

# STREET RATS

The lower sections of Suhl'kaajt were much different after the roundup of the elf slaves. The streets were emptier than usual, only a few Udakii roamed the paths as Royal guards patrolled a lot more frequently. The city felt less safe than usual, as if every movement someone took, you would catch the eye of a passing guard and be questioned for seemingly no reason. The air seemed tense, and after the slaves were taken away, Zett'elek felt it was an omen of things to come. He felt panicked and worried, staying held up inside with Dina'alja, peering outside his windows and watching the guards patrol.

Ever since the day he felt the connection with Vakth in the windowsill, he was thinking to himself about what it would be like to be royalty. To sit at the throne of the Udakii king and look down at the people that looked up at him, setting his kingdom right in the wake of the past kings tyranny. The thought didn't his already panicked riddled mind. He needed more time to think about this, and what options have opened up for him as he watched Suhl'kaajt fall further into disarray. He took a long, black cloak from a hook on the wall and draped it over his body.

"I need to go out for a bit, Dina." Zett said out loud, "I'll be back before sundown."

"No!" Dina said as she rounded a corner, looking like a worried mother, "I cannot let you! The guards have been on edge lately, did you not see what they did to all those poor Opalian slaves?!"

"I know, I know Dina!" Zett said calmly, holding one of her hands and rubbing the back of it to comfort her, "But I need to think. I mean, if I AM King Vakths son, I could do... I don't know, I could talk sense into him, maybe. I just need to think."

"But can't you think here?" Dina said with worry, "we could talk over some mushroom stew and some glowleaf tea! We could... we could-"

"Dina..." Zett sighed softly, gently petting her shoulder.

"I knoooww..." Dina relented, gently kissing Zetts cheek and putting up his hood for him. "We all need to find our own paths. It's just a shame yours is finding you first."

Zett giggled and kissed Dina on the side of her beak, fixing his hood as he approached the door.

"Promise you'll be back before sundown?" Dina asked woefully.

"I promise, Dina." Zett said, before setting out the door.

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The streets were barer than Zett thought. They almost seemed abandoned, windows shuttered and doors locked, store fronts closed, the only sounds that could be heard were distant water drops and the clicking of Zetts talons against the cobblestone. Other than that, it was eerily quiet. Zett walked down the center of the road, his hands tucked firmly in his cloak pockets as he wandered the town, looking down at each and every home and storefront he passed by, wondering what hardships each of its occupants faced. Were they taxed too much? Is money scarce? How long into the future can they survive before they're thrown into the streets with little more than the jewelry on their bodies. He needed guidance, much more than Udakii in the city. But all Zett had was Dina, so the only guidance he could think of were the Gods. he wasted no time marching up the winding road to the middle direct in search of the Goddess statues, hoping to find the answers he so desperately needed. Upon going up to the Middle district, the atmosphere drastically changed. He could see Udakii walking the streets in full swing, talking amongst themselves in the streets and dressed in visibly more luxurious clothes. They were almost completely adorned in gold jewelry, precisely cut gems set inside their gauntlets and neck guards as swaying silk loincloths draped over their fronts. Even some of the women wore jeweled pasties over their breasts, flaunting their assets as well as their wealth. Something seemed off.

Zett walked down down the street with caution, only catching a few guards eyes as he crept through the crowds unaccosted. As he tried to find his way to the Goddess Statues, he found himself wandering through a bustling, yet orderly market, crowds filled with visually pompous Udakii. "The shop has been doing great lately!" spoked a nearby jewelsmith. "Ever since my lousy slaves got whipped into shape, that is. And these new gems look stunning in our new necklaces!"

