

The following is the Intellectual Property of Willem Tobey (nom de plume). Usage outside of personal entertainment purposes will bring shame upon you and your family. This writing\story\novel, its characters, and the events portrayed within are purely fictitious. Any similarity to other writings\stories\novels, characters, and events is purely coincidental and unintentional.

WARNING: May contain coarse language, violence, gore or sexual content. Reader discretion is advised.

Chapter 27. “Mask”

Vilkas wasn't sure how long they were in this position, but discomfort was turning into pain. He was sweating from the activity and from Shari's heat.

“She said it was supposed to be colder tonight, but the air feels the same,” he thought. He quietly sighed. “I don't mind, though.”

“I think you're finally shrinking,” she quietly said, then kissed his neck. “If my vagina didn't feel like half a child was jammed in it and my legs weren't asleep, I might've tried pulling away sooner.” She sighed, then giggled. “I've never orgasmed so hard in my life. That was amazing.” She gushed. She sighed contentedly, then kissed his neck again. “I better get up.”

She moved her hands from behind his head and stretched her arms. She moved her hands next to his chest and pushed away from him. He reached out and pressed her shoulder to assist. She hovered over him and stared at him with a dreary smile. She closed her eyes and placed a gentle kiss on his lips. She leaned away and grabbed his hand. She pushed against his hand with a pained look until she sat upright. She groaned and dropped their hands near her knee.

She squeezed her eyes shut. “This is going to hurt...and it's going to be a big mess,” she whispered and opened her eyes. She slightly raised her eyebrow and pursed her lips. “I suggest you don't move unless you want to change my sheets for me.” She looked at him blankly, then smiled.

She brought her left hand up - holding a washcloth. She turned and tucked it underneath his aching balls. She turned back and closed her eyes with a sigh. She let go of his hand and slid it down by their union. She sighed again and lowered her muzzle. She mouthed something and lifted off of him.

“Glorp...slap.”

Hot slime oozed from around his penis as she pulled away. She shoved her hand over herself and sat on his thighs. His entire groin was covered in a cloudy white slime. His penis was the shade of an apple's skin and glistened in the light. The temperature difference felt good against the tender skin.

Shari rocked slightly, then fell onto her shoulder next to him. She held her knees by her chest with a pained expression. She stayed like that for several minutes.

“Fffuuu!” She cried as she slowly lowered her legs.

She reached over and quickly pulled his right forearm into her muzzle. Her muffled scream was followed by sobs of pain.

“Shari,” he said with concern.

“Nnn-nnn,” she hummed as she looked at him, tears in her eyes.

She breathed heavily into his arm as tears slipped down to the bed. He stared back at her with a pained expression. She reached out and caressed his cheek with her hand. He reached over and held her hand to his muzzle. She gave a weak smile. He brought her hand to his lips and kissed it, then returned it to his muzzle. Her breathing slowed and she turned to look at the ceiling. She gave his hand a squeeze, then took it away. She pulled his arm from her muzzle and sighed as she held it against her chest.

She looked over at him and said, “I’ll be right back, sweetie.”

She brought his hand up to her mouth and kissed it, then placed it back at his side. She reached out with a warm smile and caressed his cheek again. She held her hand there for a moment, then turned off the bed. She walked slowly and awkwardly around the bed.

“It’s only funny until you try and walk,” she coldly said as she walked out of the room.

“I wasn’t thinking that,” he muttered.

She returned a moment later with a cloth pressed against her groin. She held out a cloth for him. He took it and began to clean up the mess that seeped into his fur. It felt more like he was moving it around than cleaning anything up. Shari reached between his legs and pulled the cloth up and off of his scrotum. She folded the cloth and moved it along the sides. She wadded the cloth up and moved from the room. He folded his cloth over and very carefully cleaned off his penis and sheath.

“Bring that with you and get washed up,” she said from the washroom.

He folded up the cloth and held it in his hand. He sat up and turned to place his feet on the floor. He stretched out his aching legs and tried to stand.

“WAIT!” Shari yelled.

