

The Elven Maid

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Chapter 1

It was late, the very last rays of dusk hovering over the town as Galyn made his way home from perusing the markets. He'd found no inspiration for his business yet, but he was in a good enough mood despite not yet having been struck by some genius notion. It was only his third day in town, after all, and despite keeping an eye out for ideas, the truth was that he'd mostly been trolling the markets and guilds for the things his new household still needed. Indeed, the lateness of the hour was testament to the great success he'd had in sorting out the positions he still needed to fill for his household staff. He'd been allowed to bring only a single guard and majordomo, both friends whose skills he'd helped cultivate, when he'd been sent out to prove his value to the family. At the very least, he'd needed an additional pair of guards for rotation, a gardener, maid, and bookkeeper.

His very last meeting, the one that had kept him out so late, had finally secured the most critical of those positions, that of the bookkeeper. Without the man he'd just finished hiring, it would be difficult for any idea Galyn *did* come up with to work out. While he was more than capable of handling basic bookkeeping, navigating the often byzantine requirements of the kingdom's bureaucracy was a full time job. And so it was that he was in a good mood, having hired the bookkeeper and guards, plus having acquired the rest of the furnishings his household needed just for good measure.

Such was his simple pleasure at what he'd accomplished, that he stepped lightly and hummed a little under his breath as he made his way back home, satisfaction an excellent counter to the weariness of a long day on his feet. He had just turned off the main way, headed down into the district that held his home, when a tiny fluttering movement of silver hair caught his eye. Some instinct caused his step to stutter and his head to swivel, and he forgot to breath as he caught a single instant of clear sight under the hood of a figure sitting, looking forlorn and lost in a battered traveler's robe, on the opposite side of the cobblestone street.

She was gorgeous.

Gorgeous but...sad?

His feet were moving without his permission, heading across the street to kneel by the stranger. The robe was even more battered than he'd thought, torn in places and with splotches of what looked like blood raising concern in his heart.

"Miss? Miss, are you alright?"

The figure didn't stir for a moment, then her head tilted and he caught sight of her face properly this time, his breath nearly leaving him again as crystalline blue eyes and delicate features peaked out from under the cowl of the robe. Delicate features...and pointed ears.

The woman was an elf.

It was only after a long moment of no words coming from the elven woman that his mind made it past her beauty, noting with distress that her face was dirty and tear tracks cut through the grime. Her eyes were so lost looking that his heart, at first filled with nothing but desire, began to ache with a deep empathy that made him take a seat beside her on the rough stone. He made no move to touch her, he merely waited, making it clear that he was willing to wait for her answer.

For a long while he didn't think she'd give one. Then, after the last rays of dusk had fled completely, a dead voice answered with a single word. "No."

The word was so quiet that it was almost lost in the small distance between them, but only almost. And it carried far more with it than just the word alone. A sensation of brokenness and loss that pulled at Galyn like a terrible void. His hand reached out, more gently than he thought himself capable of, and titled her eyes to look at him again.

"Do you have a place to stay tonight?"

The moment he said it, he realized it could be taken very wrong, and he could see a spark of suspicion in the woman's eyes. But something in his own must have told her he'd meant no harm and the spark faded. She answered with a small shake of her head.

He made his decision, insane as it probably was, and stood. He reached down a hand to her and said. "Well, you do now. For tonight, at least, you shall have a bath, a bed, and a meal in my home. Tomorrow. Well, tomorrow can take care of itself when it comes."

Surprisingly, it hadn't taken that long to convince the elf to come with him. In truth, he thought it was more despair than anything else that had made it so. But whatever the reason, she'd come with him after only a few minutes of persuasion. Alexandra had looked at him skeptically when he'd brought her inside, but had taken her off to the baths at his order. Even if she was his oldest friend, he was still the master of his house and she obeyed.

By the time the two of them had returned, his guard had worn a different expression, far more knowing than it had been before. And that, he suspected, had everything to do with the fact that the elf was no longer in her traveling robes. She wore an old shirt and pair of breeches that clearly belonged to Alexandra, and even in the cast-off garments there was no possible way to deny her beauty. Galyn had seen many an elf throughout his youth, but even the most beautiful of them paled beside the wain image of the silver-haired maiden standing in meager, second-hand working clothes. Her crystal blue eyes and shimmering silver hair were colors he'd never seen on anyone, even an elf, and her body was every bit as stunning as her face had been. Satin smooth pale skin, marred with a few bruises, a dancer's legs, and breasts that strained the blouse Alex had lent her. Which was saying something, given that Alex was considerably more than a handful herself.