Zett wondered what he was talking about, until he looked down into the jewel smith's shop, and saw something that nearly took his breath away. Inside the shop, there were three female Opalian slaves, dressed in nothing but golden shackles and chains, each working tirelessly away at their own custom made workbenches. Each of them seemed tied to their table, not even given a smock to hide their nude bodies from flying sparks and shrapnel, their bodies covered in bruises and lashes. As Zett looked around the shops and even in the streets, he could see other high members of the Udakii with elf slaves in tow, naked and in chains, following each of them and doing work seemingly against their will. Whatever the king had done to the elves in the days they were captured, and whatever they had done to make these Udakii so complacent with their abuse in the mere days that followed the roundup. It was revolting to watch. It was like the king and the guards were spoiling the nobility of Udakii to convert them into his philosophy of sexual deviancy and immorality. He tried to hide his disgust beneath his hood, feeling sorry for each and every elf slave he passed. But the sight gave him a lot more clarity on the situation, and how dire it truly was.

Zett eventually found his way to the Goddess statues, each statue towering into the sky, each depicting one of the many gods and goddesses they worshipped. He knew his best option was to pray

at the feet of Huraahni, the god of good fortune and luck to guide him down the path he needed to take.

“Please... Huraahni, heed my prayer and listen.” Zett’elek spoke softly, closing his eyes and bowing his head. “I am in need of your guidance, your fortune and good faith to help me down the path that my city needs me the most. I’m lost, Huraahni. Please, hear my plea and Help me find my way. Send me a sign.”

“What are you doing here, runt?” spoke a gruff voice behind him, “you don’t seem like you belong here.”

Zett turned to face the voice, only to find a pair of two Udakii guardsmen, one just about his height. This was exactly the sign he did not want to see, It was quite the opposite of good fortune.

“Oh... hi!” Zett said nervously, turning to the two guards, “I was just praying, sir, I wasn’t trying to cause any harm.”

When Zett turned to face them, they both made a look of intrigue, one of them clutching the hilt of his sword.

“Say you look familiar...” one of the guards said, “what did you say your name was again?”

“I-I uh...” Zett stammered, “I never said?”

“Uh huh, yeah.” said the guard holding his sword hilt, “I’m gonna need you to pull down your hood.”

“I’d really prefer not to, actually.” Zett said, backing up into the statue of Huraahni and giggling nervously.

“That wasn’t a request, pretty boy.” the guard said, slowly unsheathing his sword.

“R-really I’m not that attractive” Zett stammered again, “but thank you for the kind words! There’s really no need to show off this ugly mug!”

The guards each fully drew their swords, each bearing a nefarious smile across their beaks as they approached Zett with malicious intent. The smaller guard began to raise his sword over his head, ready to bring it down against the panicking Zett. he winced, bracing for the inevitable until a swishing noise began to reverberate through the air. When Zett looked up, he saw the guards arm become tangled by a rope, knocking his sword out of his hand. The rope that curled around his hand seemed to have two large stones tied at the end, fashioning a primitive bolas. The guard looked surprised and looked for the thrower.

“Who threw that?!” the guard yelled.

Out from behind one of the statues appeared a single, solitary Udakii, swinging one of the Bolas in a circle at his side. He was handsome, bearing pale blue skin with dark blue freckles covering his entire body. His hair was short, and he looked to be wearing only a leather neck brace and loincloth, no jewelry to be seen on his person. The mysterious man chuckled.

“It ain't moral to attack those that defend themselves, lackey.” the Udakii said, giggling, “Why don't you try me on for size?”

The guards huffed with fury as the guard struggled to get his hand untied, while the other charged at the Udakii. He swung his Bolas faster, swishing it over his head.

“Think fast!” he shouted, making the guard charge him recoil and stand his ground as he acted like throwing the bolas, only to raise his free hand by his side and thrust it towards the guard. Out from behind the Udakii, a loose stone laying just at his feet lept from the ground and towards the guard at incredible speed, launching straight into the guards stomach.