He turned to look at her frantic expression as she ran into the room. He felt his right knee begin to buckle under his weight. As he was about to step on his left foot, Shari pushed him. He fell back onto the bed and caught himself in a seated position. Shari doubled over and placed her hands on her knees as she breathed. She looked at him with a concerned look.

“I take it back. It won’t look funny. Let me help you,” she wheezed and held out her hand. “Give me that,” she said, looking at his hand.

He handed her the cloth. She sighed in relief. She left and came back into the room. She grabbed one of his crutches and held out her right hand. He placed his hand in hers and pushed off the bed. She quickly brought the crutch under his arm and brought the other crutch over.

“Thank you,” he said and fixed the other crutch under his arm.

“You’re welcome. I’m sorry. I should have been more conscious of it, but I’m a little fuzzy right now,” she said, motioning to her head.

“It’s okay. It worked out alright,” he said, trying to comfort her.

“Yeah, well, it would’ve been a major setback if you stepped on that foot,” she said coarsely. She turned to leave the room. “What if you fell?” She asked quieter, sounding concerned.

He made it into the washroom. Shari wet a cloth and began to wipe down his groin.

“I can do that,” he said, holding out his hand.

Shari continued to wipe his groin in silence. She rinsed out and wrung the cloth before cleaning him a second time. She tossed the cloth on a drying rod and went back over the area with a dry cloth. She placed the cloth on the drying rod and stood by the wash basin with her arms around her stomach, looking at the floor.

“You should pee if you can. It helps prevent infection,” she said, sounding glum.

He stepped to the side and looked at her - waiting for her to move.

“I’m staying,” she bluntly stated.

“Right,” he muttered.

He forced what he could out and flushed water down the drain. She stepped aside so he could wash his hands. After drying off, he looked at her. She still seemed distressed for some reason.

“Shar-...”

“I’m fine. I just,” she said and sighed. “Really have to pee.”

“Do you still want me to...”

“I won’t force you to, but it’d be insulting if you didn’t.”

“Did I...”

“Just go!” She snipped and gave him a look that he could feel.

He lowered his head and made his way towards the door.

“Forgetting something?”

He looked over at her. She slowly turned her cheek up towards him. What he wanted to enjoy now felt like a chore. It hurt just as much as the look she gave him. He pressed his lips against her cheek for a moment, then made his way into her room.

He laid back into his spot on her bed. He could feel the cooled sweat against his back. He began to think about what he could have possibly done this time. Nothing about her was making any sense. Her shifting attitude...her willingness to show him sex. He could only assume she was still suppressing her true feelings.

“What is she trying to hide? Is she protecting herself? Does she think I’ll turn out like the other guys?” He groaned softly at the thoughts as he shifted his head against the pillow.

Shari quietly came back into the room. She circled the bed and climbed on top of it. She sighed softly as she laid there. He looked up at the ceiling and closed his eyes. She slowly turned toward him and found her spot against him. She slid her leg down his and placed her hand on his chest. He kissed her forehead and looked back at the ceiling before finding the back of his eyelids.

#####

He awoke to an empty bed and the smell of breakfast filling the air. He inhaled sharply and looked over to his crutches. He saw a stack of clothes on the top of her vanity. He groaned and placed his feet on the floor. He reached over and pulled the clothing over to the bed. It took some weird movements, but he finally pulled the underwear and pants on. He pulled on the tunic and cinched on the belt, then hopped over to the crutches.

He made his way out to the dining table where Shari was already sitting. She was situated in his usual spot. He placed the crutches against the wall and hopped over to the bench. Shari was already eating so he assumed she didn’t want to engage in the practice Alida taught him. He bowed his muzzle and thought one to himself.

Shari hopped up from the table with her empty plate and began to draw water to wash the dishes. She glanced over every so often. She walked over and took his plate when he finished.

"Is something troubling you, Shari?" He asked politely.

She growled as she slapped her hands on the wash basin. She held her eyes closed for a moment, then opened them and looked out the window.

"I'm scared, Darijus," she muttered quietly. As he was about to say something, she continued a bit louder. "The last several times I was in Namal Lu, I was asked if I'd heard the rumor that Dalry was going to be attacked again. It wasn't an issue until the rumor had spread to Orinon, Lyneda, and Kilon Nauri. What frightens me the most is the weapons stolen from the smithy. It happened during the night before I left. I spent most of the day gathering information between patients."

