to partake, perhaps?"

Emma leaned over the counter to return the smile she was given. "I'm afraid it's business this time, Suzie. I'll have to sate your voracious appetite some other day. I believe there's someone waiting in the Green Room for me?"

With a bright blush across her cheeks, Suzie nodded and handed her an ornate, brass key with a sly smile. "He's been in there waiting for quite some time. Just promise not to keep me waiting too long, alright? And do try not to make too much of a mess."

Accepting the key with a gracious flourish, Emma said, "I shall make it my duty, milady. Say hello to Sage for me." Suzie showed her teeth in an amused grin and watched Emma saunter down the indicated hallway. She swept her eyes around as she walked. She supposed that, but for the atrocious perfume, the place was actually rather comfortable, with soft, plush carpets and dark maroon walls that were dimly lit by the occasional, well-polished wall sconce. She turned a corner and took a flight of stairs to the second floor. She also supposed it was prudent of him to request a meeting in one of the more secluded rooms, but she couldn't help but feel a twinge of annoyance at being made to walk the length of the building twice. She let out a warm chuckle at her own laziness, fingering the smooth metal of the key. It felt like there was a polished mirror hanging on the wall every few feet, and she stopped shy of the door she was supposed to enter to inspect herself. She meant to look her best.

Crystalline eyes that glittered like expertly cut amethysts peered back at her above a tapered draconian snout that smiled widely, showing twin rows of razor sharp teeth. Her head was crowned with several pairs of smooth, onyx horns, the largest two of which curled back over her head like those of a ram. A blanket of glimmering, metallic bronze scales covered nearly her entire body except where

they were split by a stripe of brilliant blue that started under her chin and dove into her shirt, covering her front down to the tip of her long, muscular tail.

She was dressed rather plainly in comparison to the brightness of her scaly hide. A shirt of sturdy, black cloth covered her slender torso, hiding her ample feminine endowments from view, if reluctantly. She was tall, well over six feet, and would continue to grow as she aged. It had been some time since her last fitting, and the clothes she had were beginning to constrict her uncomfortably. The buttoned holes in the back of her shirt to permit the movement of her long, black-membraned wings were tight around the limbs, and the line of buttons that ran down the back of her shirt were beginning to strain dangerously.

Emma would just as soon have gone bare, but nudity was looked on with unease most of the time, even in this day and age, so she soldiered through the discomfort. She already had to get her clothing custom-made. What would she have to do when she was ten feet tall? Twenty? She grumbled and flicked her bright blue cape over her right shoulder. She couldn't wear the argentum-inlaid cape down her back with her wings, but she thought it made her look delightfully roguish, the fine cloth hanging down and obscuring her side as it did.

Pants as black as her shirt clung tightly to her legs, sweeping as low as her calves, but leaving her taloned, digitigrade feet free to move. A sharp, black claw idly preened the scales of her jaw and she gave a short, satisfied nod, leaving the mirror and sliding the key into the appropriate lock. The building was well-tended, and the door floated inward on silent hinges as she pushed it open and shut it behind her. The Green Room was appropriately named, and the walls were painted a dark, forest color that complemented the shade of the spacious area rug and fine, satiny sheets on the comfortable-looking bed. It was luxurious, and lavishly decorated, clearly intended for the utmost comfort of its occupants.

Her host rose as she entered, dipping into a respectful bow. He was a broad, powerfully built shark morph with dark grey skin the same color as his eyes. Emma supposed he was attractive, and he was dressed in a manner that effectively displayed his physique. She dipped into a polite bow of her own before she seated herself in the plush chair that he pulled in front of the one in which he had been seated.

He smiled, showing what Emma supposed was supposed to be an unsettling number of serrated teeth as he lowered himself into his chair. Pale stripes graced what she could see of his body, and his chest flexed powerfully as he crossed his arms. "It's an honor to finally meet you." He said after a quiet moment he spent sizing her up, "Your handwriting does your beauty little justice."

Her wings shuffled behind her and her tail flicked nervously through the air. "Was it that hard to read? I've been trying to get better."

A low laugh rumbled deep in his chest. "It wasn't so bad." He gazed hungrily at her for another few long seconds before he shifted to keep the long fin that resided between his shoulder blades off of the chair. "I must admit, I was surprised when you agreed to do this. It isn't really in keeping with your organizations regulations is it?"

A legitimate enough question. "Not only that," she answered, doing a poor job of keeping her nerves out of her voice, "It's also very illegal. But you're too well-spoken to be someone who would misuse it. Just don't tell my superiors about it. Besides, we Lancers don't get paid as much as people think; I can really use the money." She pulled from her pocket a small, crystal vial that held a few ounces of transparent, pinkish fluid. "Venom from the Silver Lance's resident naga. She makes a lot of it, and gets terribly cranky if she doesn't milk herself every few days. Usually she destroys it, but I managed to snag a few ounces from her last milking. You've got your end?"

He nodded with another toothy grin, pulling from his belt a pouch that jingled with coins. He tossed it at her and she caught it, surprised by its weight. She handed him the vial and opened the pouch, there was... a significant number of shiny coins inside it. "That... it a lot of gold." she said after a noisy swallow.

"Everything you requested, plus a little extra for a beautiful lady." He popped the stopper off of the vial with a thumb and made to smell it.

She held out a cautionary hand. "Whoa there! Careful!" She slipped the burdened pouch into her satchel and gestured at her own nose. "That stuff is powerful! Even the vapors can enter the blood through the sinuses." She leaned toward him, speaking in a soft whisper. "You've got to tread lightly with this. Even without being injected, it'll still affect you. Listen. Here's what you've got to do. All it takes is a drop, preferably less, in a drink or on the skin. It will bleed through into the blood and have your lucky lady cumming in minutes." She hesitated. "Or lucky man, I suppose. I'm hardly one to judge. But you can't use more than a drop. Any more than that can be dangerous. It will literally paralyze someone with an orgasm, so I recommend you get a pipette for more control before you try to pour it anywhere."

"Will do." he said as he slowly rose to a stand, peering thoughtfully at the vial in his fingers. Emma followed him up and tugged her shirt straight on her voluptuous body. He took a step as if to pass her, but instead of continuing, he rolled his shoulder, flicking his wrist almost casually as he splattered a sizable portion of the contents of the vial into her face. She spluttered in shock, backpedaling, but his feet were suddenly under hers and she tripped, falling backward and knocking her chair away. Her wings caught her, but she then felt him follow her down, pinning her arms under his hands as he laid his well-built body atop hers.

She blinked rapidly. Her scales would have protected her from the dangerous fluid, but it had gotten in her eyes, and was even now wicking away into her bloodstream. "Why?" she whined pitifully.

"Like I said," he growled through the manic grin of a starving animal presented with a banquet, "you're beautiful. And I really only need a little bit of it for me to study. Then I'll be able to synthesize as much as I want." He replaced the hand on her arm with an elbow, and gingerly stroked the smooth scales of her cheek. "It would be a shame to rob the world of your magnificence. I think I'll let you live after I'm done with you."

"That's far enough across the line, right?" said a casual, feminine voice out of nowhere. Her would-be aggressor's eyes opened wide in shock when a foot of razor-sharp steel materialized against his throat, followed by the haft of a familiar spear and the shark morph who wielded it.

A rather opportune time for her shroud to wear off. "Yeah, I think so, Mel." replied Emma. Mel grinned, showing her own sharp, triangular shark teeth. She was frightfully lean and wiry, and the incredible tone of her athletic body showed itself through her own form-fitting uniform. She was a lighter shade of grey than their soon-to-be prisoner, and her underside was pale. Her own fins were tipped with black, and she lacked his stripes.

The man who lay atop her spluttered fitfully, his eyes wide with shock. "Y-you set me up!"

Emma wanted to slap him. "Of course I set you up! You can't buy a Lancer! You are truly, legendarily stupid for thinking this would work, regardless of your alchemical expertise. I've never been more insulted in my life! Now get off of me, you filth." He blinked, the spear on his neck severely limiting his options, so she sighed heavily and snaked her tail up, cinching it around his neck and rolling him off of her. She easily bounced to her toes and grunted with the effort of hauling him up next to her by his throat.

Mel leaned casually on her spear and chuckled. "Pretty steep, charging him that much for a few ounces of rose water. You should have been a merchant. You'd have made a killing."

The shark that occupied the loop of her tail struggled weakly, and she casually considered choking him into unconsciousness, but she thought better of it. "Who says I'm not making a killing now?" she asked Mel, patting her satchel, making it jingle noisily. Mel threw back her head and laughed as she slid the cap back onto her spear, once more concealing it as a simple, if longer than usual, staff.

She gave Mel a winning smile and started toward the door, dragging the shark along beside her. Abruptly he stopped, and she turned to look questioningly at him. The blade of a long knife had appeared in his hand, and he viciously stabbed it at her. She grunted when the tip of his dagger impacted with her

abdomen, amused at his shock when the blade did nothing more than glance noisily off of her scales.

She looked at him, completely awed by his foolishness. "Did you just try to stab me?" Her eyes went back to Mel. "Did he just try to stab me?"

Mel shrugged. "That's what it looked like to me. Could be wrong though."

Emma hauled him around her to face her. "Is she wrong?" she asked him, "Am I just mistaken? I hope I am. Otherwise I might have to get upset with you." He dropped the knife from numb fingers and shook his head vigorously. "So I'm not mistaken? If you say so." She balled her clawed fingers into a fist and threw her arm out in a punch vicious enough to lift him from the ground and send him flying across the room to bounce off the far wall. Mel grunted sympathetically. Draconic muscle made Emma much stronger than she looked, and there wasn't an insignificant amount of muscle on her lean frame.

Miraculously, he retained a hold on his consciousness, and he sluggishly regained his feet, spitting a handful of teeth onto the floor. "Damn..." Mel mused, "You're tougher than you look, big guy. I'd be out cold after that, but if I were you, I'd stay down. We've got a set of shiny manacles with your name on them."

This apparently didn't please him very much, as he cried out and ran for the door in fear. Mel strolled up next to Emma and yawned theatrically, leaning on the dragoness in place of her staff. They stood where they were and let him reach the door, watching him throw it open and scramble out of the room. Barely half a second later he came flying back in to bounce again off the same wall. Mel strolled over and cracked him over the head with the butt of her staff, and he finally went limp. "You see Em?" she murmured to the dragoness, "This. It's people like this that give sharks a bad name."

Abruptly, a black-and-white-furred horse head poked into the room through the open door. "Did you ladies lose something?" he said through a smile.

Emma watched Mel binding the other shark's hands behind his back, sparing no roughness. "Hardly, Toby. We were just keeping you on your toes... such as they are."

The equine scoffed as he stooped through the door. He was more than a foot taller than Emma, and he towered over Mel as he bent down to hoist the captive up and over his broad shoulder. "It's good to know that you'd hate to see me lose my touch."

Mel stood up and ran her hands through Toby's coarse, white horse tail. "She isn't the only one who would hate to lose your touch."

Rolling her eyes, Emma grabbed the vial from the ground where the shark had dropped it. Fine crystal was expensive. She followed Mel and Toby out, chatting casually. "Speaking of losing touches, how was your week off, you two?"

Emma could practically hear Toby's smile, and Mel shot her own grin over her shoulder. "It was expectedly wonderful, obviously." said the shark morph, "You really should come with us some time. I don't think I'll ever get tired of those spindly little trees. It's so... placid and calm... most of the time. Imagine how noisy we could make it if you were there with us."

"Please, Mel," chortled the dragoness in a musical laugh, "I'd snap your skinny ass in half."

Toby hummed dubiously. "I don't know about that. She's a lot sturdier than she looks." Mel nodded with a smile and proceeded to fuss around with Toby's tail with the end of her staff.

They quickly reached the exit, and Suzie just watched them stroll out of the building with their charge. Before she left, Emma tossed the woman behind the counter the pouch of coins. It clinked heavily and she jumped. Emma winked on her way out. "Not much of a mess this time, and I think that should cover what damages there are, with maybe a little extra for a beautiful lady." Suzie peered into the pouch, her face draining of color when she saw how much money it contained. Emma threw her head back in a laugh and swaggered out of the door.

The dull, nearly constant roar of an enormous city during the busiest part of the day greeted her suddenly as she blinked at the abruptly bright light. Her keen eyes adjusted quickly, and she jogged to catch up with her two teammates. During any time of day, Southcliff was a sight to see. Even the back alleys were broad avenues that a team of horses could be driven down, all paved with huge stones, and the city was kept immaculately clean. The Duke was proud of his city, and his pride showed in the prosperity of Southcliff and its surrounding lands.

