

THE BETTER HALF

The palace was most active during the night, as the guards and the Royal Crown could take full advantage of their newfound liberties. The guards in particular are especially frivolous, walking amongst the royal halls with an aura of supremacy, most of which not even bearing their loincloths. There was no such thing as indecency within the palace anymore, guards standing in the halls with their front cocks displayed, members of the Crown naked of their jewelry and clothes, all while the female elf slaves serviced them at every moment, unable to refuse their shameful duties. It was a cesspool, a shameful affront to common decency to not only the Udakii, but the Uragi as a whole. And no one within the Palace knew this more than the Vaa'Kyraa, his soul mourning the loss of his people innocence and morality.

Vaa was unable to leave his brother's side, it was as if his soul was tethered to him due to some unspoken rule. He was trapped, not only in the mortal world, but by his brother's awful company. Vaa looked down sorrowfully at Vakth, sitting atop his crystal throne as Ji'anna, the poor elf woman forced to personally serve the king, knelt in between the king's legs, her neck chained to the base of the king's front cock as she was forced to service him for an indefinite amount of time. Tears rolled down her face as she had no choice but to worship the king in this manner, licking against the king's cock and using her small frame to press herself against it, all the while Vakth's blind eyes rolled back in content and pleasure.

"I see you're enjoying yourself, my king." Tuh'adek spoke, approaching Vakth from a nearby hall. Just in the mere presence of Tuh'adek, Ji'anna began to lick faster and more rigorously, shamefaced and fearful as she trembled in terror just from Tuh'adek's voice. Vaa couldn't express how much revulsion he felt for Tuh'adek. He couldn't grasp the idea of one Udakii to exude so much fear and obedience in some, but so much fierce loyalty in others. He is truly evil, a sadistic pretender that uses the king's affliction to his benefit, feeding into his immense paranoia too many laws such as the mass enslavement of the Opalian elves seem justified. But the worst Vaa could see, was not only what he was doing to the Crown, the royal guard or the Opalians; it was what he was doing to Vaas people. Their morals have been corrupted, somehow having been able to justify such heinous actions with complacency, but with sickening fervor.

"I have never felt more at ease, Tuh'adek" Vakth spoke, watching as Ji'anna laboriously worked between his forelegs. "Now that these elves serve far more a purpose than simply standing around being useless"

"I couldn't agree more, my king" Tuh'adek said, smiling down at Ji'anna with a grin that even sent shivers up Vaa's spine. "But this was not what I was about to discuss. I have incredibly rousing

news for you, my king.”

“Oh?” the king said, tilting his head at Tuh’adek far more than necessary, “that being?”

“Your people have come to warm up to you!” Tuh’adek said, “they have come to respect you with the proper amount you deserve, my king. You’ve done an excellent job.”

Vaa knew that Vakth did nothing to earn the Udakiis approval, all he ever does is sit on his throne and cower from his many intrusive thoughts. Tuh’adek was simply stroking his ego, making him just as complacent as he made the rest of his people. Vakth smiled and leaned his head back against his throne.

“That’s good... very good...” Vakth said, scratching his nails against his armrests.

“Quite good indeed, my king” Tuh’adek smiled, looking proud of himself, “it couldn’t have been done without your glorious leadership and my exemplary guard-”

Before Tuh’adek could finish, Vakth let out a soft, yet guttural bellow of pleasure as he front cock shot a rope a white fluid in Tuh’adeks direction, spattering his loincloth.

“Ahh... wonderful” Vakth sighed, tilting his head back up to face Tuh’adek, who seemed taken aback, “Now what were you saying, Tuh?”

“Ah, nevermind my king.” Tuh’adek remarked, “I will leave you to your duties, if you’ll excuse me.”

“Of course. But one thing, my friend.” Vakth said, “what of my son? Any word?”

“None yet, but our guards are working tirelessly to seek him out. We know he is there, my king, and we will bring him to you.”

“Very good. You may leave now.” Vakth said, shooing away Tuh’adek with a dismissive hand, then looking down at Ji’anna, “not you, slave. you keep going.”