Vilkas could feel his senses heighten. He glanced over at the crutches. "So...any clues as to when or how many?" He asked in a serious tone, then looked back at her.

She lowered her head. "No," she said, her voice barely a whisper. She took a breath in and held it, then let it out slowly. "I already told Ularn and Seppo when I first heard about it," she said and looked out the window again. "They both said they'll do everything they can. This village can't survive another attack. Our only fighter has a bad leg." She turned to face him and crossed her arms over her stomach - clutching the sides of her cream colored blouse. "I know they'll do everything they can, but I don't want to see my friend go out and get slaughtered."

His eyes twitched. "Friend? After what we did? After all this?" He thought, feeling his anger rise.

Shari sighed and brought her right hand under her mandible in a loose fist as she looked down at the floor. He looked down at the table. His eyes darted along the treated planks trying to conjure the solution, but nothing was short of suicide. He looked up at her and stood.

"There has to be something we can do besides nothing. I'll do anything and everything to protect you and the villagers."

Shari's eyes met his and her arm slowly went back to her waist.

"I love this village, I love the people, and," he said with conviction, but a lump formed in his throat. "I love you," he said, his voice feeling weak.

He saw her eyes narrow. He placed his hand on his chest and gripped his tunic.

"It may be hard to believe, but I honestly feel like I've been in love with you from the moment I kicked down your door. I care about you. I want to protect you. I respect you. I want to be with you forever. I want to talk to you, laugh with you and learn more about you. I want to start a family with you. I want to die knowing I've hugged you, kissed you and everything else knowing I did everything I could to see you smile." He smiled. "I want to keep being your golden-tongued, golden-hearted, stupid, ignorant, smart ass, meathead wolf."

His heart was pounding in his chest and he was breathing a bit hard. He gripped his tunic tighter at the lack of response he was receiving from her.

"Well, Vilkas," she finally said, her voice sounding cynical. She took a step away from the counter with her hands on her hips and her muzzle slightly lowered. She glared at him over her glasses. "At least when you get yourself killed I'll finally be able to really dig into you to see what makes you so feral."

His smile was waning. He couldn't believe what she was saying.

"And you want to talk about loving me?" She asked, raising her voice and placing her hand on her chest. "Respecting me? Starting a family?" She slapped her hand back on her hip with a chuckle. "Absolutely laughable." She glanced up at the ceiling. "No," she said and looked back at him. "Ridiculous, ludicrous, and preposterously absurd." She looked back down her muzzle at him with narrowed eyes. "You had to break your leg to finally show me you would listen to me - let alone respect me."

It felt like his heart was sinking lower and lower in his chest. "Shari..."

"What kind of an example will you be setting for our child?" She began waving around her right hand as she spoke. "That it's okay to disregard what we say as long as you follow it up with a chore or two and say some sugarcoated words?" She slowly placed her hand back on her hip. "Others gave you gifts and you accepted them with open arms and a smile." She turned her hand up and pointed at him. "I gave you life. You threw it in my face," she hissed as her hand dropped. She placed her hand back on her hip. "The only way I can trust you is when you're unconscious under my knife."

He felt his hand begin to tremble. He clenched his teeth and squeezed his eyes shut as another stabbing pain shot through his head.

“Quite honestly, that’s where my interest in you begins and ends. Slicing you open and experiencing new things is a rush. Helping with petty coughs, colds, aches and pains...”

“Is that all I am to you,” he growled as he opened his eyes and glared at her. “Charts, numbers and experiments?”

“Yeah,” she shot back with her eyes wide. “You are.” Her eyes narrowed again. “I gave you the gift of life and you threw it in my face. I helped you through your fever and you repay in kind by abandoning me through mine.”

“I wasn’t given a choice.”

“You sure didn’t put up much of a fight,” she hissed. “You disrespected me by brazenly throwing my gifts back in my face, but you go and gush over a,” her glare turned to a sneer, “A pair of fucking boots?”