The three Lancers strode almost casually along the roads, and Emma's eyes were constantly drawn to the shining structure that rose up on the hill above the city. The Sanctum Arcanum, outshining every other building, even Castle Southcliff, by an order of magnitude, ringed its hill like a silver-streaked, white marble crown. It was where they were bound, the headquarters of the Silver Lance, and the home of the Archmage of the Ordo Arcanum, Emma's father.

She longed to see her home again. She had been out securing the meeting with the shark currently thrown over Toby's strong shoulder with all the concern granted a sack of potatoes for quite some time, and she missed her family and other friends. She didn't regret it though. The shark had been peddling tainted potions, intentionally designed to be addictive, to the women he preyed on for long enough. His fate was up to the Tribunal now. Emma just wanted a break, and maybe something hot to drink, and clothes that fit her better, and a nap... a nice, long nap.

A long, ornate path that wound slowly up the hill carried the three Lancers toward their destination, and they received numerous, ecstatic greetings from their fellows that stood on guard at the massive gates, huge doors that stood almost

constantly open. Emma was surprised as, after dropping off their charge, Toby and Mel both wrapped their arms around her in an intimate hug. She giggled hopelessly. "Get out of here." Mel whispered, "We've got all of your reports, we can handle the paperwork. It's your turn to take a load off."

Emma sagged into their arms, she could have kissed them. Instead, she thanked them profusely and jogged off into the compound as Toby shooed her away. Giddy excitement worked its way through her body and short arcs of electricity jumped from scale to scale as she bounded energetically through the broad, open halls. The whole place smelled of a dizzying mix of people, most of them familiar. As she turned a corner and bounced through another wide doorway, she gulped in a huge breath of fresh air as she strolled out into the open courtyard that was ringed by the lofty walls.

It was part park, part drill yard. There were a number of trainees running a complex obstacle course that had been constructed off to the side, hugging one of the walls, and Emma could see Valorie towering over a gathering of other Lancers who were sparring, by the sounds of it. She sighed and wandered out into the open. The sun-soaked grass was warm against her toes. The space within those walls was like another world, quiet and serene in spite of the occasional sounds of light conversation and mock combat. Great trees provided ample shade, and a small stream meandered between their roots. Emma wandered through the dappled shade on her way up the hill. As she passed under the hanging branches of the ancient-looking willow tree that capped the hill, she sauntered over to its trunk and ran an affectionate claw along its rough bark.

She whispered a greeting to the dryad in the willow as the branches waved above her in a nonexistent breeze with the soft groaning of shifting wood. She patted the trunk like an old friend and started down the other side of the hill. She could smell him, hanging in the air, and could sometimes catch the rumbling of his voice, and she let her legs carry her at their own pace.

As she crept around a thick elm, she saw him. He was seated, cross-legged in front of a table upon which lay a number of ornately carved figurines. He seemed deep in thought, engrossed in some game with a pretty, full-figured horse morph seated across the table from him, albeit in a chair. She had brilliant green eyes and fur the color of burnished copper, and would have stood perhaps a few inches more than a foot over Emma. As different as they were, they both had a look of quiet intensity plastered across their features, and the air practically vibrated with silent tension.

Slowly, the equine lifted a cautious hand, laying it gingerly on one of the figurines. With dire purpose, she scooted it forward across the table and eventually released it with the finality of someone pronouncing a death sentence. "Check. And. Mate." she growled with supreme satisfaction.

The Archmage's massive shoulders sagged and he sadly knocked over the largest of his pieces with a thick, black claw. The long, black coat he wore did little to conceal his tremendous form; it didn't even close over his wide chest, not that it needed to hide anything his reflective, golden scales already kept hidden for him. His thick, tapering tail poked out of the back of his coat through a slit cut up its length, and the coat even had sleeves for his wings, meaning that there was no way he had put it on without the aid of some spell or another.

He was facing away from her, so she couldn't see the broad stripe of black scales that covered his front and divided his body, and the translucent crimson hide stretched between the bones of his partly outstretched wings covered much of the rest of him. She could still make out the thicket of horns that crowned his head, the largest two of which curved back over his skull and back up, thinning to dangerous points. He sighed heavily, "I almost had you, too."

The equine's eyes glimmered with mirth, "Please. That mate was coming eight moves ago. No need to be a sore loser."

The dragon snorted, a plume of wispy grey smoke drifting up from his nostrils. "We'll see how sure you are next time." He shooed her away with an idle claw. "Now go on, Aurora. Find your brother and run through your exercises again. The rest of the day is yours."

She bounded to her feet, distinctly un-horselike, with a giddy grin. "At once. Thank you, Master."

He nodded in reply as the horse trotted happily away, giving Emma a warm smile along the way. The young dragoness had practically grown up with the twins. Aurora jogged toward the walls, disappearing inside as Emma approached. The Archmage's tail flicked excitedly through the air as she strolled in range, almost reflexively coiling around Emma's waist and hauling her easily through the air around him. She couldn't help but giggle excitedly as he deposited her into his arms and held her to his powerful chest. Her whole body vibrated as he murmured to her. "Emma. It's good to see you."

She couldn't help but purr warmly, her chest vibrating alongside his. Her father was more than twice her height, and his tremendous frame was a picturesque example of overwhelming, draconic might, with broad shoulders and a strong, prominent musculature. The teeth that he showed in his happy grin were sharper and far deadlier than any blade, and the claws into which his fingers terminated were just as dangerous. His coat-clad arms hugged her into his body with shameless affection, and the heat that poured off of his scales seeped into her bones.

Wrapping around his forearm, her tail signaled her happiness. "Hi Dad. I missed you."

"And I you, little one. I take it your mission was a success, then?"

Nodding, she returned his embrace. "Mhmm. Toby and Mel are processing him now, so I've got a little extra time off. I figured I'd come and say hi before I went to go dig up some trouble to get myself into."

"You sound like some trouble or another isn't going to find you. I don't think you've ever had to go looking for trouble." He chuckled as he pulled her off of him, suspending her with his hands under her arms. "You've hit another growth spurt in the past few weeks. I don't know how much longer Valorie's going to be able to call you Shorty... Cross your arms over your chest." She did so. "All the way." She sighed and bent her arms, wrapping them over her torso and wincing when several buttons popped off of her back. "That won't do at all, will it?" he mused as he poked a finger into the hole the shark had cut into her shirt, lifting a scaled eyebrow.

Rolling her eyes, she listened to him mutter a brief string of words under his breath. She felt a light, tingling sensation wander over her scales, and her uncomfortably tight clothes mercifully loosened, suddenly fitting her perfectly. Likely, her buttons had been magically repaired as well. Her father's sapphire eyes sparkled brightly. "Better?"

"Much." she answered. He nodded decisively and sat her down, trailing a claw along her horns, making her tail wiggle enthusiastically behind her. "Thanks. Do you know where Mom is? I was hoping to say hi to her before I went to pick a fight with someone much bigger than me."

He gave her the same pleased hum he had given Aurora as he rose slowly to his wickedly taloned feet. "They don't know what they'll be getting into, but no. Your mother and Dawn left the other day for Fellsmere. Dawn hasn't quite gotten teleportation down yet, and Clara offered to fly her."

Emma shrugged indifferently. "It's not a problem. I don't plan on leaving Southcliff until my next assignment. I've done enough trekking for a while, I think. Tell Mom to find me when she and Dawn get back. I'm supposed to meet some friends at The Chalice tonight, but I think I'll stop by early since I've got some extra time."

With another graceful nod, he pulled her into a farewell hug that pinned her to his thigh for a long moment. "Take care, little one. And have fun. Say hello to Kathryn for me."

She peeled herself off of him as she promised to do just that. Spreading her wings out behind her, the grass flattened around her takeoff point as she leapt into the air, trailing her tail along the Archmage's arm and flapping higher into the sky. When she crested the walls, a cool, light breeze caught her wings and carried her easily to the sloped roof of the great ring. Southcliff stretched off in every direction, and even this far up in the air she could hear the hustle and bustle of thousands upon thousands of people going about their business.

Laughing cheerfully, she waved to her father once more before she threw herself off of the roof, the wind whistling past her wings as she hurtled down the hill. She raced her shadow across the ground, shouting greetings to the occasional person who could be bothered enough from their tasks to look up at the sudden flicker of sunlight as she passed over them. She danced over rooftops, knowing exactly where she was going. She knew Southcliff like the scales on the back of her hand.

It was only a few minutes later when she touched down in a small courtyard with a flourish of her black-skinned wings. There weren't many people around at this hour, and those that were either ignored her arrival or greeted her with waves and friendly smiles. The building adjacent to the yard had a hanging sign that proclaimed it to be an inn called The Brass Chalice. It was engraved with a stylized image of two cheerful men, one raising a wooden tankard in a toast, the other gripping an ornate goblet.

It was like a second home, and she grinned as she strolled in through the simple, double doors. The inside of the building was brightly lit by the midday sun streaming in through the bank of windows that lined a wall, but would quickly grow dim and murky with twilight. She took a deep breath. The air inside smelled of a dizzying mixture of scents. She could make out wood smoke laced with various, and all legal, intoxicants, the smell of alcohol, and something deliciously greasy wafting in through the swinging doors that led to the kitchen in the back. There weren't many people in at this early hour, but The Chalice would be more than full by sundown.

She strolled casually up to the bar that ran nearly the length of one wall and took a seat in one of the many comfortable stools. The bartender, a lanky bird morph with glossy black plumage, looked up at her entrance, a pleased smile touching his eyes. "If it isn't Emendata, here to grace us with her magnificence!" he cried cheerfully as he set aside the glass he had been cleaning and wiped his leathery-skinned hands on the pristine, white apron that he wore. "I was told you weren't going to be in until later. To what do I owe the honor, milady Lancer?"

She smiled at his sincerity. "Things were wrapped up sooner than I expected, and I'm terribly thirsty, so I thought I'd stop by a little early for a surprise inspection. I've got to keep you on your toes, featherhead."

He wrung his hands expectantly and nodded knowingly, as if that was what he had expected her to do all along. "And what might it be first, my loveliest of patrons? Mistress Valorie seems rather taken with my mead of late; she likes it sweeter than most. Or will it be the usual?"

"I think I'll stick with the usual, birdbrain, but you might be able to talk me into getting adventurous later."

"One usual it is then." he said smoothly. With jerky, but practiced and masterful movements, he spun a small pewter mug onto the bar and promptly filled almost to the rim with dark, steamy liquid. He then dug under the bar for no more for a second before he withdrew a small jar and popped the cap off, pouring a healthy dollop of sweet, cloying honey into Emma's tea. Stowing the jar, he pushed the mug toward her and handed her a thin, wooden dowel with which to stir it. She slid him a fine, silver coin in payment and idly swirled her drink.

"Emma!"

The dragoness barely had time to turn to the voice's owner before she was nearly tackled off of her stool by an almost manically happy cat morph with splotchy, calico fur that was a dizzying mix of black, white, and orange. She was wearing a calf-length skirt and a simple blouse under a tight, linen bodice that intimately hugged her svelte, petite figure. Over all that was hung a crisp white apron that she smoothed over her stomach as she released Emma, her furred tail perking up behind her. "S-sorry!" she shyly squeaked, "It's just been a while."

Emma grinned widely and patted the stool next to her, which the excited feline gladly took. "Duty called and all that, but I couldn't stay away from my favorite little kitten for very long." She scratched the fur behind her ears for a brief second, and almost instantly had her purring in her chair. "How have things been around here, Kat? I've been away for too many nights."

Pulling her hand away to give Kathryn a chance to speak, Emma listened intently as the feline filled her in on the local goings-on with bright, cerulean eyes and a warmhearted smile. "So did you catch him?" she asked after she was finished.

"Mhmm." answered the dragoness, "He didn't put up as much of a fight as I imagined he would, and he went down pretty easily, although I think I broke his jaw. I definitely made him lose a handful of teeth. I wanted to show you the hole in my shirt where he tried to stab me, but my father fixed it before I had the opportunity."

Kathryn's eyes were wide with awe. "He stabbed you? That doesn't seem like a very smart thing to do."

"Stabbing someone rarely is, regardless of the circumstances."