“Agh!” the guard shouted, coughing and holding his gut, “that all you got you little geomancer? Just some pathetic pebbles-”

Before the guard could finish, the Udakii threw his bolas at the guards head, wrapping around it as the stones smashed into the back of his skull. The guard yelled in pain, as the other guard, still struggling with the bolas wrapped around his hand, grabbed his sword with the other, and charged at the Udakii. The figure, standing unfazed, waved his hand in front of him with a harsh, violent movement at the charging guard, which suddenly made his tied arm swing against his will. Whichever way the Udakii swung his arm, the guard would do the same, as he was controlling the stones of the Bolas. He tried to fight the pull of the stones, finding it incredibly difficult as the Udakii made a punching motion, forcing the guard to swing his arm into the face of the other, sending him down to the ground.

“You idiot!” the guard said, tumbling to the ground in pain.

“Hey I'm not the one doing it!” the other guard said, trying to control his arm and pry the Bolas off his hand. The other guard tried to stand up and untangle his face from the bolas, only to have his head forcibly bashed into the ground.

Once they finally were able to remove the bolas tied around them, that didn't stop the Udakii geomancers violent assault. As the guards stood up, they watched as the Udakii raised their arms slowly to the side, as a flurry of pebbles and small rocks hovered behind him, fixed in the air. The guards looked on in disbelief, trying to stagger to find their bearings as they backed away slowly. With a little flick of the Udakiis wrist, the stones floating behind him began to barrage the two guards one by one, pelting them hard and fast. The guards couldn't scramble away fast enough as each stone hit them in their unarmored areas, unable to cover themselves with their arms good enough as they pushed each other out of the way as they ran down an alley, eventually falling down a flight of stairs.

“Hold on wait.” the Udakii said, putting his hand to his ear as he listened intently. In the distance they could hear the guards hurrying away in the distance. The Udakii picked up a good sized rock and looked up over the tall buildings, closing one eye as he lined up a shot. With one swift movement, he hurted the stone like a shot put, sending it arcing over the building in a very smooth

curve. He cupped his hand over his ear again, counting down from three on his fingers, until the distant sound of a loud CRASH could be heard, followed by a moaning wail.

“Ha, nailed em!” the Udakii said, celebrating to himself before wandering over to Zett, who was staring slack jawed. “You alright? The guards have been acting a little stuffy lately ever since the elves were ‘reformed’ or whatever. They didn’t hurt you at all, did they?”

Zett couldn’t say anything, all he could do was stutter and stammer as he looked up at the Udakii. He was really cute.

“Oh I’m sorry, how rude of me!” the Udakii said, offering his hand, “Im Gua’lili, it’s a pleasure to meet you!”

“I uh... Zett?” Zett’elek said, flustered beyond belief, “Zett’elek... thank you so much?”

“Don’t mention it!” Gua’lili said, giving a smile that launched Zetts heart into his throat. “I can’t just stand by and let them treat you like that.”

Zett could feel his face blushing beet red, his body was practically frozen as he stared up into Gua’lilis eyes, sparkling like diamonds as they stared down back at him. He shook his head and snapped out of trance, pulling down his hood to fix his hair. Gua’lilis eyes widened.

“Whoa.” Gua said, “you look uh... familiar. You must be what the guards have been chatting about lately.”

“Wait really?” Zett asked, looking concerned, “I didn’t realize I was getting that popular.”

“Yeah no kidding.” Gua said, “they’ve been looking for an Udakii that looked exactly like the king, black skin and blue spots and all. You’ve basically got a bounty on your head

“And you’re not going to... collect that bounty, right?”

“Oh gods no,” Gua said, waving the comment away, “as much as I need to coin, I would never throw away my morals so easily.”

“You’re poor?” Zett said. Gua sighed.

“Very much so yes,” Gua said, “but enough about me. You’re the king’s alleged bastard child?”

“Apparently so, heh.” Zett chuckled nervously, “probably should have been more careful going out today.”

“Well you can’t stick around here for much longer, those guards will send a search party.” Gua said, grabbing Zetts hand. Zett practically melted.

“W-where are we going?” Zett asked, trying to contain his obvious flustered glee.

“My place!” Gua said, leading him through the Goddess Statues. Maybe Zetts prayer was heard, because he couldn’t have been lucky enough to find someone this cute on his own.