As Tuh’adek left, and Ji’anna continued to service the king’s spent member, Vaa couldn’t help but chime in.

“What do you plan on doing with him brother?”

“Oh I plan on taking his elf back to my bedchamber. Bind her to a rack and pull at her limbs to have her pathetic wails in the night lull to me to sleep as she-”

“You son, idiot.” Vaa interrupted. He couldn’t help but watch Ji’anna as she cowered in horror as Vakth listed off his plan for her, seemingly out of nowhere.

“Ah, him.” Vakth said, paying no mind to the soft sobs of the elf girl, “I am mostly uncertain. He is my son after all, my flesh and blood, my only true heir... he could usurp me...”

“That’s not how it works, brother.”

“He could be plotting my death as we speak...”

“Brother...”

“He could be disguised as one of these guards, ready to plunge a knife in my chest when I least expect it.” Vakth began to delve into panic, spastically muttering “Maybe I should kill him before-”
“BROTHER!”

Vakth jumped out of surprise, having only heard Vaa raise his voice at him a few number of times. He looked up at Vaa, silent and spooked.

“He is your child, Vakth.” Vaa said bluntly, “a son of the king doesn’t USURP, he INHERITS. Upon your death he would be coronated and made the new king, and there is no conceivable reason for your SON to try and murder you, you pathetic, panic riddled maniac!”

Vakth sat frozen in his seat, staring up at Vaa with wide eyes before narrowing them.

“Are you threatening me?” Vakth said, which prompted Vaa to fly right in front of Vakths face, teeth bared and eyes filled with fire.

“I WOULD KILL YOU IF I WASN’T TRAPPED IN THIS FORM!”

Vakth leaned really far back in his throne, staring into his brother’s rage fueled eyes as he could see his malice for him, the one thing he could truly see.

“He’s my son. I would never kill my own flesh and blood, Vaa...” Vakth said, forlorn.

“Take a look at who you are speaking to, Vakth.” Vaa said, floating off to leave his brother alone with his thoughts.

Vaa pressed his hands to his head, rubbing his temples out of frustration as he meandered through the halls, only stopping to stare out the window to gaze out at his city, that was supposed to be his to rule.

“Gods, how could this have happened?” Vaa said, his voice filled with emotions he cannot control. “How, what in this world did I deserve so much torment?!”

He stood there in silence as he pondered his mistakes, dragging his hands down his face before he heard a voice off to the side of him, standing at the end of the hall.

“Do you see that, Gua’lili?” a soft voice said. Vaa had never learned the names of the guards, so he had just assumed it was idle chatter and ignored it. Another voice spoke this time.

“See what?” the other voice said.

“The ghost.” It was at this moment Vaa froze, and quickly turned to face the two voices, looking with wide, piercing eyes. At the end of the hall stood two oddly dressed guards, standing side by side as one looked in Vaas direction, becoming visibly startled as Vaa looked back at them. He looked them over, noticing the familiar patterns of the smaller Udakiis black and glowing speckled skin, along with his flowing blue hair and handsome, familiar face. It couldn’t have been, Vaa thought, but it was too high of a coincidence. He had to be the Vakths child. He pointed at him, his hand shaky.

“You.” Vaa’s voice boomed, almost sounding furious to see him here, what in the world would have brought him here, during the night, noless.

"I uh.." the smaller Udakii said, stammering his words, "m-me?"

Vaa zoomed impossibly quickly through the hall and stopped just before him, starting him so much that it sent him tumbling to the floor, much to the other Udakii's concern. Vaa pointed down at him anger and concern written all over his face.

"WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!" Vaa bellowed at him, "ARE YOU TRYING TO GET YOURSELF KILLED?!"

"W-what are you talking about!?" the Udakii on the ground said, cowering, "'w-who are you!?"

"Are you alright, Zett'elek?!" the other Udakii said, looking incredibly concerned and even more confused. Vaa looked over at him, seeing an empty war room just behind where he stood. He looked back down at the Udakii on the floor, looking less angry and more stern.