Corvus nodded sagely behind the bar before casting an attentive glance at another patron who plodded clumsily up to the counter on heavy, cloven hooves. He sank into the stool next to Kathryn, making the sturdy wood creak ominously. He was huge, more than nine feet tall, with a heavy, bulky musculature that strained his dark clothing nearly to its limits. His dark brown fur was only a shade lighter than his dark hair, and a pair of tapering bull's horns poked up near his floppy, bovine ears. Corvus eyed him suspiciously as he slurred an order. He was

clearly already drunk, despite it only being mid-afternoon, and he reeked like he had bathed in pure grain alcohol, the smell searing into Emma's nostrils.

He turned bleary, brown eyes to the side, apparently not seeing that the avian barkeep clearly didn't intend to serve him anything. When his eyes lit on Kathryn, his face split in a hungry grin. "Why hello there, pretty lady." he said in a deep, nearly incomprehensible mumble, "Let me just get a drink, and I'll show you the best time of your life."

Emma blinked in shock. Was this bull morph really hitting on her friend in such a sorry state? He wasn't really making a good argument for the virtues of alcohol, and she had to stifle a giggle as Kathryn politely rebuffed him, scooting closer to the dragoness to get away from the bull's atrocious breath. She and Kathryn both stiffened, however, when he rose clumsily to his hooves to tower over the feline, a silent threat gleaming in his eyes. Emma could plainly see the impressive bulge throbbing sluggishly between his legs, half-hard despite his intoxication. It would have split Kathryn in half if he had tried anything with it. "Come on, kitten. Everyone wants a ride."

The dragoness laid a steady hand on Kathryn's thigh, fighting the tide of overwhelming violence that was starting to tighten her chest. "I assure you, I don't." growled the feline, "And don't call me kitten."

He scoffed in a low, breathy laugh. "Or what, kitten? You'll let me see your claws? Go ahead; I can take them." He braced his hand on the bar while he reached toward her with the other. "In fact, I think I'll take that drink later. I'm going to take you up to a room and-AH!"

As soon as his fingertips touched Kathryn's shoulder, Emma had resolved to remove them from his body, but before she could act on her decision, he yelped in sudden pain as Corvus produced a dagger from nowhere and slammed it though the bull's palm, pinning his other hand to the counter. The bovine grunted and turned toward the bartender with an angry scowl, obviously intending violence, but as he turned, Corvus prodded the tip of another length of steel against the bull's crotch, which made him cool off rather quickly.

"Alright, Maggie." he said in a dire whisper, his beak clicking threateningly around each word, "I don't know how you got so drunk that you thought this would be a good idea, and I certainly didn't serve you enough to make you this stupid, which means someone must have carried in a little something extra with them. So here's what's going to happen. You're going to pay your tab and get the fuck out of my inn right now, and then you're going to go home and sleep this off, or you're going to carry your balls home in a bag and pray to the gods that you can find someone willing to sew them back on. And then, if you find yourself with a desire to come back, you'd better come in here blindfolded, because if you ever again as

much as look at one of my employees I will mop my floors with your intestines. Is that clear?"

With a slow, dull nod and a few frightened blinks of his eyes, he numbly dropped a heavy pouch onto the bar. Only then did Corvus jerk the knife out of his hand with a ragged twist, making him squirm in agony. He staggered away from the counter, clutching at his pained hand. He stooped through the door, and neither Emma nor the bartender relaxed until they heard his heavy footsteps receding away from the building. Corvus wiped his soiled blade on his apron, leaving two bloody streaks that he wore like badges of honor before he made the knives practically disappear back up his sleeves. He picked up the pouch the bull had left and asked almost casually, "Are you okay, Kathryn?"

She sank back into her stool, leaning hard into the supportive arm that Emma threw around her shoulders. "Y-yes." she said with a nod.

Corvus returned it and pulled open the pouch in his hands. He withdrew a few small pieces of silver and slid the rest of it over to the feline barmaid, saying with an impressed smile, "It looks like he left you quite the tip. You must have made quite the impression on our rather burly former patron."

Kathryn peered inside, her eyes widening in shock as she took in the pouch's contents. "Gods' Blood... this is... a lot. I wasn't even the one who served him."

"Funny. He specifically told me to give it to you. You know the rules. The customer is always right!"

"Y-yes sir."

He slid a tray burdened with freshly made drinks Emma hadn't even seen him preparing over to the cat morph. "Then back to work, Kathryn. Tables three, six, and twelve."

She grinned and bounced to her padded feet, scooping the tray into her hand and giving Corvus a courteous curtsy. "Grab a table, Em. I've got a break coming up in an hour. I'd love to talk some more."

Emma promised to do just that as she took the first sip of her tea and watched Kathryn sashay away to her tables. Corvus pulled a soapy cloth from under the bar and worked to clean the bloodstain from the well-worn wood. The dragoness turned toward him as she savored her drink. "I could have handled that, you know." she said in a hushed tone after a silent moment.

"Trust me, I know." Corvus retorted, "but you make too much of a mess. It's far easier to clean blood off of the bar than to replace it after you break it on someone's skull."

"Oh come on; I wasn't going to hit this one with the bar, I was just thinking a little bit of light mutilation, nothing too messy."

The raven looked at her dubiously, "Sure... That the way it always starts. A few cuts, a broken bone, and suddenly you're popping people's heads off in the

middle of my inn." There was a tense, silent moment, and they abruptly broke out into uproarious laughter, bending over the bar in their mirth. "It is good to see you again, Emma." he added, patting her shoulder, "Now go and stake your claim. Kathryn will have my tail feathers if I keep you two apart for very long."

Emma nodded with a happy, toothy grin and pushed herself off the wood, dragging her mug along with her. She plopped herself down in a chair adjacent to an empty table, sticking her tail through the hole in the chair's back. The atmosphere of the inn's common room felt as if the confrontation hadn't ever happened, and it was rather placid and relaxing. Her legs splayed out under the table in front of her and she wiggled her toes in satisfaction as she drank her tea, watching Kathryn and her coworker stalking between the tables, keeping the handful of people with whom she shared the room content.

Every time Kathryn wandered past, or stopped to pour her more tea, the feline's furry tail brushed affectionately along her arm, making Emma smile distantly. Almost half an hour later, Kathryn surprised her by spinning around her and dropping unceremoniously into a chair next to the dragoness before scooting closer and smoothing her short, white hair around her face.

Leaning in as if to share a juicy bit of gossip, Emma said in a conspiratorial whisper, "So tell me, Kat. How have you and Sage been doing? Anything juicy to share?"

Her furred friend blushed fiercely, Kathryn's triangular ears turning red. "W-we've been doing well... really well." She smiled fondly, remembering. "She's too good to me, Emma. I'm so happy when she's around. She said she'd be here tonight."

"Good." said Emma without hesitation as she took Kathryn's hands in her fingers, squeezing them confidently, "You both deserve someone who'll treat you like the beautiful women that you are. I'm so happy for you both."

Kathryn looked down shyly. "Thanks... I owe you a drink for convincing me to talk to her." She fidgeted for a few seconds before looking up at Emma.

"Speaking of beautiful women, I was wondering if you'd do something for me."

Lifting scaled eyebrows, Emma leaned back in her chair and casually crossed her arms under her ample bust. "Oh? And what might I do for you."

She chuckled when Kathryn showed her nervousness. "Well... you see... My sister's been in town for a bit over a week, but she's due to head back home in a few days. Would you mind going to talk to her, answering her questions?"

"Questions about what?"

"Sh-she's really only my half-sister, so she didn't get my mother's... fur. She's been thinking of... having some work done, if you know what I mean, and she's got a thing for scales. I think she might appreciate having someone with scales to talk to before she makes a decision and spends all that money. I mean... I

don't want you to talk her out of anything, just tell her what she wants to know. She's been asking me all these questions, but I was born like this and I feel like I can't help her."

"Uh-huh..." said Emma with a touch of suspicion, "So you're not just trying to set me up with your sister?"

Emma didn't believe the feline could blush any harder, but she did. "N-no!" she cried out defensively, "She just needs advice! Any setting-up will be between you and her! I mean... I've told her about you, but any interest she might express is hers, not mine!"

She raised her hands, backing down from the pretty cat morph before her ears caught fire. "Alright, alright. I believe you. Relax; don't get your tail in a knot. I'll talk to her. She's here I take it?" Kathryn nodded and gave her the room number. "Swell then. Oh! Speaking of getting work done, my father says hi."

Kathryn twitched nervously in her chair. "Th-the Archmage wanted to talk to me?" she squeaked at a pitch Emma was surprised she could hear, "W-why?"

"It's not that dramatic, he just wanted me to say hi for him."

"Why?"

"Because he knew I'd be seeing you later today..."

"He remembers me?"

"He remembers everyone."

"He barely even met me! I never even talked to him!"

"Yeah, because you could barely breathe, you were so nervous."

"He only saw me once!"

"He likes you."

"He knows me?!"

"Hey, you're not the only one who talks to their family about their friends."

"My Dad's not the Archmage..."

"So?"

"He's a dragon!"

"I'm a dragon!"

The slender feline stopped and sagged against her chair. "Yeah, but..." she murmured with great uncertainty, "You... you're different." Emma just waited expectantly, and Kathryn grasped at the air, searching for something to say. "You, you... You aren't a dragon AND the Archmage!"

Emma scoffed and rolled her eyes with theatrical flair, and Kathryn abruptly burst out laughing, the awkward tension shattered. The dragoness laughed with her, clapping the feline on the back with enough force to nearly throw her from her chair. Still giggling, Emma staggered to her feet, downing the rest of her tea with climactic finality. "Alright, skinny. I suppose I'll go talk to your sister before she

winds up with two heads or three arms. Gods know what might happen if she's left to her own devices."

The feline wiped a laughter-driven tear from her eye and held a hand over her stomach. "Heaven's forbid. Just be gentler with her than you were with me."

She left Kathryn cackling at the table behind her as she strolled over to the stairs to the side of the bar and hopped up them two at a time, reaching the second floor quickly. Down a short way, she came to the door Kathryn had indicated to her. She knocked softly, and opened it when a gentle, feminine voice called her in.

"Hey, Kat." sighed the woman seated at the simple table by the window. Emma just stared and took her in. She was a little shorter than her fuzzy sibling, and appeared to be completely human at first glance. She was clad in a modest, well-made dress that fell nearly to her ankles, but clung to her voluptuous curves with tenacious zeal. Where her sister downstairs was willowy and whip-thin, the attractive woman that sat, unseeing her guest, had an incredibly enticing figure that strained at the front and sides of her dress in a way that almost took Emma's breath away. She really was stunning. She had a lovely, delicately featured face with soft contours and pert, kissable lips.

In fact, her whole bearing seemed... soft. She wasn't overweight, but she had a thin layer of plush fat that lent her body a pleasant-looking plumpness. It was refreshing to the dragoness. The rigorous physical demands of the Silver Lance kept all of her colleagues trim and athletic at the least, if not powerfully muscular. Emma herself was a cross between the two, with a slender body that carried almost impossible curviness and was packed with a layer of dense, unyielding muscle that lurked under her scales, ready to spring into action if she were to need it.

Brushing a lock of her shoulder-length, pale brown hair over an ear, she looked over at Emma, and her bright blue eyes, eyes she shared with Kathryn, immediately opened wide in shock. "Gods' Blood!" cried the woman sharply as she scrambled from her chair, "I-I'm sorry! I thought you were someone else! I... Uh, wh-what can I help you with, miss?" Emma smiled a greeting and opened her mouth, but was cut off as sudden recognition washed over her hostess's face. "Oh! Wait! I know you! Y-you're... Emma, right? My sister's told me so much about you!"

"The one and only." confirmed the dragoness, continuing her smile, "Although I regret that Kathryn's told me very little about you." She strode casually forward, extending her arm toward the still-surprised woman. "Aeneaemendatacaerulea of the Silver Lance, at your service milady. My friends, and now you, can call me Em or Emma if you want, or Emendata if you're feeling particularly formal."

The bewildered beauty took Emma's hand and shook it briskly. "Hi." she chirped happily, "My name's Kassiedie. And if we're friends now I guess you can call me Kass."

"I'm all for new friends. One can never have enough people to rely on." Kass grinned and nodded in agreement as Emma unfastened her cape and pulled it off her shoulder, slipping it into her satchel before she pulled the bag off of her body and hung it on a peg on the wall. "It's a pleasure to meet you, and it's truly a shame Kathryn never introduced us. I feel like I'd have liked to know you before now."

Kass blushed, and Emma saw the family resemblance. "I guess we better get caught up then."