“You certainly gushed over accepting my dick,” he matter-of-factly stated.

Her eyes went ablaze with hatred. Her top lip curled up to expose her teeth. Her hands fell to her sides in fists that were shaking.

“Hypocrite. Such a loathsome hypocrite,” he hissed and brought his hand down by his side. His expression softened. “I was a fool to have fallen for you. That’s all you’ve treated me as so I suppose I deserved it. I can’t apologize enough for laying my hands on you.” He lowered his muzzle with remorse and stared at the table. “I regret it to this day. Nothing I say can ever take that back. It makes sense why you called me ‘Ensio’. I guess you aren’t the forgiving type.” He looked back at her. “It’s a shame. I’m ready to forgive you even now.”

He smiled even though it hurt. “You accuse others of laying with you and leaving. You accused me of it. I see now that you’re the one laying and leaving with how you’re forcing me out. You healed my heart just so you could break it.” He pressed his lips together. “You are *clearly* the bigger person, huh?” He asked, half-heartedly sarcastic.

He smiled warmly - genuinely. "I like you better when you're not wearing a mask, Shari. When you decide to take it off, I'll welcome you back with open arms. Even with you baring your fangs, I still love you." He glanced over to the crutches and back at her. "I don't feel welcome here. I'm going to go. I have to do something to prevent this village from falling. Standing here attempting to figure out your fluctuating feelings isn't productive, nor is it working very well. I *am* just a *stupid...ignorant...meathead* after all."

He turned and hopped over to his crutches. He placed both under his left arm and moved over to pick up the sword that was leaning against the pile of gifts. He shoved the scabbard under his belt behind his back. He spotted the box Seppo sent him. He lifted the lid and grabbed the bracelets, then shoved them into his tunic pocket. He moved over and placed his hand on the handle of the door.

"I'll try and get someone to get that stuff out of here," he said and chuckled. "Don't know where I'll put it." He stepped to the side and pulled the door open. "Thank you again...and...goodbye...Shari."

He stepped through the door and turned. Shari was still in the same spot. Her face seemed to be filled with anguish and she held her arms around her waist. He smiled. It was filled with pain, but, if it was the last time he saw her, he wanted to leave her with a smile. He used his crutch to pull the door towards him and closed it with his hand. He hung his head as he stood for a moment. He sighed and held his head up as he made his way down towards the busy village square.

His heart ached and he wanted to turn back when he heard Shari erupt into a scream, then begin to cry uncontrollably.

"Was I too harsh?" He thought to himself. He stopped and looked over to the pub, then over his shoulder to her house. "I should go back." He groaned as he closed his eyes and turned his head back around. He took in a deep breath and let it out slowly. "I was too harsh. Maybe it had to be done." He shook his head. "I don't know."

He pulled himself together and turned toward Seppo's house. He could definitely tell that Ularn was in his shop. He couldn't tell if Seppo was in his. He didn't want to, but he was going to have to sneak out onto the main road.

He stopped behind Seppo's shop and properly slid the scabbard onto his belt. He pulled the pink bracelet onto his right wrist. The stones rolled easily over his thinner hand. The brownish bracelet took a bit more effort. The leather cord on either side of the stones gave just enough to slip over his larger hand. It was comfortable, but he did notice it had a bit of cord left beyond the knot if he ever wanted to loosen it.

He sighed and gathered himself again. Going out to the street was going to be tough. He quietly prayed to any higher being that would listen that he wouldn't be seen by any of the villagers. He made his way between the shops. He stopped and peeked out both ways. He was lucky that Amy was dealing with a customer. A few of the passersby gave him strange looks. He smiled back at them. He slipped out from the alley and stopped in front of Ularn's smithy.

"Vilkas?"

He cringed. "Dammit!" He cursed in his head. He brought a smile to his face and looked over at the incoming squirrel.

"You're looking good," Amy cheerfully said.

"Uh...thanks," he said nervously. He wasn't sure how to talk to her - or what to talk about.