"Zett'elek, right?" Vaa said, pointing at the war room, "get in there, now, and leave your friend at the door to guard it."

Vaa gave the Udakii one last glare before floating through the door, waiting for Zett'elek to walk through.

"Uh... wait out here, Gua'lili." he heard Zett'elek say outside.

"Um...okay?" Gua'lili said, confused, "but why?"

"I have not the foggiest idea," Zett said, sounding closer to the door, "but that ghost uh, wants me to?"

"I didn't know this place was haunted," Gua'lili said, making Vaa rub his temples in frustration, "let alone that you could see ghosts."

"This is an odd day," Zett said, opening the door to the war room and stepping inside, shutting it behind him. Vaa stood on the opposite side of a large, expansive table map, depicting each and every continent on Phi'uja Maana, markers with unique symbols placed around on the board, each depicting a different subrace. Vaa looked at Zett with his arms crossed, as Zett approached the other side of the table.

"So uh..." Zett said, concerned, "are you actually a... a spirit?"

"No, all Udakii within the Crown are blue and transparent." Vaa said sarcastically, "of course I'm a ghost! What kind of question is that?"

"S-sorry, jeez!" Zett said, looking embarrassed and incredibly confused, "then what are-"

"Nope, you're done asking questions" Vaa said, floating through the war table to get closer to Zett. "I'm asking the questions now. And my first question is this; what are you doing here, when you are fully aware that the royal guard is looking for you, and, for all you know, wants your head on a spike?"

"Wait... how do you know they're looking for me, specifically?"

“Are you that naive? Take a look at me, does anything seem oddly familiar to you?”

Zett looked up at Vaa’s ghostly form, observing the oddly familiar face and speckles all over his translucent body. He looked for far too long before it finally clicked in his mind.

“You’re the king’s brother... Vaa’kyraa!” Zett said, bewildered, “I think I read about you in transcripts!”

Vaa stood in silence and allowed Zett time to connect the dots, which he did rather slowly.

“But wait...” Zett said, “you’re...a ghost.”

“Mhm.” Vaa nodded.

“And I can see you...”

“Keep going...”

“And if i’m the king’s son... does that make you..?”

“Your uncle.” Vaa interrupted, “I am your uncle.”

“So I am the prince!” Zett excitedly explained, “I knew it, I knew I felt a connection with Vakth the moment I saw him in the windowsill!”

“Good, now that we got that mystery solved and our familial relationship sorted,” Vaa began, before shoving his face in front of Zett, “what are you doing here, my newfound nephew?”

“R-Right, sorry...” Zett giggled stammered, “I was hoping to speak sense into the king, given our now uh... apparent relationship?”

“You mean to tell me,” Vaa said, “that you disguised yourself as a guard, snuck through the palace unbeknownst to the Crown and the royal guard, hoping to talk to him about being your son, even though you were just barely sure of that fact?”

“That... yeah..?”

“You do know that he plans to murder you, right?”

“WHAT?!” Zett screamed in surprise, only to be shushed quickly by Vaa, “why would he want to kill me?! Aren’t I his only heir?!”

“You are!” Vaa said back, “but he’s convinced himself that you’re going to stab him in the back and usurp his throne.”

“That doesn’t make any sense!” Zett said, “I’m his heir, I inherit the throne!”

“THAT’S WHAT I TOLD HIM!” Vaa screamed, “there is no reasoning with that lunatic. I’ve tried to talk him out of so many of his insane, cruel policies so much that he’s practically tuned me out of every political conversation. There’s no getting through him, especially if Tuh’adek is with him.”

“Tuh’adek?” Zett asked, “his royal protector?”

“You’ve seen him when he humiliated that Udakii for everyone to see. He’s a sadistic sociopath. He holds more power than the king could ever hope. He’s practically using my brother as

his puppet to sate some sick and twisted fantasies he's harboring in that demented mind."

"Gods..." Zett said under his breath, "If I'd have known... I wouldn't have tried to come here... Tuh'adek is to blame for all this?"