Bouncing excitedly on her toes, she moseyed over to the bed, careful to keep her talons from the wood of the floor. The Brass Chalice was rather plush as far inns went, with real beds and thick, comfortable mattresses that weren't full of bugs. She took a seat at the foot of the bed, noticing that there was only one chair in the room. Her tail she curled around in front of her and laid in her lap, fiddling with the hem of her tailsleeve. "So..." she said slowly as Kass seated herself in her chair after pulling it closer to the dragoness, "Kat tells me you were thinking about getting yourself a nice set of scales and said you might have a few questions for someone who's had them her whole life. Would you like to talk about this colossal, potentially life-changing and intensely personal decision with someone you just met?"

"Come now." she said shyly, "I feel like I've known you a while. Kathryn's absolutely infatuated with you; the only person I've heard more about is Sage, and that only barely." She laced her fingers together over her stomach and smoothed the front of her dress. "I don't know..." she began hesitantly, "People have always told us how beautiful we are, Kathryn and I. She certainly is, tall and svelte and graceful, and I suppose I am too, in a different way. Not... not that I want to sound arrogant about it! I-it's just something I've noticed. But I just never felt... right, you know? I feel like the Kass people see isn't the Kass I am... or should be? Does that make any sense?"

Emma nodded, resting elbows on her knees as she leaned toward her hostess. "W-well," Kassiedie continued, "I grew up in Kedrinn with my father after my mother died. He remarried when I was young; I think because he thought I needed a mother. He was probably right, and Kathryn was born when I was six. She and I grew up, and it was awkward for a while, being so different, but it's hardly weird anymore isn't it? There were always other morphs around when we were young, and I always remember being more taken to scales than to fur or fins."

"I wanted what they had. I want that for myself. I want that smooth surface I can polish. I want a big, thick tail I can wrap around my leg. I want digitigrade feet that end in claws that click when I walk. I... I **want** it, Emma! And I've finally

saved up enough money to pay for it! Not a cheap cosmetic job, either, but the whole thing, with egg-laying and sharp teeth and a long tongue and... all of it! I want it, and it's so close to being mine I can almost feel the scales under my skin!"

She heaved a deep breath that pressed her heavy breasts into the cloth over her chest and rose unsteadily to her feet, raking her fingers through her hair. "Gods' Blood... I'm sorry. I didn't mean to get so carried away. I just... I get worked up thinking about it. S-sorry. Sorry. I must sound so desperate."

Emma's own chest bounced in a lively chuckle. "I don't know about desperate." said the dragoness, "I think you're just a woman who knows what she wants and isn't afraid to chase it down. Which, admittedly, begs the question: Are there actually any questions you want to ask me?"

Kass's eyes shot up, meeting her own, suddenly intense. "Y-yes." she said quietly as she glided closer and sat down cautiously next to Emma, their hips almost making contact. "Emma? Can I touch you?"

An eyebrow quirked up, but she assented with an inviting smile, pulling her sleeve up and holding out her bronze-scaled arm to Kass. The scale-bound woman outstretched her own hand and laid delicate fingers on the dragoness's outstretched limb. Kassiedie let out a shaky, reverent breath and lightly touched Emma, tracing a finger around the outline of each individual scale as they got progressively smaller toward her hand, where they grew fine. "They're so perfect." Kass whispered worshipfully, "Do you polish them?"

She nodded in answer. "Yes. When they get dirty or scuffed."

Taking the dragoness's hand up in both of hers, Kass fingered the sharp, black claws that capped Emma's fingers. "You feel so strong. How do you not hurt someone?"

It was Emma's turn to take up Kass's hand with another slow nod. "The key is to use the fingers rather than the arms." The woman's flawless skin glided smoothly under her fingertips as she stroked Kass's arm. "Everything takes a gentle touch. After spending your whole life holding yourself back, you get used to it. Sometimes, my father takes me out into the mountains where my mother and I can let off a little pent-up energy. She's who taught me to fight."

Kass's eyes flicked to the wings folded against her back. "So... you really are a dragon, not some morph that spent a ton of gold?"

"Born and raised." answered Emma, "Here, look at this." She reached under the neckline of her shirt and pulled out the tough, argentum chain she wore around her throat. Attached to the chain like a pendant was a small shard of something heavy. On one surface, it was a bright, metallic bronze that was spiderwebbed with veins of blue and red, and on the other, it was a pearlescent, milky white.

The curvy woman's eyes seemed ready to roll out of her head as she took it up in nervous fingers. "Is this...?"

"Mhmm. A piece of my egg. My father hid a tiny part of the shell, the only piece that I didn't eat soon after I hatched. It's so that I never forget from where I came. Although it also makes a pretty good show-and-tell piece, don't you think?"

Kass practically fondled it for a long moment before she let Emma tuck it back under her shirt. "Yes. Thank you." she said in a soft whisper, "That's nice, that you have something so special. My mother didn't leave much of me to remember her by." At the first sigh of a tear, Emma threw her arm around Kass's slender shoulders and pulled the woman the rest of the way into her, unsure of what else to do. Kass just sighed and rubbed her eyes on the sleeve of her dress. "Thanks, Emma, but I'm fine, I promise. Thanks for sharing that with me."

"Anytime."

Glimmering blue eyes peered up at her. Kass was a full foot shorter than Emma, and her wonderfully curvy frame felt good pressed into her side. A slow hand lifted to trail along the curve of the curling horns that bounded her skull. "Can you feel that?"

"Mhmm, although the biggest ones are the least sensitive. The shorter ones, around my jaw right there, are the most sensitive. They actually help me hear, since they're mounted to my skull right next to where my ears are. Although you can't see my actual ears, since they're under the scales-Oh! Y-yes... right there!" Kass had found a sensitive patch of scales at the base of her horns, and she couldn't help but lean hard into her new friend's fingers as she was scratched gingerly. "D-don't be shy. Harder. Harder... Yes..."

Kass blinked at her in surprise as a noise rumbled to life in her chest. "Are... are you purring?" her masseuse wondered wryly.

She huffed, but didn't stop purring as Kass lifted another hand to her horns and more vigorously raked nails along her scales. She couldn't stop her tail from sliding off of her lap to stretch out along the bed behind her and wiggle happily through the air. She closed her crystalline, violet eyes and leaned harder, trying to give Kass unrestricted access to her horns. "Y-yes!" she hissed, "Come on. Come on! A little higher! Harder! Oh... yes..." When she hesitantly opened her eyes as Kass's fingers ceased, she practically had her head in the woman's lap. "O-oh..." said the dragoness as she sat up, hoping Kassiedie wouldn't know to look at the membrane of her wings for her embarrassed blush. "S-sorry. You're not the only one who can get carried away, I guess."

A small, soft hand stayed on her, dropping from her horns to her shoulder, and she felt Kass gently knead her muscle through her shirt. "Gods' Blood." murmured the smaller woman in admiration, "You're so hard... Is that the scales, or just you? I mean... you're a lot more muscular than me... than a lot of people."

"It's both, really." Emma admitted. Kass hummed appreciatively when the dragoness rolled her shoulders under the woman's fingers. "But it's not always

about this strong, hard body of mine. A little softness in the right places can go a long way. Here, let me show you." She took the hand Kass had on her shoulder and wrapped it in strong fingers. The scales on her hands were smaller and finer than those on her limbs and torso, and her hands were soft, despite how rough their scales looked. Lifting, she laid Kass's fingers over her snout.

Kassedie took the initiative and gently petted the smooth scales of her face, trailing her fingers up between her eyes as Emma inhaled deeply. "You smell... wonderful." she whispered, closing her eyes.

"Really? What do I smell like?"

She shivered as the hand on her roamed lower, running fondly along her jaw. She told Kass what she smelled, pausing between each sentence to take another deep breath. "You smell alive. You smell beautifully alive. You smell like flowers, wild daisies, like you walked through a prairie since your last bath. You had... pork with your lunch, and you paid for it; it was well-seasoned... with garlic and onions. You didn't get it here. It was Mary's. You ate there with Kathryn, and she hugged you; I can still smell her on your dress. You drank... wine, red and dry, from the vineyard to the north." She smiled when Kassedie shivered and dipped her hand lower still, fondling the contour of her collarbone. "Your heart's starting to beat harder, and you're beginning to sweat. Little beads, not because it's hot. It smells like... desire, excitement. Your hand's trembling; you might not even be able to tell. You want so badly to let your hand fall just a little lower, but you're afraid. You smell worried, worried that I'll tell you to stop, that you won't find out if they're as soft as they look."

Keeping her eyes closed, she slipped her own hand around Kass's back and caressed her reassuringly. "Go ahead. They don't bite." Kassedie was clearly forcing herself to take slow, controlled breaths as her fingers slid lower over Emma's shirt and onto the curves of her ample chest. The dragoness smiled. She had inherited a little bit of her mother's impossible hourglass figure just as she had her father's sculpted physique, and she was miles away from being flat-chested. She was really only a little bit smaller than Kass in shapeliness, and the full-bodied woman seemed about to explode out of her dress at any moment. She was big, and deceptively plush and pliant, much to Kassedie's delight as Emma's chest was quickly and expertly manipulated by nimble fingers.

Kass raised her other hand, turning more toward Emma as she turned all of her attention onto the dragoness. "You're so soft." Kassedie breathed into the Emma's ear. Her eyes stayed closed, but she nodded in reply as she arched her back, pushing into Kass's palms. "I didn't think scales would let your skin be so... flexible. They must be very fine and smooth."

"Yes." murmured Emma in a pleased purr, "Anywhere I have to bend, my scales are smaller and less rigid, elbows knees, neck, around my m-mouth, and of

course, my delicates." Kass laughed quietly in a most alluringly low, breathy manner as Emma vocalized her pleasure in a soft moan. "W-would you like to see for yourself?"

"More than anything. Please."

Emma smiled and slid her eyes lazily open. Her masseuse's cheeks were flushed rosy pink with desire, and bright eyes looked up expectantly at her. "Here." she whispered intimately as she reluctantly peeled Kassiedie's hands off of her chest, "Help me take off my shirt. There are so many buttons, and you seem to be very good with your fingers."

As she spun, turning her back toward Kass, she heard the woman giggle lightly. "I certainly hope so. It's my job to be good with my fingers." She laid hands on Emma's back, beginning to slowly undo the countless buttons that held her shirt awkwardly closed around her winged torso. "I'm a masseuse, and a pretty good one at that, if I might brag a little. It's always nice to know that your skills are appreciated. I've had quite a bit of practice." Kass let out a barely audible coo of delight when she freed the dragoness's wings from their cloth prison. Emma rolled her head back and sighed thankfully, stretching her wings out to the sides and presenting a wall of diaphanous, black hide to Kass. It never felt right, keeping her body covered. It was especially frustrating to have fabric around the base of her wings, and as more and more buttons were tugged from their holes, she felt a rising excitement build within her.

One of Kassiedie's hands stayed bent to its task, but she lifted the other to trail a few fingers along Emma's taut skin. She flapped weakly, blowing a few loose articles of Kass's around the room. The instrument of her freedom leaned forward, and she felt the softness of Kass's own chest as the curvy woman pressed into Emma's back. "What's it like to fly, Emma?"

"It's freedom." she said without pausing to think, "It's hope, and joy. It's the wind under your wings. It's the beauty of the open sky and knowing that there isn't anywhere you can't reach. It's... hard to describe without getting poetic, sorry. Maybe I can take you up sometime and show you in person."

"I think I'd like that. Could you really carry me?"

Emma scoffed and leaned back into Kassiedie's chest, flexing the powerful muscles of her wings against the plush mass of the breasts pressed into her back. "I could carry you." intimated the dragoness confidently, "I'm stronger than I look. While extra weight does make it harder to fly, and I definitely couldn't drag some horse up with me, I think I could manage little old you, for a little while, at least."

"Have you taken Kathryn with you?"

"I've offered, but she's politely declined. I think she's afraid of heights."

Kass laughed as she undid the final button and slid her fingers up and over the smooth lines of Emma's back. "She always was the more well-grounded sister."

An intrigued hum buzzed in her chest as two sets of fingers slid around her sides and under her shirt to cup her bountiful orbs. Kassiedie must have been impatient. "I thought you wanted to see."

"I never said I wanted to stop touching." Which was fair enough, Emma supposed, but Kass stopped when her hands found something else. "Oh..."

"Oh?" mused the dragoness as she rolled her shoulders and gradually slipped her shirt off of her body, "Not expecting nipples?"

"I don't know what I was expecting. I know some other lizards don't have them."