She was cute. She was wearing a light gray, short-sleeved blouse with a black skirt that reached just above her knees. She didn't look like a typical squirrel in her coloring and her elongated ears that had long wisps of fur stretching from the ends. Her jet black hair reached down to her jaw and was parted in front of her left ear. She had white rings around her dark chocolate eyes with a white muzzle that ended with a black nose. Black swatches across her cheeks and part of her muzzle complimented her dark gray - nearly black - fur. Her hands were white with black claws. Her main fur color covered the top of her forearms with a black strip that separated it from the white underside. Her tail was a bit flat, but very fluffy. It curled over just behind her shoulders. It was different when she smiled. He was mostly around people with spiked front teeth. Her front teeth were flat - the top front two slightly longer than the rest.

"I'm Ay-m-muh," she stuttered and bit her bottom lip. She took a short breath and said, "Amy," then huffed the rest of the breath out.

“Yeah, uh...hi,” he nervously said back. “Vilkas.”

“Yeah,” she said and huffed a breath out as she smiled. “Um...so...what brings you...to, um...here?” She asked, matching his shyness.

“Um...so...what brings you...to, um...here?” She asked, matching his shyness.

“I,” he began, then thought about what just happened between him and Shari. “I, uh, need to talk to Ularn. Seppo if he’s around, but he might be out there,” he said and glanced over to the left.

“Ah.”

She was holding her hands behind her back and she slightly swayed. The curled part of her tail twitched every now and then. He tried not to notice her jutting out breasts. They were larger than Shari’s, but not as big as Valeska’s. Regardless, they didn’t match her frail frame - even if she was only a few inches shorter than him. As nervous as they both seemed, they maintained fairly constant eye contact.

“S-so-oh arrre yooou a-and Sh-Shar-ri...um,” she stammered, her eyes looking down at her toe tapping the ground.

“N-no,” he said and looked down at his own feet. “We...aren’t a...couple...if that’s what you’re about to ask.”

“Oh,” she said quietly. “Oh!” She exclaimed, more upbeat. They both looked back at each other. “A-are you see...see-seeing an-anyone right now?” She asked, her voice quiet again.

“I’m...not,” he said and glanced over at her stand. “I don’t mean to be rude, but I need to speak with Ularn and you...have a customer.” He looked back at her. “Can we...talk later?”

She brought her hands up to cover her mouth as she looked over at her at her stand. She looked back at him. “O-oh,” she said and lowered her hands. She grabbed her left hand in her right as they rested upon her skirt. “I’d like that,” she said brightly and smiled. “So, I, um, will see you...later?”

He smiled back at her. “Next time I’m free, sure.”

“Great!” She exclaimed, then looked surprised as she brought a hand up to her mouth. “Sorry,” she whispered, lowered her hand and gave a nervous smile. She brought her hand back down to the other. “See ya...Vilkas,” she said and smiled brightly.

“Yeah. See ya,” he said and smiled warmly.

He watched as she smiled wider - showing her teeth - as she rose up on her toes and turned to go to greet her customer. He closed his eyes and groaned. “I may have promised too much already,” he thought and turned towards the door. “What am I doing?” He sighed and placed his hand on the door handle.

He pressed the handle in and made his way into the shop. Ularn’s tail swayed as he slammed his hammer into a length of glowing steel. Vilkas winced as the sound echoed in his ears. It was definitely warm. The wall near the door had various shields on display. The wall to the left had pole arms and bows. The wall to the right had daggers and other “unpopular” weapons. A few floor racks had various swords of differing lengths standing on them. His anvil, grinding wheel, assembly table and quenching tank were in the back. The room behind him had a glow to it where he figured the forge and supplies were.

Ularn stopped pounding and looked up. He reached up to his head and pulled the wax plug from his ear.

“Vilkas? To what do I owe this honor?” Ularn asked in his naturally calm voice. He placed his hammer in a metal loop attached to his belt.

Vilkas made his way to the back of the workshop. He stood a few feet away from the heat radiating from the anvil. He could feel his body on the verge of sweating. It was much, much warmer the further you walked towards the back.

“I won’t get into details, but...I heard about the rumor.”

Ularn nodded his head. He pulled out the other wax plug and placed them on the workbench behind him. He lowered his head.