Speaking of whom, as she guided the clearly more alert and guarded, but still lost looking, elf to sit at the table Gayln and Riveria had set with food, Alexandra rolled her eyes at him from behind the woman's back. Gayln shrugged sheepishly, not even pretending not to know why she was doing so, and set about serving the elf the modest but filling meal he and his majordomo had managed to prepare. Thankfully, since the maid position still hadn't been filled, Riveria was a decent cook and Gayln not completely helpless as a helping hand in the kitchen. A few misspent moments of his youth and the resulting punishments from them had seen to that.

The elven woman hesitated, then took a slow bite. When no ill effects beset her, she took to the food with a will, eating as if she hadn't touched a meal in days. Which, given the state she'd been in, might just be the case. He and his two friends looked at each other, holding a silent conversation. Alexandra sighed, her shoulders slumping and making a giving-in motion. Riveria just grinned and quietly informed him that, if he was going to keep her, she'd need to fill a role in the house. He nodded solemnly, already planning what he'd say if and when he could convince their guest to tell him her story.

Chapter 2

There hadn't been much conversation the night previous. The elven woman had clearly been dead on her feet and still suffering from some loss that weighed heavy upon her every word and action. She had, at least, told them her name and quietly thanked them before Riveria had led her off to one of the few furnished guest rooms.

It was now morning and Elora, for that was her name, was sitting in a comfortable wooden chair, facing Riveria and Galyn across the mahogany desk in his study while Alexandra lounged unobtrusively in a corner. In the light of day, clean and with a pair of meals in her, the young elf looked much less lost and far more aware of her surroundings.

It was Galyn who spoken first, softly. "So, what is your story, Miss Elora? It is rare to see any elf this far west, let alone in a human settlement and in bad shape. Alexandra said you had several poorly-patched wounds."

Elora met his eyes and gazed into them for a long moment, before her head fell to look at her entwined fingers resting in her lap. "I'm an exile."

That made the three humans in the room blink in shock. They knew of the practice, but so few elves were ever...

"Are you a criminal?" The question was harsh, coming from Alexandra, who was suddenly alert in her place in the corner, hand on her sword-hilt."

Elora flinched. "No!"

It took long moments of hand-wringing before she spoke again, more softly. "No. I committed no crime. I was exiled because I refused to fulfill the role I was born for. My clan cast me out for refusing to do my duty."

That rocked all three of the humans back on their mental heels. This elf was from one of the *clans*? The forest elves almost never had anything to do with humans, or any other species. Hell, it was a miracle the woman even spoke common if she was from one of the nomad clans, instead of the neighboring kingdom of Lthelador, which contained several elven cities. Though it might explain her exotic coloration, as Galyn and the others had never met a clan elf. Those eyes and hair might be common amongst the nomads, for all they knew.

Galyn rallied, trying to steer around a topic that was clearly touchy for their guest. “The wounds were from your travels after you left the clans?”

Elora shook her head in the negative, but didn’t provide an answer. Galyn sighed and tried another approach. “What will you do now? Do you have a plan?”

The elf’s shoulders slumped and her face screwed up as she visibly tried not to cry. Galyn kicked himself mentally, about to offer what he’d planned out the night before. But, to his surprise, Riveria beat him to it.

“She’ll take the maid position here, of course.”

Every single person in the room stared at her in shock, but the raven haired majordomo simply rolled right along as she came out from behind the desk. “We’ll need to get her the right clothes, of course. And she might need training, if she doesn’t already have household skills, but that can be arranged easily enough.”

Elora got over her shock first. “You’re offering me a job! Why?”

Riveria smiled wryly at the girl. She pointed at Alexandra. “Alex was a street rat with a penchant for fighting before Galyn took her in.” Her finger moved to point at her own modest bosom. “I was a failed merchant so far in debt that I was about to go up on the slave auction block. Instead, Galyn came out of nowhere, talked his family into taking on my debt without me having to pay it back, and asked me to be his majordomo.” She rested a gentle hand on Elora’s shoulder. “Galyn has a thing for saving people. Not out of pity, but because he sees something in them. I can’t imagine what it is you’ll be in the long run, not many of the nomad clan’s skills seem likely to be of use to a trade consortium, but until we figure that out you’ll make a perfectly fine maid. We need one anyway, so even if this is the first time Galyn is wrong, or he’s thinking with his dick instead of his head this time, it will still work out.”