"I'm not a lizard." Emma assured her, "And I've got to feed my hatchlings somehow. Fresh meat is all well and good, but growing dragonlings need a little bit extra. But you don't want to hear about something so boring. Here..." Kassiedie assured her than she did, and whined when Emma peeled the gently stroking fingers off of her chest. She stopped, however, when the dragoness rose gracefully to her feet and spun, throwing out her chest and proudly putting her body on display for Kass. She showed her razor-sharp teeth in a violently pleased grin. It looked like her new friend was close to fainting in awe.

Slowly, she trailed an onyx claw down the length of her body, tracing her curves as she reached down to the waist of her pants and the buttons that held them on. These she could take care of herself, and she plucked the buttons down her hip from their holes with careful, precise movements. Kass was practically drooling on herself as Emma rolled her hips from side to side, getting the pants far enough down her legs for her to slide her tail free of its sleeve. Kicking her pants away with her shirt, the dragoness arched her back and lifted her arms into a fiercely boastful stretch. It felt so good to be out of those flimsy rags. She didn't need them. Others needed them. All she needed were her wings, and scales, and the strength of her body.

An unbidden, predatorial growl rumbled to life in her chest, and she took a step toward the frail human sitting before her. Kassiedie gasped softly and let the air out of her lungs in a slow, shuddering breath. "Y-you're... perfect." she said in an ardent, breathy whisper.

"Yes." replied the dragoness without a hint of hesitation, "Although my name technically means 'Flawless,' perfect is acceptable." She struck a pose, throwing her hip out and flicking her tail through the air behind her. It felt right to be admired. "How do I look?"

A worshipful hand trailed up her thigh to her exposed hip. Kass's eyes were full of unbridled, almost religious reverence. "Flawless." she corrected herself. Her eyes flicked to Emma's apparently bare, blue-scaled crotch for a quick second.

The dragoness caught her staring and sashayed a few steps closer. "Don't worry." she purred, "It's all there, under the scales, straining to get out, everything you want, and a little extra for a beautiful lady."

Cerulean eyes glanced up and back down. "So... you're a... I mean... You've got-"

"Yes." interjected Emma before Kass's cheeks could invent a new shade of red, "The first dragon ever to be born with both sets of... bits, according to my parents." She laughed, taking another step closer, practically straddling Kassiedie's lap. It was impossible to get much closer without standing on top of her. "That was one hell of an awkward conversation when I was growing up, but I guess you've been there, with Kathryn being one too." Emma looked down past the rounded swells of her breasts at Kass, who's hands danced closer and closer to her loins across her smooth bronze and blue scales. "Be careful." she growled in warning, "I'm very... v-very sensitive down there. I'd hate to put out your eye on accident." She finished with a whisper, "Do you want to see that too?"

Kassiedie remained silent, but her hands slowed, and she carefully stroked her way back up the dragoness's body, taking the curves of her breasts in her hands and finding Emma's tender buds with her fingers. She found herself fondled gently, but quickly hissed as Kass grew more forceful. The woman seated before her leaned in slowly and pressed lips to Emma's abdomen as she reluctantly released the dragoness's more-than-hand-filling bust and slid her fingers down Emma's sides, firmly groping the entire way. She favored the dragoness's tapered, yet muscular, waist with fond devotion, but eventually reached around, running her hands down Emma's tail.

Emma purred as she was worshipped, but Kass wasn't even looking at her. She was looking through her, seeing what she wanted herself to have, and the dragoness was keen to oblige her. Kassiedie let herself be pushed back, further up onto the bed, as Emma took her firmly by the shoulders and climbed up in front of her. Kass whined as she was oh so gently pressed down onto her back, leaving the dragoness kneeling in front of her. She dipped down, letting Kass continue to stroke the scales of her tail as she crawled up onto the supine woman.

Her lips were meant for little more than sheathing her teeth when she wasn't using them, but that didn't stop Emma from pressing them into Kassiedie's throat in a series of brief, draconic kisses. "You mentioned a long tongue." she purred into the soft skin before her, "Would you like to see mine?" She smiled when Kass moaned an affirmative, and opened her mouth, letting a length of tapering, black tongue slide from between her teeth. Leaving a trail of saliva on her neck, the dragoness traced a line up and along her neck and jaw.

Blinking unseeing eyes, Kassiedie whined when Emma pulled the long, muscular appendage from her skin to say quietly, "You taste as good as you smell."

You're starting to sweat harder. I don't want to call it musky, but you are delicious." She immediately returned her tongue to Kass's silky skin, and the pinned woman moaned again as she was hungrily licked and caressed.

The hands on her tail dropped to her back when Emma pulled the long, muscled limb up, using the tip to gently stroke the woman's gorgeous face, sweeping nimbly along her delicate features. "Now's the time, Kassiedie." she whispered, taking Kass's cheeks up in her hands, "Listen. Kassiedie, come back to me, for just a little bit." Kass blinked rapidly, her blue eyes slowly refocusing on Emma's striking violet irises. "You have to want this as much as I do, so tell me to stop." said the dragoness firmly, "Tell me I'm taking advantage of you; tell me to get off of you. Tell me to stop, and we can go downstairs, and I'll buy you a drink, and we'll visit with our friends. Just tell me to stop."

Kass peered at her curiously for a moment before her face softened. "No." she said with a sly grin, "But I'll take that drink when we're done." And then she slowly laced her fingers behind Emma's neck and suddenly yanked her downward, kissing the dragoness with wild, aggressive passion that Emma wasn't sure she had experienced before.

It was the dragoness's turn to moan hotly into Kassiedie's mouth as the suddenly impassioned woman dug hungrily into her. She had to corral Kass's tongue with her own, lest she cut herself open on the dragoness's teeth, but she seemed to take to it, and she let herself be guided by the dragoness as her hands shamelessly groped the firm muscle of Emma's shapely rear. Breathing slowly out through her nose, she calmly fought the twitching of her tail as she let it drift down to find the hem of Kassiedie's dress. She snaked the long, dexterous limb up and under the bottom of the fine cloth and started to tease it up Kass's legs, baring well-formed calves, and eventually thighs.

She started to be able to smell much more than just Kass's sweat as the beauty's excitement made itself apparent. The cloth of the well-made dress bunched around Kassiedie's wide hips, and while Kass seemed entirely unwilling to release Emma's head, the dragoness didn't need to see to reach her hands down and continue to pull it up. When Kass's back on the mattress started to become a problem, Emma just dug her hands behind her entranced lover and flicked her tail, using it as leverage to roll herself over onto her back, wings outstretched.

Kassiedie took the hint as Emma tugged fitfully at the woman's enticingly tight dress. It was going to come off if the dragoness had to tear it off, and Kassiedie relented, breaking contact with Emma's lips only long enough to drag the dress up and over her head, throwing it carelessly to the side before diving back in. Mission accomplished, Emma's hands went to Kass's plush chest, taking the soft mounds into her palms and kneading them with gleeful fingers. "Promise me you'll keep them." she growled as she pinched stiff nipples between her fingers, "It would

be a crime to rob such divine beauty from the world. Promise me you'll keep everything you can. I want to see these curves covered in a coat of nice, shiny scales. Green, blue, yellow, I don't care, just promise me you'll stay you, you angel, you."

"I promise." she cried softly, her aching buds blooming under Emma's tender ministrations, "This body people keep telling me is heavenly beyond belief is one of the only things I have left of my mother. My father always said I looked just like her, only with his eyes."

"If she was half as lovely as you, I have trouble believing your father's heart didn't explode when he first saw her. I wish I could have met her. She must have been quite the woman, to produce someone as strong-willed and wonderful as you. She would be so proud to see you chasing down your dreams."

"I know." she cried again, with genuine tears this time, dripping from her cheeks to roll off of Emma's scales, "That's what Pa keeps telling me when I talk about what I want to do." She kissed the dragoness again, and her whole body was shaking with barely contained desire. "I was afraid what my family would think of me, wanting to... to change." She let out a hoarse laugh between kisses. "They never even asked me why, either of them. They just wanted to know how they could help me go through with it." Another hot, short kiss. "I couldn't have done anything to deserve to be surrounded by such good people."

Emma took her turn to laugh. "Nonsense." she said coolly in the brief moments her mouth wasn't full of Kass's tongue, "Perhaps it's because you're one of the good people that surround them. I've seen enough evidence to that already, and I've known you for half an hour, tops." She raked clawed fingers through the fine hair that cascaded around Kassiedie's shoulders. "And besides, you're not changing, not really. You'll still be Kassiedie. And everyone deserves to feel at home in their own skin, scaled or otherwise."

"They're too good to me."

Emma slowed, pulling away and running a claw along the teary trail that ran across Kass's cheeks. "No. They're just family. You can never be too good to someone who deserves it."

Kassiedie rose up, blinking slowly, and wiped her tears on her arm. Emma watched her think as she settled her legs around the dragoness's waist. "Yes." she said gently as she dried her tears, "I suppose you're right." Nodding as if that much was obvious, Emma returned her fingers to Kassiedie's opulent figure and waited to see what she would do.

She purred warmly as Kass bent back down to her. But instead of pressing lip-to-lip again, she worked the full, soft cushions over her jaw and down onto her throat. Emma tilted her head back, giving her the most precious thing a dragon had to grant, unrestricted access to her neck. Kass hummed as if she understood the

gesture, and let her hand glide along smooth bronze scales, dipping in to trace the border where they turned blue, and then followed the contour of a tense tendon down to her collarbones, her lips an inch behind.

As Kass shifted her hips down Emma's body to let her get at the dragoness's breasts, Emma's hands tenderly, encouragingly groped the clean lines of Kass's back. The lips on her scales sent electric tingles along her spine, and as Kass's mouth found her sensitive, black nipples, she stiffened in excitement. She moaned in giddy bliss as Kass roughly worked her over, and her body responded with stunning eagerness, growing tense and tight as she spasmed. "C-careful!" she groaned, "That's tender!"

Kass giggled gaily and paused, looking up over the swell of Emma's breast at her. She winked, and slowly, almost grudgingly, left Emma's chest, her lips wandering further down over the sharp angles of her toned abdomen. Emma froze when Kass neared what seemed to be her goal, the dragoness's only movement the impatient flicking of her tail above them. The eager woman hummed curiously, considering how to go about it, seemingly not sure how to continue. Emma thought about opening herself, but it was much more fun to have someone else stimulate her into readiness.

But Kass was resourceful, and it wasn't particularly hard to figure out. She inspected the dragoness's crotch with an appraising eye until she spied, right where it belonged, an almost imperceptible irregularity in the pattern of her bright, electric blue scales. She grinned, having found her prize, and steadily worked her mouth toward it.

Emma was only able to grunt a warning when Kass's soft, wandering lips brushed over the tender spot. The dragoness arched her back powerfully and cried out in a low, ragged moan as the nearly invisible slit in her groin suddenly opened with the urgent flexing of delicate muscles. She hadn't even finished blooming when she was suddenly thrust the rest of the way open by the eruption of a semi-stiff, forearm-length draconian member that angrily thrust itself out of her loins and slapped heavily against her stomach. Emma could only pant as she finished blossoming for Kass, the slick, visibly excited lips of her womanhood spreading beneath her less shy endowment.

It was all black, the color of the rest of her skin, shining slightly with her own lustful secretions, and was darker in some areas with the flow of needy blood. Emma raised shaky hands to the sides of her head in shock. She hadn't thought she had been that pent up, but the release she had felt had been explosive. She panted and looked down at Kass, who was just staring at her crotch, mouth open in surprise. "Sweet, merciful Gods." the awed woman hissed, "It's... so big."

"And... it's not even hard yet." Emma breathed heavily in reply.

Kassedie ignored her, raising an arm and laying it, elbow to wrist, on Emma's abdomen next to her draconic tool as a crude measuring device. She didn't stay next to it for long as the dragoness throbbed to life, lifting leisurely off of her stomach and into the air against the drag of gravity. Trembling hands lifted and touched it carefully, making the dragoness squirm. It pulsed in her fingers, quickly gaining a few extra inches, making it longer than Kass's forearm. "Emma..." she said in a wide-eyed whisper, "This won't... there's no way I can take this."