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Gua led Zett through the back alleys of the opulent homes of the middle section, holding his hand tight. With Zett being half Gua's natural size, it was hard for him to catch up as he led him through a large winding cave in the wall of the mountain. The only lights that shined throughout the cave were the naturally glowing crystals sprouting out of the walls. The cave was large and expensive, enough to fit a quarter of the city inside.

"Wow... is this your home?" Zett asked.

"Only part of it." Gua continued, leading Zett further into the cave. Eventually they reached a natural incline, spiralling upwards into an unknown part of the cave, and just at the top of the ramp Zett saw an entire makeshift home. Tattered cloth to section off different rooms, mismatched rugs covering the entire stone floor, many crates and discarded furniture decorated around haphazardly around the home. But it's home's most prominent feature was an opening in the wall that looked over the entire city, as well as the palace. Zett stepped up to the natural window, looking out into the city.

"Quite a view huh?" Gua said, standing beside him.

"Yeah... Quite a view." Zett said.

"I hope you don't mind me asking.? Gua said. "But what were you doing out on the streets like that? It's dangerous up here."

"I was just taking some time to think." Zett said, "knowing that I might be the prince of this city, it's just a lot to take in. was trying to figure what I could do."

"What could you do?"

"I'm not certain yet, in all honesty. I was hoping to go to the palace in hopes to talk with the king- uh... my father. Try to talk him down and make sense of all this chaos."

Gua laughed, sitting on the ledge.

"That will never work." Gua said, "your father is insane, by the very definition. Any rumors you may have heard about him are most likely true. There's no getting sense through to his senseless mind."

"I know you're right, but I just have a feeling there must be something in that palace to help me. There's gotta be, right?"

Gua looked up at Zett, looking as if he was pondering something.

"Why do you want to help this city so bad?" Gua asked, "was it because you feel responsible to, just because you're the prince?"

"I've always wanted to help this city, Gua'lili" Zett said, "even if I wasn't the prince, I'd still do anything I could to set things right."

Gua smiled even more, standing up and facing Zett with a gleeful expression, gently punching

him in the shoulder.

“You got a strong sense of justice in you.” Gua said, laughing, “and if you’re gonna follow your gut, i’m gonna follow it right along with you!”

“R-really?!” Zett asked, surprised, “why do you want to help me?”

“I think there’s a real chance you can set things right, Zett’elek.” Gua smiled, resting his hand on Zetts shoulder, “now, I think I know a way to get inside the palace. You remember when the elf slaves were being led into the palace, yeah?”

“I could never forget that sight.” Zett said.

“Well yesterday I was wondering by the revealan that leads into the crystal caverns below the city, and I could hear the sound of pickaxes and whips cracking from down below.”

“What does that mean?”

“It means the elves somehow entered the crystal cavern through the palace! And I know for certain there’s another entrance within the lower section. Perfect way to get inside!”

“What about the front door?”

Gua narrowed his eyes at Zett, as if he said something stupid. He pointed over through the window of his home at the palace gates, which were heavily guarded by dozens of guardsmen, practically barricading the door.

“You know there’s guards down in the mines too, right?” Zett said matter of factly.

“Much easier to sneak through there than the front door.” Gua said, shrugging. “Not a lot of other options.”

“Alright, then how do you propose we sneak through the cavern?” Zett asked bluntly, “It’s not like we can just waltz in there wearing guard uniforms. Where would we even get guard uniforms”

There was a moment of silence between them as they looked at each other. A devious smile crept across both their faces, both of them likely thinking the same thing.

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“Gah, those rocks are gonna leave bruises.” a guard said, sitting in the middle of an empty part of town right across from another guard, both of which were covered in bruises and slight cuts. They could barely limp away from the Goddess statues after being pelted by stones, so it was nice to have a moment’s respite.

“When I can walk straight again,” The other guard said, “we need to take what we saw to Tuh’adek! I’m sure that was the king’s son!”