Elora had been about to say something, but Riveria’s last comment threw her off, causing it to come out as a splutter. She didn’t get a chance to try again as the majordomo somehow had her on her feet and was dragging the confused elf out the door. It closed behind them when a thud as Alexandra and Galyn stared at it, then at each other, silently wondering what, exactly, had just happened....

Galyn tried not to stare. He knew he was failing, but he manfully made the attempt anyway. Elora stood before him, blushing under his stare, dressed in the maid outfit that Riveria

had arranged for her. He wasn't quite sure, at that precise moment, if he should give his majordomo a raise...or strangle her. For the word 'modest' wasn't even remotely appropriate to use for the outfit. It wasn't, *quite*, 'immodest' either, but it was certainly riding the edge of that definition.

It was in the traditional black and white colors used by maids in any of the four kingdoms, black being the primary color and white mostly constrained to the lace and accessories. The problem was, simply put, that there wasn't an overly large *amount* of material involved at all. The skirt only fell to halfway to her knees, the sleeves were minimal, and most critically of all it had an honest-to-god cleavage-window cut just as large as decency would allow. Perhaps a bit larger that decency *would* allow, actually. A fact which, given Elora's considerable bust, was providing a view that he thought even the straightest woman or most bent man in the four kingdoms would have a hard time tearing their eyes away from.

Of course, Riveria's whispered comment as she stood behind his shoulder, mischievously informing him that, "At least she'll be nice eye-candy, if she doesn't prove to be a very good maid," wasn't helping the current state of his thoughts. He closed his eyes for a moment, took a deep breath to center himself, then opened them again to address the young elf.

"You look amazing, Elora, but if you're uncomfortable wearing so little, we can arrange another uniform, regardless of what Riveria might have told you." A part of him hated himself for saying it, but he'd not risk chasing her back out on the street, or worse having her stay but hate him, just for the chance to see a bit more skin.

Interestingly, his comment seemed to put her at ease rather than embarrass her farther. Her blush faded to almost nothing and she shook her head, a slightly rueful expression replacing her nervousness. "No, sir. This will be fine. I've worn less for festivals, and little more even for routine hunting when the clan went south. It's merely the strangeness of the dress..."

The look in her eye told him it was also her knowledge of his probable reaction, likely brought on by Riveria's parting comment when they left his study that morning. Not to mention whatever else his majordomo might have filled her head with in the time since. He was really going to have to grill his friend and find out just what she thought she was doing...

He took another deep breath, more subtly this time, and addressed her again. "Very well. Don't hesitate to tell me if at any time it makes you uncomfortable. Clear?" She nodded and he let it go, changing topics. "That being settled, let's discuss just what your duties and payment will be. Food, lodging, and uniforms will all be provided, and with your situation in mind I've set aside a modest starting stipend for you to get basic necessities. We can discuss your regular pay after Riveria has a chance to evaluate what skills you already have and what training you'll need, but as a brief overview of your duties..."

Chapter 3

Three weeks had passed since Galyn first arrived in the town of Brevia, and two weeks since the beautiful Elora had joined the staff. Quite unexpectedly, she'd been comfortably able to fill the gardener's slot as well as learning her duties as a maid, though perhaps it shouldn't have been too great a surprise. There was only ever intended to be a limited staff and the small estate

had less than two dozen rooms, even counting the servant's quarters, and thus the duties of a maid were not enough to demand her full attention. Not yet, at least. The gardens were larger than the house, but they had been in excellent shape to begin with and needed only routine tending. That Elora apparently knew a little bit of elven magic for just such purposes had been a pleasant surprise and resulted in him having successfully filled all the positions he needed to get started.

At the moment, he strolled idly along the paths of the those very gardens, trying to make his brain produce a good idea or two. While he, with the help of his newly hired bookkeeper and a few personal contacts, had managed to make enough good deals to break even financially, even growing his initial capital moderately, he knew that such limited results were not what his family expected of him. More, they weren't what he expected of himself, either. He fully intended to be named heir of the Gesan trade consortium, over any of his siblings or cousins. He considered his sister, Hasel, to be his only real competition, but that wouldn't remain true if he didn't hit on a good idea to satisfy the elders that he would be the best guiding hand for the future.

He had plenty of long-term plans, of course, but the trouble with those was that he didn't want to waste them on this test of his abilities. Not to mention the fact that he hadn't known where he'd be sent. Most of them were also intended to work *with* the consortium's current holdings, which none of the children had access to once their tests began.