She slowly worked her fingers around the hardening ridges that ribbed the dragoness's tapering tool, urging it bigger and more rigid with almost mournful touches. Emma smiled calmly, lifting her tail and brushing it along Kass's hair. "I figured as much." soothed the dragoness, "But there are other things tails are good for than wrapping around people's legs." Kass lifted a hand from Emma's crotch to cradle the tip of the dragoness's tail to her cheek, looking at Emma with a sly smile. "Oh, come now." said Emma in mock disbelief, "You can't tell me that you never thought about what it would be like." Slipping her tail from Kass's fingers, she trailed its tip lovingly along the curve of her cheek before dropping it to her chest. "My scales are nice and smooth;" she continued, flicking her tail over Kassedie's nipples and bouncing her soft, hefty breasts, "it won't cut you." She left the woman's chest and dropped further, playing around her navel. "I can make it feel very good."

When Kassedie nodded, Emma gave her an eager smile. Showing the strength in the thick muscular limb, the dragoness coiled it around Kass's waist, making the woman giggle as Emma hoisted her up, dragging her into the air and hauling her forward before dropping her back down. Kass squeezed her shapely thighs around Emma's waist as the dragoness's neglected member throbbed angrily against the curvy woman's sumptuous, cushiony rear. Kass just cooed and let herself be encouraged to lie back down. Her supple breasts squished into Emma's as the dragoness wrapped strong arms dotingly around her back as she was pulled into another series of warm, wet kisses.

Emma forewent the use of her hands, instead using her tail to longingly stroke the curve of Kass's appetizingly lush backside, but that wasn't her goal, at least this time. Her increasingly voracious lover lifted her butt into the air when Emma poked her impatiently, and the dragoness slid her tail between them. An ardent moan escaped Kass's throat when she slid her tail up and along the cleft between Kass's legs. She slowed down, dragging her tail up and down with agonizing tenderness. Kassedie's womanhood was as soft as the rest of her, the velvet petals of her delicate flower parted and slick with need.

Kass tensed before she had even tried anything, and Emma purred tranquilly as she slid the tip of her tail up and between the woman's lusty folds, prodding gently at her entrance. Kassedie pulled back long enough to breathe in a throaty

murmur, "Do it. Please." The dragoness smiled, as if she was going to do anything else. Kass froze, letting out a tight-lipped whimper, and kissed the Emma again as her satiny passage parted around the tapering tip of the dragoness's tail.

She glided in effortlessly, and she slid a few inches in, holding Kass as the woman twitched fitfully under the smooth penetration. Kass was tight, and she certainly could have never even considered using her dick, still throbbing furiously at being ignored, but she was also slick and wonderfully plush, and the dragoness worked herself around inside Kass to the woman's very obvious pleasure. "You feel good," Emma purred up into her ear, pushing hair away from Kass's half-lidded eyes, "so tight and wet. It's like silk. Would you like more?"

With an urgent, wordless nod, Kass grunted as Emma pushed a few more inches into the blissful woman, stretching her wider around the girth of her muscular appendage. She wriggled inside of Kass, using her agile limb to pleasure every square inch that Kassiedie had given her to play with. She couldn't help but grin when her lover moaned with increasing energy. Kass had a body seemingly designed for pleasure, to both give and receive, and Emma was set on giving her everything she deserved, moving with determination as she began to slowly pump her tail in and out of her lover, building herself into a gentle, gradually increasing rhythm.

It seemed that Kass's body couldn't decide whether to freeze, her muscle making her stiff and jerky, or melt, draping herself languidly across the dragoness's body. Emma cradled Kass into her chest, stabilizing her with strong, steady hands, letting Kassiedie's own hands roam over her body as she was thrust into more and more urgently. The woman's mouth fell onto Emma's throat, and she kissed the fine scales, stopping occasionally to lick along the line of a tendon or a vein.

Each of Kass movement's screamed her ecstasy, from the anxious clenching of her fingers around Emma's shoulders and breasts to the stiff trembling of her legs, and Emma controlled the tempo of her pleasuring, building in force as Kass's rapture built on itself. The woman mewled excitedly as the first tremors of her oncoming release shook through her body, and she hissed unnecessarily for Emma to keep going, for more, to go harder. The dragoness just nodded in assent, as if that hadn't been her plan all along, and began to vigorously piston her tail in and out of Kass's fluttering womanhood.

"Yes!" Kass grunted direly as she collapsed onto Emma. The dragoness accepted her weight with gentle arms as Kassiedie growled the word over and over, her voice steadily rising in pitch. Her lover was dangerously, catastrophically close, and the dragoness spared no attention as she forcefully pushed Kassiedie over the edge of the cliff of bliss she had worked to build.

She didn't scream, as Emma had predicted she would, instead clenching her teeth with fierce determination, fighting her eyes' efforts to roll back into her head

as she reached the limits of her endurance. She bucked her hips into Emma's stomach, viciously humping a phantom dick as the tail in her pussy was suddenly and violently clamped down on. Kass came messily, and the room was suddenly full of the wet, squelching sounds of Emma continuing to ream her as she spasmed atop the dragoness.

It was almost enough to push Emma over the edge. The dragoness loved to hear and see her lovers mid-orgasm, to see the fruit of her labor up close and personally. Kass's back arched, lifting her head off of Emma's throat, and she squeaked out what might have nearly been a blissed-out cry, had her lungs and vocal chords been operational. Instead, she just silently thrashed against the dragoness's powerful arms, lost in her paradise of rapture.

She took a long time to relax, likely because Emma was hesitant to slow her ministrations, but eventually Kass sagged against the dragoness's chest, panting in ragged gasps as Emma slowly worked her down from her orgasmic high. "Easy..." cooed the dragoness, "I've got you. Just breathe; I've got you." Sluggishly, Kass's eyes refocused on Emma's, and she closed them as a beatific smile crossed her features and she let out a happy sigh.

There were a few endless minutes of silent intimacy, a post-coitus cuddle that Emma treasured, not eager for it to end. Kass rested her head against the dragoness's shoulder, twitching lightly as Emma withdrew her tail from the relaxed woman's folds. A hand daintily walked fingers up Emma's arm, and Kass spoke, albeit with some slow reluctance. "Thank you, Emma."

The dragoness adjusted her head to peer curiously at her. "For what?" she wondered with sincere confusion.

Kass laughed softly. "For starters? How about the best orgasm I've ever had?" She hesitated, lifting her head to smile meekly at Emma. "But really... just for everything. Thanks for coming to talk to me."

Emma snorted, sitting up slowly, pulling Kass up with her. She scooted back on the bed until her wings were pressed against the headboard, eyeing Kass with genuine affection. "What are friends for? If you can't share concerns and insecurities with them, what's a girl to do?"

"What's a girl to do indeed?" Kassie agreed with a shared smile. The smile faltered, however, when her eyes dropped, although not far, to the dragoness's member as it twitched in the air, absolutely furious at being ignored. "Y-you didn't... I'm sorry. I wish I could-"

"Stop right there." Emma interrupted with a dismissive flick of her claws, "I don't need to... finish, trust me. You've already given me a gift far more precious, something no one else could have." She gestured past her painfully erect, ridged shaft at Kass's succulent form.

Smiling sweetly, Kassiedie crawled forward until she could stroke Emma's cheek with a hand. "Please, Emma." she pleaded, "I told you I was good with my hands, let me use them for something. Let me give you something else, as small as that might be." She chuckled warmly. "You can't be too good to someone who deserves it, right?"

"I just gave you what you asked for, what you wanted. I hardly deserve it."

Kass stroked her cheek again, more gently, before she leaned in, pressing her breasts against Emma's arm and kissed the dragoness's jaw slowly. "Let me be the judge of that." she whispered.

A dainty hand was laid casually on her knee, and it began to slowly stroke her muscular leg, running up over her polished bronze scales and getting close, dangerously close, to her exposed sexes, but never touching them. "O-okay!" Emma grunted as the gentle stimulation pushed a thick blob of pre from the tip of her draconian member. They both watched it roll down the length of her shaft. "But you're paying the charge for the mess you're about to make of this bed." she finished as her resistance shattered.

A toothy grin. "Deal." Kass agreed.

She watched as Kassiedie hiked a shapely leg up and over her own legs to straddle her thighs, putting her in range of both of Kass's hungry hands. Her almost two-foot tool sent spikes of thankful bliss deep into her mind as Kass wrapped slim hands around its girth and started stroking it languorously. "So big." her lover whispered, looking only into Emma's eyes as she was slowly stimulated, "So big, and thick, and interestingly shaped. I bet these ridges are very sensitive." Before Emma could agree, Kass ran a not-too-gentle finger down her shaft, bouncing her finger off of every fleshy rib. Each sent a jolt of pleasure up Emma's spine, and she jumped with a whine. "That's a yes, then." Kass added with a sly grin.

Kassiedie leaned in for another kiss, not needing to see what she was doing. Her fingers were just as promised. She wasn't even stroking her with the intent of getting Emma off. She was just lightly touching, rubbing and scraping experimentally, just exploring Emma's joyously pulsing, masculine endowment. A moment later, her wandering complete, she had to use both hands to encircle the dragoness's girth at its base, and she started to gently drag her hands up and down Emma's ludicrous length.

She was either reckless, or very, very good, because Kass used the perfect amount of force to squeeze Emma's steely hardness, demanding with her fingers for more and more viscous lubricant to issue from the dragoness's tip so she could then spread it over her lust-tightened skin until the inky black flesh shined with a gloss of slick fluid. Emma threw her head back, her spine arching against her will as Kass bent herself to her self-appointed task, beginning to briskly pump her hands along the dragoness's overwhelmingly excited member.

It was her turn to wheeze a sharp "Yes!" as she balled her clawed fingers into desperate fists to keep herself from hurting Kass as she twined her strong arms behind her lover, pulling Kass forcefully into her chest. "Yes!" she growled with the savagery of a wild animal, "Harder! Yes!" Kass took Emma's dire growl in stride, and did as she was begged, forgoing all semblance of rhythm or tempo and just furiously jerked her fingers along Emma's sensitive shaft, using a hand to occasionally finger her tapered glans.

The dragoness's powerful musculature heaved under her scales as she tensed in time with the throbbing in her loins. She could already feel it coming up on her like the onslaught of an angry titan. Kass jumped when a whitish-blue spark arced briefly across her scales, followed by another, then another. Kass's hand's slowed, and mindless panic welled up in Emma's mind. "No!" she cried weakly, desperate for release, "Don't s-stop! Don't worry; I won't hurt you! You're safe! Please! Please d-don't stop!"

Emma relaxed as Kassiedie forged onward despite her unease at the sight of tiny lances of electricity jumping from scale to scale. The dragoness ran shaky hands up and down Kass's back, trying to sooth away the woman's concerns. "I-it... Nngh! It gets hard, so h-hard to keep it inside when I get close. Oh gods, so close! B-but don't worry! It's s-safe, I promise! D-don't be afraid! Oh... Gods' Golden Blood! Yes!"

Kass hardly looked afraid, just surprised, and she brought her hands to bear with renewed vigor. Emma's breath left her lungs in a wild moan as she felt ruinous tension rapidly building behind her loins. "Almost..." gasped the dragoness, "Almost! Oh Gods! K-Kass, yes! YES!" She bent forward with vehement urgency and forced Kass into herself as she swallowed hard around a bolt of destructive force that tried desperately to explode from her throat. Kassiedie didn't resist as the dragoness crushed her into a powerful scaled torso and came violently.

Emma grunted, a foot of slender, black tongue lolling limply between her teeth as her draconic tool swelled briefly before she released the first of countless ropes of hot, thick seed into the space between them. She felt it splatter against her scales and slick Kass's already sweat-dampened skin as her womanhood spasmed around nothing. Kass didn't let up, pistoning her hands around Emma's spasming cock with intense focus. She bucked wildly against Kass's smooth belly as the woman drove her orgasm to new heights.

There was so much. She had so much to give her determined lover, and she panted, clutching Kass for support as she gave her everything she had. Jet after jet shot from her loins to fill what little space there was between them and ran out to soak the mattress around them. What must have been a gallon of pearlescent, virile jizz drenched them both, and Kassiedie used confident fingers to pull every last

drop from Emma's loins, the dragoness's flexing muscles able to push no more from her body.

That didn't stop Emma from staying wrapped around Kass, letting the throbbing of her body reluctantly die down. Kassiedie kissed the side of her throat, soothing the fire that was slowly burning out under her scales. Her embrace slowly went from desperate to doting, and she caught her breath as, finally, Kass took her hands off of the dragoness's grudgingly deflating member and returned the dragoness's loving hug. "Feel better?" she wondered into Emma's ear.