“I see,” Ularn said quietly. “Did Shari send you?”

“Do you know where Seppo is?” Vilkas asked, purposely avoiding the question.

Ulnarn looked over his shoulder, then turned.

“We are caught up on construction supplies. I presume he’s aiding with cleanup duties.” His honey with red accent eyes narrowed. “While I’m intrigued by what you have to say, shouldn’t you be resting?”

Vilkas looked away. “‘Should’ and ‘can’ are different.” He looked back at Ulnarn. “I can’t sit idle if this village is coming under attack. I need to know...” He remembered the position of the person he was talking to while saying it. “I would like to know what’s being done.”

Ulnarn folded his arms across his chest and sighed. “It pains me to say, “Nothing.” We are not a village of warriors. I need to protect my people, but I’m failing them by struggling to come up with a concrete solution.”

“I may be able to help with that. I may not be able to fight right now, but I can teach others how to fight. We don’t have time. If they stole a bunch of weapons, it could happen any moment. I suggest we get anyone willing to fight together for training.” He used his hand to point out the arsenal around him. “This is a start.”

“That had crossed my mind. Without a tutor, though...” Ulnarn sighed as he drew his left hand across his eyes and along his snout. He held his hand around his bottom jaw. “With you, it’s possible. I like our chances of survival a lot more now. The question remains: How are we going to convince them?”

Vilkas glanced down at the floor. “I’m not good at speeches.” “But,” he said and looked back up. “I’ll go with you.”

Ulnarn nodded as he stroked his scaled jaw. “I can go speak with Seppo. We can meet after the shops close. Head back to Shari’s and...”

Vilkas slowly shook his head. His chest began to ache. The pain was showing on his face.

“Oh,” Ulnarn said and looked around, then back at Vilkas. “Let’s go.”

Ulnarn took off the heavy leather apron and draped it onto the workbench. Vilkas followed him through the shop. Ulnarn placed his hand on the handle of the door.

"I hope you're ready for the reception. They haven't seen you since that day. Shari's words hold a lot of respect to the people." Ularn looked over his shoulder. "You look the type to keep to themselves. If you're not ready, this *will* overwhelm you."

Vilkas nodded. "I know. It must be done. I can't stay in the shadows forever. Not if I'm about to live here."

Ularn blinked a few times, then nodded. "Alright then."

Ularn pulled the door open and allowed Vilkas through.

"Vilkas," he heard Amy quietly squeal.

He glanced over. Amy was staring at him with her hands clasped under her short muzzle. Ularn stepped out.

"Chief?" Her hands dropped and she stood.

"Good morning, Amy," Ularn called out.

"Muh-morning, sir."

Ularn led Vilkas through the crossing traffic and towards the rebuild. Vilkas could feel his shoulders tire as they rounded the corner towards the construction. He made a mental note to move around a lot more.

"Chief!" Someone called out.

"He's here! Vilkas is here!" Someone else shouted.

All work stopped as people called out or cheered. It all became a garbled mess. The workers began to crowd around the two. Vilkas felt his chest fill with pride, but it was also becoming a bit overwhelming.

"Everyone!" Ularn shouted. "Please! Calm down!"

"HOI!" Seppo yelled. "Rauhoita Kaikkia!" Seppo pushed through the crowd and stood next to Vilkas - giving him a hearty slap on the back. "Good to see you, friend," he said quietly with a large smile.

“Good to see you, too,” Vilkas said back with a smile.

Seppo held up his free hand. “While our friend and benefactor appreciates our love and support, please mind yourselves. He’s a man that isn’t used to the attention or the swarming. Respect his privacy and keep the adoration to a minimum. Our chief is present. All eyes on him for a moment.” Seppo nodded over to Ular.

“Everyone,” Ular began as he looked over the crowd. “Thank you,” he began and clasped his hands in front of his chest. “*Immensely* for your continued efforts in rebuilding our community.” He lowered his hands and his tone became serious. “Right now, we have an important announcement.”

[Shari](#) belongs to [Celeste](#)

*Rauhoita Kaikkia: Calm Everyone or Calm Down Everyone