“I know, I know, and we will!” the guard said, “just think... After we tell him, we’ll finally leap

through the ranks. The amount of elf slaves we'll have, I can just imagine those shimmering breasts jiggling as I whip them."

"You've got some weird fantasies, friend," the other guard said, holding his head and smiling, "but I can't say having an elf spread her pussy for me isn't at all exciting..."

"I know! Those elf girls know how to please an Uragi..." the guard said, "all we need to do is just find that stupid bastard prince..."

Before each of them could continue with their conversation, two small pebbles bounced against each of their beaks, followed by what sounded to be someone clearing their throats above them. Both of the guards hesitated to look above them, frozen in fear as they slowly lifted their head, looking up at two large floating boulders just above their head, with Gua'lili looking down at them from a rooftop, Zett right at his side. The guards looked back at each other, both looking worried.

"Found him," the guard said, just before each of the boulders fell on their heads, rendering them both unconscious.

Both Zett and Gua leaped from the roof and down to the floor, walking over to each of the unconscious bodies, dragging them away by their underarms.

"Gods they're h-heavy..." Zett said, dragging his guard side by side with Gua. "you didn't kill them, did you?"

"Kill them?!" Gua asked, "of course not! I may be a beggar, but I'm no animal."

Zett sighed as they both hefted them behind a nearby rock, stripping them both of their armor and quickly tying them up with rope, donning their armor when they've finished tying the last knot of rope.

"Wow, this armor fits us quite well," Zett said, "you look really good in it, especially."

Gua smiled as he clicked the metal neck brace around his neck, happily sighing.

"You think so?" Gua giggled, doing a small, yet very feminine spin for Zett to show off all sides of his armor. Zett choked back any sound he would have made that would embarrass him, but that didn't help his bright red face from giving away his infatuation. Like seriously, Gua was really, really cute, especially now in proper jewelry.

"Haha, yes ha, uhm," Zett stammered before coughing. "So where is this cave opening?"

"Not far from here actually," Gua said, quickly leading the way down the road. It was only a short walk, as the road quickly ended into a large, pitch black cave opening. Gua smiled back at Zett before they both entered inside, slowly delving deep into the cave.

The sound of pickaxes against stone and crystal echoed throughout the cave as they walked closer inside, the familiar glowing crystals beginning to light their way the deeper they got. Eventually, they passed through a strange wooden archway before entering an incredibly large, crystal filled cavern. Each crystal was almost larger than the last, some of which being larger than the largest

Udakii in the city, easily being over 36 feet tall. All around the cavern were built wooden scaffolding to make makeshift walkways high above the ground, where many of the Udakii guards roamed across. But beneath the walkways standing in bare feet on the jagged cave floor were male Opalian elves, each swinging pickaxes against stone and crystal. There was easily several hundred in the cave, each one completely naked apart from wrought iron shackles, their ankles chained together with one very long chain connecting to each of their cocks, forcing them to stand in ridged straight lines as they mined, each one looking exhausted, at the point of breaking. It was hard to see, watching the elf slaves treated so harshly without break or mercy. They slowly walked through the halls of the cave, passing by slave after slave paying them no mind other than a slight glance and the occasional wince, as if they were prepared to get whipped.

“Hey you two!” shouted a guard from further down the hall, “get in here quick!”

The two of them looked at each other nervously as they made their way to the guard, thinking that refusing would make them suspicious. As they rounded the corner, they saw something harrowing. In the middle of the small cavern, an elf was tied against a rock, his limbs forced into an x formation as his body curved against the spherical stone. There was a black bag over his head, but his cock and balls were set on full display, a weight tied around his scrotum as he whimpered loudly, shaking his head vigorously. The guard handed Zett a riding crop, smiling wickedly.

“This elf was trying to sleep on the job, the pathetic slave. Wanna have a moment to whip him yourself?” the guard said, making the elf panic immensely. “Make sure to focus on his balls. A quick whack to an elves scrotum usually keeps them from slacking, but a good hour of whipping makes sure they’re nothing but slaves to be punished and used.”