Emma lifted hands to Kass's shoulders and gently leaned back against the headboard of the bed, peeling herself off of Kass against the pull of the sticky fluid that seemed intent on gluing the two women together. They were both a mess, the dragoness's cum plastered over each of their torsos. "That's one word for it, I suppose." She wrinkled her nose at Kass. "Gods' Blood, you reek of sex. What's have you been bathing in?"

"Recently?" she answered with a flick of her eyes down at her seed-glossed body, "Oh, you know. Sex, mostly."

"Well that explains it, then." supposed the dragoness with an amused flick of her tail. She looked around herself at the mess they had made. Despite the volume she had output, it had stayed mostly contained by their bodies, so the mattress had taken the brunt of her assault. She hummed thoughtfully and considered her options as Kass smiled at her expectantly.

The woman yelped when the dragoness scooped her off of the bed in her strong arms. "You're a mess." Emma purred.

"And whose fault is that?"

"Hey, I warned you."

Kass kissed her on the nose. "You said you'd make a mess of the bed, not me. So what do you plan on doing about it?"

She had a point, and Emma grinned. "I've got an idea." she admitted. Carefully, she wiggled down the bed and rose gracefully to her taloned, digitigrade feet. Drops of dragon cum rolled off their bodies to fall with soft, wet sounds to the wooden floor below them. Slowly, teasingly, she ran her tongue across Kass's abdomen, scraping a stripe of the thick coat of her slime from Kassiedie's body. She made a show of swallowing noisily. She tasted heavy and musky, and something inside her felt intensely proud of the strength of even her flavor and smell.

It was a laborious process, licking Kassiedie clean, especially since she wouldn't quit giggling and wriggling. But eventually Emma gently lowered Kass to her feet and stepped away, inspecting her work with an appraising eye. "Much better." she said in a satisfied growl after she stooped and ran her tongue one last time up the slit of Kass's womanhood under the guise of getting one last drop. Kassiedie tasted just as good, if not better, than she did.

Kass gestured to the dragoness, who still dripped with the slowly drying remainder of her lustful leavings. Holding out a claw for patience, Emma winked and decided to give Kassiedie a light show. "Watch out." she warned with a grin, "This is going to smell really bad for a bit. You might want to open the window." Kass strode to the far wall to do so, throwing up the window and letting in a pleasant breath of fresh air to join the lance of dimming light as the sun dipped below the horizon.

The dragoness closed her eyes and let out a slow breath as she sank down into herself. It took no effort at all to call up the roaring torrent of inner strength that boiled constantly at her core. It jumped at her call, surging up through her and filling her with dull, yet white-hot energy. She hesitated to liken it to fire. It was hot, but it didn't burn. It was quick, and moved jerkily within her like the lightning she could make manifest, searing under her scales in blinding, jagged spider webs that she could feel shooting through her.

She willed it outward, over her scales, and she could hear the sharp pops of real, urgent arcs of electricity that passed over her body as she ran a current of energy through her scales and the liquid that was slicked over her. The tang of ozone in her nostrils was suddenly and viciously overpowered by the reek of burnt seed as her leavings heated up, blackening and flaking off of her scales as she burnt herself clean.

After a few minutes of that, she took the time to gently coax the power she had called forth back down into her, slowly wrapping it tightly in layers of self-control like a doting mother. Opening her eyes after that, Emma brushed a hand over herself, rasping away the remainder of her cum as if it were nothing but a distant memory.

Kassiedie stood, her mouth half open in awe. Emma stared back at her, appreciating the stunning beauty Kass shamelessly put on display before she mournfully flexed familiar muscles, pulling her sexes back into her body. Like a serpent ducking back into its hole, her member slithered back between her legs before her slit closed, leaving a smooth coat of cobalt scales where they had been. Kass didn't appear to have even noticed. "C-can all of you do that?"

Cocking any eyebrow as she strolled over to her clothes, throwing them over her shoulder, she answered. "By all of you I suppose you mean dragons? Well, yes, in a way. Every dragon's got a particular element that they're good with. Mine's lightning." she quipped proudly. "My father has a thing with fire and heat, and my mother with ice and cold. Don't ask me how they managed to get lightning out of that."

Kass stepped forward, plucking Emma's clothes and throwing them back to the floor with her dress, where they belonged. She leaned into the dragoness,

pressing her lips to Emma's sternum between her breasts. "What does it feel like?" she mumbled into her.

"Would you like to feel it?"

Eyes sparkling intently, Kassiedie nodded. The dragoness smiled and lifted her hand, laying it casually on the curious woman's shoulder and willed the tiniest amount of energy into her. Kass's lips spread around a giddy grin when her hair slowly lifted up from where it had fallen around her shoulders until it looked like she was wearing a fine, brown puffball on her head. "It tingles." Kass said in an awed whisper.

"It'll do that." returned the dragoness as she presented her other arm to Kass. "Now touch me. Give it back and feel what it's like to let it out."

Gingerly, Kass raised a trembling hand and reached it out, bringing it close to the scales of Emma's proffered limb. Kass jumped when, as her finger came within half an inch of Emma, a short spark briefly connected them with a tinny pop. Jerking her hand away abruptly, Kass's hair suddenly went limp again, falling forward to obscure a face that looked to have just had a religious experience. Emma chuckled and brushed the beauty's hair back behind her ears. It was a sin against nature to hide those gorgeous blue eyes. "I did it." Kass mumbled after a few seconds, looking at the dragoness for approval.

"That you did." said Emma in return, taking Kassiedie's face in both hands and giving her a warm kiss on the lips that she returned with cool passion. "There's always a little sting that some people complain about. Did you feel it?"

"Yes, but it wasn't too bad. Does it hurt you like that?"

"No, not really. But my body's a little better equipped to handle it." She strolled, rocking her hips for her lover's enjoyment, back to where Kass had thrown her clothes and retrieved her dress while she was there before she swaggered casually back. She handed Kass her dress. "Now hurry and put your clothes back on before I can't help but throw you back on that bed. We'd be there all night, and people would surely be waiting downstairs for us."

Kass pouted, but eventually let herself be cajoled into redressing, sliding her dress back on over her body. Emma couldn't help but marvel at how little the impossibly curvy woman's breasts sagged despite of her size and softness. There were few exquisite beauties like hers in the world, and the dragoness felt truly gifted to have met one. She whined, unable to stop herself from lamenting the loss of such a stunning view as the dress went back on and Kass bounced a few times on her feet, ensuring everything was sitting in the right place.

"What about you?" the unfortunately clad woman said as she slid on her soft leather boots over a pair of woolen stocking that she pulled on while sitting in her chair.

Emma dully realized she was being spoken to, and forced her eyes to refocus on Kassiedie. "Wha-hmm? Me? Oh! Yeah, give me a second." She very carefully pulled her pants on over her viciously clawed toes, making sure her tail went into its sleeve before she buttoned it up her hip. Her shirt presented its own issues, and she pulled it on over her chest and had to use her tail to ensure her wings were strapped in before, in an astounding display of dexterity that left Kass open-mouthed once again, she flicked her tail along the buttons that ran down the length of her shirt, flipping them through their holes before she flexed, setting the buttons and ensuring her shirt was on her properly.

"Good Gods..." Kass murmured, "How much practice did that take to get down properly?"

Finally someone who understood. "It took **forever**. And I still misthread the buttons sometimes. It gets frustrating after the millionth time. But there really aren't many other ways, unless I could **cheat** like my father." She waved that thought away and slid alongside Kass once more, pressing her lips to the woman's soft skin yet again. She couldn't get over how lovely and silky smooth it was. "Now, I think I owe you that drink." Kassiedie grinned impishly, nodded, and started for the door, but was stopped by Emma's hand on her shoulder. "Wait. Let's take the scenic route. The sun's not going to be up for much longer, and I know a place where we can watch it set. It's beautiful, watching it sink down over the hills to the east."

Kassiedie's eyes lit up. "That would be lovely! D-do we have enough time to make it out past the walls?"

Emma laughed. "You don't have to see past them when you can see over them." She offered the confused woman her hand as realization of what Emma was offering her dawned. Kassiedie glanced behind the dragoness as Emma slowly shuffled her wings, and laid her hand in Emma's confident fingers. The dragoness smiled at the display of trust and pulled Kass into her as she scooped her lightly off her feet. Kass smiled back, lacing her fingers together behind Emma's neck and rested her head against the dragoness's chest as Emma carried her casually over to the window.

She lifted a foot onto the windowsill and stooped through it, hanging halfway out of the building with Kassiedie in her arms. Her tail flicking blindly against the inner wall, she curled it around her satchel, lifting it from the peg on the wall. She couldn't leave without it. There was barely twenty feet of clearance between the window and the ground below, but that was plenty for a leaping takeoff. Kass closed her eyes after looking down, but didn't question Emma as she flexed her wings in preparation.

She laughed giddily at the fleeting sensation of falling, Kass tensing against her arms as she hurled her body out of the window. She only let herself fall a

couple feet before her wings snapped open, air filling the membranes with a series of sharp pops as she brought them down beside her, hurling herself upward. Kassiedie gasped and cried out at the sudden feeling of the earth dropping away from her as Emma flapped higher into the air, not in fear but exultation, and the giddy woman peeked her eyes open, watching the buildings of Southcliff dropping away with a capricious smile stretched over her lips.

It looked like it was going to be a clear, cloudless night, and the sky ran the full spectrum of colors from bright, fiery yellow-orange at the setting sun, to deep violet at the far horizon. Emma spiraled higher into the air as she drifted over Southcliff, setting a lazy pace over to the spires of the Sanctum Arcanum, the highest points in Southcliff. Kass seemed speechless as the wind ruffled her hair, making it fly wildly around her ears. The dragoness touched lightly down onto the gently sloped roof of the easternmost tower, reclining casually back against it and facing to the east and the dimming sun.

She had to prod Kass back to life, and the woman blinked suddenly, looking around her as Emma gave Kass her body back, keeping nothing more than an arm thrown around Kassiedie's waist for safety, but otherwise letting her gleefully wiggle her arms and legs as she turned herself, putting her back to Emma's chest so she could survey the horizon. They were hundreds and hundreds of feet over even the nearest streets of the metropolis, and the less elevated parts of the city were a thousand feet below. A cool, evening breeze wafted across them, fluffing Kass's already ruined hairdo. She didn't seem to mind. "Gods... It's so beautiful." she whispered, more to herself than the dragoness on whom she sat, "The air smells so fresh up here."

Emma hummed an agreement and buried her nose into the woman's soft hair. She still smelled like flowers. They sat there in peaceful silence while the sun reddened to a wavering, burning red sliver and slowly, reluctantly set, dropping below the horizon. The sky darkened minute by minute, stars piercing the blackening veil that was dropping over the world as the last of the sun's glow disappeared under the planet.

"Emma." Kass whispered shyly back to the dragoness, her voice shaking as though she were holding back tears, "I could stay up here forever. Th-thank you, for sharing this with me." She turned slowly to face the dragoness, who smiled down at her. Kassiedie, her eyes shining brightly with starlight, at least to Emma's keen eyes, reached up to press a final kiss into Emma's lips. The grateful woman seemed in no hurry for the kiss to end, and the dragoness obliged her, cradling Kassiedie's head with her free hand, supporting her and letting her put all of her focus into the lips she had locked with the dragoness's.

Emma wondered herself, what it was like to have full, soft lips. She hoped she was as good at awkwardly returning those passionate meetings as Kassiedie

was at giving them. She thought about asking Kass if she was any good, but that would have required breaking contact to breathe, and that seemed out of the question. Besides, hiding what insecurities she had wasn't going to hurt anyone, so she just sat there for a few long minutes, sealed to Kass's mouth by her own. She wondered if anyone could see them below, her scales glimmering by the light of the thin sliver of moon that was about to set, following the sun on its path.

She wasn't really sure how much time had passed when Kassiedie finally pulled herself away, but by the visible change of the position of the stars in the sky, it was more than a few paltry minutes. Emma smiled and leaned her head back against the roof behind her, staring up into the sky as Kass stroked her jaw and throat. "I think I'm ready, Emma." she whispered, "Ready for that drink you promised me."

The dragoness chuckled warmly and retuned Kass's caress for a short moment before she wrapped the woman in her arms, holding her tightly to her body. "Then hold on, beautiful, because we're late, and we need to make up for lost time."

Kass laughed excitedly and clasped her hands behind Emma's back, just below her wings. Taking a powerful, unyielding grip on her in return, Emma rose to her toes, teetering at the edge of the roof. "Do it." Kass hissed into her neck.