Vaa nodded, looking distraught and world weary.

"He's demoralized my people and his guards," Vaa said, "twisted their minds in ways I can't even comprehend. That's why it was so easy for him to enslave the Opalians, he has a way with words that should be impossible to have."

"What is there to do, Vaa?" Zett replied, "it's like he's got a stranglehold on the city!"

"There's nothing to do, nephew." Vaa said, turning towards the war map, looking down sorrowfully at each and every continent. It wasn't until his eyes passed over a very particular continent, home to the sekht and the Palace City of Tai'juhn Ehkt, which lived the current high king, a thought drifted through his mind.

"Maybe there is a way..." Vaa said under his breath.

"What?" Zett questioned, "you just said there wasn't."

"I had an idea before your father killed me," Vaa began, pointing at the Palace City on the map table, "when I was coronated, I immediately planned to form an Alliance with the High King within the Sehkt capital, hoping to strengthen our position and establish trade routes with other allied subraces. At that point in time, Suhl'kaajt was almost entirely autonomous, living off of our own dwindling resources."

"My grandparents never tried to establish an alliance with the High King?" Zett asked.

"No, not at all," Vaa said, "entirely too proud. A pride I knew that would hinder the growth of Suhl'kaajt, so I needed to correct that as soon as I could."

"What stopped you?" Zett asked. Vaa slowly turned his head to Zett, squinting at him with a beedy, exhausted look, as if daring him to ask him that question again.

"Right... continue."

"I'm in no position to rule this city anymore, nephew." Vaa said, "and neither is my brother if Tuh'adek continues pulling the strings. But you."

Vaa kneeled in front of Zett, bowing to his level to speak to him face to face.

"You can lead where I left off. Follow in my footsteps, instead of Vakths."

"You want me to form an alliance with the Sehkt?" zett asked, a troublesome look on his face.

"I want you to be the king this city needs." Vaa said with sincerity. "You have the resolve to ease the mind of our people and lead our cities future on the correct path. Our true king, leading our people under the beaks of the Crown that Tuh'adek so badly bastardized."

"You want me to rule Suhl'kaajt... in secret?" Zett asked.

“If that’s what it takes to reform our morality, then I’d ask for nothing more, Zett’elek.”

Zetts eyes were filled with welling tears as his mind was filled with frantic thoughts. He didn’t know what to think, all this responsibility placed on his shoulders all at once, it was so much to take in. He looked up at Vaa and saw the compassion in his pale eyes, all the life drained from them, but still filled with genuine purpose. He knew what to do.

“I’ll do it.” Zett said. “If it’s the right thing to do, then I’ll do it.”

Vaa couldn’t hold back his emotions, and if his eyes could still form tears they would be flowing down his cheeks. Vaa smiled wide, the first genuine smile he had ever beared at another living in so many tears as he tried to hug Zett, only for his body to naturally phase through him.

“Damn it, forgot about that.” Vaa cursed, sighing, “well that kind of killed the moment.”

Zett giggled and smiled back up at Vaa, before heading back to the door.

“I’ll do my best, uncle.” Zett said, “Your death won’t be in vain anymore.”

With that final word Zett left the room, as the voice of him and Gua’lili discussing what had just happened faded off into the distance, soon leaving Vaa alone in the war room, silent, but no longer empty. With the smile still plastered across his face, he floated back to Vakths, only to find the throne empty, Vaa staring down at the empty seat. Zett would be better than he ever was, he had faith that he would do the right thing.

Vaa left the throne room and hovered through the halls in search of Vakths bedroom, only to find his brother sleeping soundly underneath his comforters, as the elf girl was tied and spread apart underneath his bed, each of her limbs spread by a chain attached to a pulley system as she dangled just above a scratchy rug, heavy weights hung from her nipples and clitoris, her desperate whimpers echoing throughout the room.

Vaa loomed over Vakth as he slept, watching his pleased expression as the elf cried and begged underneath his bed. He whispered to him, just loud enough for him to hear through his slumber.

“I cannot wait to watch you die.”