Gua and Zett couldn’t believe what they were hearing. Was this how all the guards were? Salivating at the mere thought of torturing an elf into a bruised and whimpering mess? Was it getting them off? Who knows what they’ve done to these poor slaves just to sate their sick, sadistic fantasies. Gua nudged Zetts arm and looked up inconspicuously, drawing Zetts gaze towards the ceiling. high above the guards head was a large crystal in the cave ceiling, which looked to be loose. Zett nodded to him less inconspicuously, and looked towards the guard, who looked confused that he wasn’t being answered for a good few seconds.

“Hello?” the guard asked rudely, “what’s up with you two looking all shifty? Ah, is it because you’re more into the females? That’s fine then, just give me back my whip and I’ll- ACK!”

The guard was quickly interrupted by the large crystal smashing down onto his head, sending him to crumple down onto the floor unconscious. Zett crouched down beside him, looking over his face to make sure he was really out cold before quickly going over to the slave and untying him from the rock, and removing his ball weights and hood.

“W-what... w-why would you..?” the elf asked. He was trembling hard and looking frightened,

but his demeanor changed as soon as he saw Zetts concerned face, and the body of the unconscious guard.

“Don't worry, we're not going to hurt you!” Zett said, reassuringly, “are you okay..?”

“I...I think so..?” the elf said, rubbing his wrists shackles, “you're not a guard are you.. Who are you?”

“I'm the prince! Zett'elek.” Zett said, gently taking his hand between his finger and thumb to shake it. “I'm trying to find a way to set things right in this city and free your kind. You don't deserve this wicked treatment.”

The elf looked as if he was on the verge of tears, as if he was not treated with genuine kindness for days, which most likely was the truth. He wiped away his tears and looked up at the prince, a newfound hope in his eyes.

“Don't worry about us for now.” he said, a smile appearing over his lips, “if you try and free us now, it'll only end in disaster. Please try and take back our kingdom, Prince Zett. for the sake of all of us.”

Now Zett looked like he was on the verge of tears. He tried to quickly regain his composure, standing up slowly as he towered over the 7 foot tall elf.

“I want you to do me a favor.” Zett said, “I want you to spread hope through this cave. I want every elf slave to know that freedom will come, in due time. Okay?”

The elf smiled and nodded.

“I will do what I can.” the elf said, before looking a little distressed, “I-I think you should put me back in the chain line, it'd look suspicious if I were to roam free.”

Zett looked to Gua with hesitation before he was given a reassuring nod. He sighed and left the side cave and left the unconscious guard, the elf slave following behind. They walked beside the other elf slaves before coming upon a gap in the chain, the elf standing in front of it tensely. Zett hesitated, but knew he had to do what he had to do. He knelt down and took up the open shackle, and as gently as he could, locked it around the base of the elf's cock. The metal was obviously cold with the way the elf reacted, arching his back and gritting his teeth before trying to relax, looking down at his cock.

“We'll be fine.” the elf said, picking up his pickaxe. “Follow the right path.”

Zett as the two of them began to walk away, before turning back and asking.

“Oh by the way!” zett asked, “where's the exit?”

“Just at the end of that corridor.” the elf said, pointing down the long hallway, “there's a spiral staircase that leads up into the courtyard.”

“Thank you!” zett said, giving the elf one last reassuring smile before sprinting down the hallway with gua, hearing the elf begin to make conversation just behind him, talking in high spirits as

he mentioned his Zetts name.

Eventually they came to the staircase the elf told them about, as they climbed it they heard the sound of grinding stone as they ascended, eventually seeing an opening above them. They came out to the courtyard, the open enclosure bathed in moonlight as the stars up above twinkled and shined down onto them. They looked over towards the palace as the fountain entrance closed, knowing whatever Zett was seeking would be inside. Zett nodded at Gua, as they both pressed forward into the palace gates.