She assented, and let herself fall from the height, straight down to the hilltop below. The wind roared past them as they fell, Emma angling herself into a frightful nosedive, and the dragoness could feel the woman clinging to her laughing manically. Seemingly inches from the ground, she swept her wings out behind her and snapped them open, pulling up at the last second and soaring out over the roofs of Southcliff. She flapped into a racing pace, the wind whistling around her wings as she sped over the city back from where they had come, her new friend laughing the entire way.

Barely a minute later, she skidded to the ground in the same open courtyard she had landed in hours before. The Brass Chalice was a different beast once the sun went down, there was familiar music emanating from within, and there were crowds of people who stood in the open, night air adjacent to the building, some sitting at tables that would have been brought out with the setting of the sun. Her thunderous landing took few people off guard, since, whenever she was off duty, she was here with her friends more often than not. Kass, breathing heavily, a dopey smile still spread over her face, slid unsteadily to her feet, leaning heavily on the dragoness for support as she blinked rapidly and got her breathing back under control.

Emma held her up as she fussed with Kass's hair, trying to return to it some semblance of order. Kassiedie just playfully slapped her hands away and took care of it herself. But she couldn't shake herself of the messy, windblown look, and she

gave up once she got it at least all below the top of her head, looking in annoyance at the dragoness as she did so.

Giggling and offering the flustered woman her arm, which was quickly accepted, she escorted her into the popular inn, waving greetings at several other off-duty lancers as she did so. It was even more packed inside than out, and the place was dimly lit by a few simple chandeliers and the fires roaring in the two hearths on opposite sides of the room. Someone was playing music on a stage set opposite the bar that Corvus was still behind, fussing with what looked to be a million orders for drinks with another bird morph, a slender woman with silky-looking brown feathers, Lenore, his wife.

She couldn't see the source of the music over the shoulders of a few broad-shouldered horse morphs that were blocking her view, but she knew who was playing. Hawk's magnificent tenor could be heard over the dull chorus of background conversation. Emma peered around the room, looking for her friends, and was taken by surprise when Kathryn tackled her from the side. The excited cat morph seemed unfazed as she bounced off of Emma's sturdy frame, and immediately wrapped her spindly arms around the dragoness and her sister. "Sage just got here!" she shouted over the din of a hundred people trying to make themselves heard over everyone else, "I managed to save us a table up front! Come on! Follow me!"

Despite her thin frame, the feline worked in the Chalice, and practically lived there when she was off duty, and she expertly guided her two tagalongs through the seemingly-solid wall of people in front of them until they managed to come upon, like a rock in the storm, a small table that had a number of empty chairs pushed up to it. Emma let herself be shoved by Kathryn's skinny arms into one of the chairs, and found a mug of steaming tea already waiting for her. The feline was good. She took an experimental sip. It was as good as it always was, and she chuckled as Kassedie was crammed into a chair next to her.

Kathryn took her own seat next to a finely-dressed fox morph with immaculately groomed fur colored brilliant orange and white. Sage smiled warmly and wiggled her fingers at Emma in a silent greeting as she looked over Kass. Sage was of middling height, only an inch or so longer than Kassedie, with modest, perfectly proportioned curves that strained at a fine, dark green blouse. Wavy, precisely styled, vibrant red hair cascaded around her shoulders, and drew attention to her delicate, attractive features and bright, attentive eyes.

Her ears flicking happily toward the music, Kathryn beamed a cheerful smile at everyone at the table and leaned into her sister for a second, less rushed hug. "Kass. I want you to meet Sage. Sage, this is my sister, Kassedie."

"Oh!" cried the vixen with sincere joy, "It is an absolute honor to finally meet you, dear. Kat has told me so much about you, and I must admit, you are even

more beautiful that I imagined. I understand why she had trouble describing you to me. I don't think I could put words to you either."

Kassedie blushed like Sage had proposed to her and shyly mumbled something she clearly hoped would be equally flattering to the vixen, who accepted it with a regal nod of her head and a gracious smile as she shook Kass's hand. Kassedie just blushed harder and buried herself into a cup of something-or-other that Kathryn pushed in front of her. It smelled strong, and somewhat fruity. Emma guessed it was brandy.

The dragoness blinked in surprise when Sage rounded on her. "And you, little Miss Sparkypants! Where do you get off being only a couple doors down, making a terrible racket, and leaving without even saying hello?!"

Emma recoiled as if the vixen had leaned over the table and slapped her. "What?!" she cried defensively, "I was working! What did you think I was doing, tossing Rosemary into a wall for fun? Come on! He stabbed me! What was I supposed to do, pat him on the head and walk him out quietly? Of course I broke his jaw and knocked out half of his teeth... and then walked him out quietly!"

Kassedie twitched and looked up at the dragoness at the mention of being stabbed, but Sage just forged on. "I've yet to hear a reasonable explanation I had to wait until tonight to see you! You could have walked him out and come back in to say hi."

She had to scoff. "I was escorting a dangerous criminal; a serial rapist who was responsible for poisoning nearly a dozen women! I'm sorry I was too busy to grace you with the magnificence of my presence, but I do, on occasion, have to do my job! Unlike some people who just get to lie in bed all day!"

The vixen just sat back hard in her chair, crossing her arms defiantly over her chest. "You know that's not fair. You can't use the nobility of your purpose to win an argument every time."

"I feel like I can when it's a reasonable rebuttal to your whining."

"Oh! Running to reason, as usual, I see! Is that always going to be your escape from my whining?"

"So long as it's a reasonable escape."

Sage threw her head back and groaned loudly. "Rosemary likes it rough anyway."

Snorting into her tea, Emma's control snapped and she threw her own head back, nearly impaling a svelte deer morph standing behind her as she broke out laughing. She was quickly joined by Sage, and even Kathryn, and the three women sat around the table and cackled like a bunch of drunken hyenas. Kass looked like she had completely lost grip on reality and had been dumped in a madhouse full of psychotics for her sins.

The dragoness recovered first, wiping a tear from her eye as Sage slapped a palm on the table, trying to regain her composure, and Kathryn leaned hard into her sister for support, her thin hands wrapped over her belly as she spasmed in her chair. Still giggling, she elbowed Kass in the side and gestured innocently with her nose at the stage behind the snorting vixen.

The musician had changed the tempo of his music, and he was vigorously bowing a quick, happy tune as he sang something in a language Emma wasn't entirely sure was a language in the first place. It was clear, however, that he only had eyes for Kassiedie, and he accepted her recognition of his stare with a boyish grin. He, like Kass herself, appeared to be an average, unmorphed human, with short, dusty blond hair and stunning green eyes that were set into a rugged, masculine face that was all sharp angles. He was tall, more than six feet, but shorter than Emma, and a green silk vest sat over a dark grey shirt that covered a lean physique whose angles matched the sharpness of his jaw and cheekbones. He winked at Kassiedie, and the dragoness watched her blush fiercely with a sly smile.

His suddenly urgent music roused the crowd, and everyone, Kass included, was soon clapping in time with the tapping of the musician's booted foot. The notes were like magic, and Emma felt something happy rising up within her, and she clapped harder, urging on the song. And then, far too soon for the dragoness's liking, and with a dizzying flourish that seemed about to snap the strings of his viola and set his bow on fire, he ended the song on a high, wavering note that slowly drifted into stunning silence.

The dragoness's heart was beating hard and she didn't know why, but she couldn't help but nearly leap from her chair with the rest of her compatriots and what seemed to be every other living thing inside, and outside, the bar as the entire crowd erupted in a cacophony of thunderous cheers and applause. He just accepted it with a stiff, formal bow that was ruined as the first of countless coins bounced off of his forehead and clattered to the stage at his feet. It seemed like the inn's entire occupancy were emptying their purses at the abruptly wealthy musician, and he set aside his instrument and grinned broadly as he started scooping handfuls of coins into a wide-brimmed hat that he had sitting on the stage next to his chair.

As the deluge of copper, silver, and even some gold, slowed to a trickle, he gave his audience another, less stiff bow, and sauntered off the stage, holding the weight of his hat in his hands as he strode casually over to the table containing the four women. On the way, several people, mostly female, slid a few larger denomination coins into his pockets, clearly just using the opportunity to brush fingers or tails over the crotch of his dark pants. Before he reached the table, one of Kathryn's colleagues handed him a mug of something foamy, and he slumped down heavily into a chair that Emma used her tail to pull out for him.

"Harlots." he growled, his speaking voice noticeably deeper than his singing voice, "No offense, of course."

"None taken, dear." said Sage fondly.

He took a sip of his drink and sighed in satisfaction, leaning back comfortably in his chair. "It is a pleasure to see you lovely ladies on such an otherwise boring evening. I just knew I could expect you to liven up the place, but I must admit to having never seen this beautiful creature before. I take offense that I wasn't warned that an angel would be listening to me play tonight." He looked down at his clothing ruefully. "I would have worn something nicer."

Emma was certain that Kass's skin was going to char and peel off under the heat of her blush, but Kathryn just elbowed her sister in the ribs, laughing joyfully. "I'm sorry, Hawk, but I didn't know you were going to be here until earlier today. I promise I would have talked to you otherwise. This is my sister, Kassiedie. Kassiedie, this is Hawk."

Kass swallowed noisily as Hawk took her hand and kissed the back of her fingers after rising from his chair with a flourish. "Gavin Hawkins, at your service, my lady. You can call me Hawk if it pleases you."

"K-Kass." she haltingly replied, completely overwhelmed.

"A suitably lovely name." added the bard as he lowered himself to his chair and took another, steeper drink. "Now, my dear ladies, do tell me what's been going on in Southcliff. I don't get as much information as people seem to think I do."

Kathryn, in contrast to her usual, painfully shy self, jumped at the cue, and immediately blurted seemingly everything she had heard over the past month, slurring more and more as she kept her throat well-lubricated. The willowy feline could certainly not hold her alcohol as well as she seemed to think, and Emma grinned shrewdly as she spied the vixen next to Kathryn secretly watering down her refills. This continued for nearly an hour, the five of them sharing news and gossip. Even Kassiedie loosened up with the addition of a few swigs of brandy to her system, and they were all laughing like old friends in no time at all.

In a sudden interruption to the genial conversation, Kathryn sluggishly slapped both of her hands down onto the table before her as if just remembering something of vital importance. She spun to her sister, slurring, "Kass! Was... was Em... did she answer your questions?" Kassiedie blushed like her sister had just accused her of doing everything she had actually done and then some, but nodded in answer anyway. "Good! So you... you're going to do it, then?"

"Yes." she answered her clearly intoxicated sister, "I think I am."

Kathryn clapped her hands like a giddy schoolgirl. "Good! Th-then... you deserve to have it done by the best! Here... take... take th-this!" She fumbled in her pocket, eventually pulling out the purse containing the "tip" from the bull from

earlier that day and pushed it toward her sister. "I..." she hiccupped, "I don't really need it."

Peering into the pouch, Kass's face paled. "Kat... You're drunk. You can't give me this much money. I already have enough. I promise."

"No!" Kathryn shouted, seeming louder than she anticipated, because she took a moment to blink, her ears twitching, "Yes... I'm drunk. And no amount of water in my mead is going to change that now! And you may have enough! But you deserve the absolute best! **The Best!** S-so let me help you get what you deserve."

"I don't deserve all this, Kat."

"Nonsense!" Sage interjected, laying a steadying hand on Kathryn's, "You are a wonderful woman, Kass, if Kathryn's opinion is anything to go by. And she likes me, so she must have excellent taste. If you want yourself a set of shiny, new scales, then it is only the best scales that you shall have, dear. Here. Susan gave me this when I left, saying it was from "A beautiful lady." Add this to your fund." Emma grinned when the vixen pulled a second pouch, heavy with coin, and slid it to Kassiedie. "You say you don't deserve it. I say you let us be the judges of that."

The woman was in tears. "Really, I don't... I have enough to..." At Sage's stern look, she quieted her rebellion and picked up the pouches almost regretfully as she blinked moisture from her eyes. "You're too good to me."

"Come now, Kassiedie." Gavin cut in, "You can never be too good to someone who deserves it, and I, for one, say you deserve it. Scales would look stunning on you." He pondered for a moment. "You know what? Why the hell not? Here are my two coppers." He tossed his hat, clinking noisily with money, up onto the table. "And a little extra for a beautiful lady." he finished.

The three donors looked over at the dragoness as if they expected her to now make a donation. She chuckled and added up the money that sat on the table, combining it with the amount Kass said she already had. "What if." she began as she threw her arm around Kass's trembling shoulders, "What if I introduced you to the best body-shaper alive?"