The system of choosing the next heir for the family by sending every interested child of the sprawling clan out into the world with the same education and pre-determined resources, to a random holding of the consortium, with the goal of starting their own business and proving they could hack it on their own merits, had proven itself for centuries. The method had proved successful enough that the Gesan consortium was now among the few merchant houses that had become big enough, and entrenched itself deep enough, that it had been granted its own patent of nobility. Indeed, their's had been the second such house in the history of the kingdom to achieve the honor, nearly a century ago now. Due to the selection methods used by the consortium, the head of the family business and the political heir weren't always the same person, but either position gave its holder an immense platform of power and influence throughout the four realms, and Galyn had every intention of seizing at least one of those positions. Possibly both.

So distracted was he by these familiar thoughts, that he nearly screamed when Alexandra appeared out of seemingly nowhere and pulled him toward the wall of the outdoor baths he had been just about to pass by. She shushed him when he tried to ask what she was doing, towing him around one corner of the baths, to the side that faced the exterior wall of the property. There was only a narrow alley, very narrow, between the bathhouse wall and the property wall, and he was baffled what his guard was doing pulling him down it. Was there some intruder in the gardens?

Just as he started to worry, she threw him off with a wicked grin and pointed him to a pair of crates that looked too new to have been here long. She climbed up and he followed her, still a little baffled but suddenly a bit suspicious of her intentions. He'd seen that grin before. Usually right before she got them both into trouble.

All became clear as she reached up to her eye-level, which was a bit below his, and swung a piece of board aside, showing a peephole drilled into the wall. She grinned at him again and pointed to it, indicating that he should look. He knew, of course, that he shouldn't. But...there was a reason they'd *both* ended up in trouble all those times, helping prepare food in the kitchens as punishment. He gave her only a token glare, which slid off her grin with absolutely no effect at all, and leaned slightly to put his eye to her peephole.

What he saw through it made him instantly apologize to her in his heart, and swear that he was going to do something nice for her. Particularly if she never told another soul about this spot.

Elora was bathing.

The bathhouse was a hot spring fed variety, where bathers washed before getting into the spring-fed pool, and he stared, entranced, as the elven beauty sluiced the dirt of the garden off her pale body. She was turned away from him, for the moment, and he gazed in fascination at the streamline, sculpted muscles of her shoulders as she raised another bucket of water and poured it over her trim frame. His eyes tracked droplets of water as they ran from her long silver hair, down her back, and onto the tops of her buttocks, gulping as he imagined his hands tracing the same path. Then she stood, turned toward him and the hot spring pool, and his stunned mind deliriously promised to give Alexandra a raise. A large raise. As soon as feasibly possible.

Despite their size, her breasts were high and firm in a way he suspected no human woman's of similar size could ever be without magic. Her body was hairless aside from her flowing locks, not the slightest trace even at the apex of her legs, allowing him a tantalizing view of her sex as she stepped tentatively into the hot water. A few scars, lighter even than her remarkably pale skin, marred her flawless beauty. But even those marks seemed to add to her attractiveness, proving she was a real living being, not a doll to be placed on a high shelf and admired. He shuddered as she settled in and released an audible moan as the heat soaked into her work-weary muscles. He gulped, pulling himself away from the peephole before he lost himself completely.

Alexandra smirked up at him, then pointed at his crotch and winked, before disappearing down the alley. For a moment he was puzzled, then the pain of his iron-hard cock trapped against his breeches hit him and he almost gasped. He quickly adjusted himself, then glanced back at the peephole. He was tempted to...

He decided against it, figuring that Alex might just still be watching and wanting to hold him masturbating to the sight of their maid over his head later. Still, he was going to be back. A part of him felt guilty for that fact, but it wasn't going to be enough to stop him. The attraction he'd been half-fighting for his new maid was something he'd been aware of from the beginning...and he had to admit that his intentions in offering her a job had only been *mostly* pure. He was not the type of noble sleaze to press himself on an employee by force, but some part of him had hope that she might become interested in him...or that he could convince her to be interested. Until this very moment, the latter thought had been an idle one, his mind having far too many other important priorities to focus on. But now...

Chapter 4

He couldn't get the image of Elora bathing out of his mind. Of course, he didn't really want to. He'd been back to watch her...and Riveria once on accident, twice more since the first day. On the third occasion, his impulses had gotten the better of him and he'd stained the wall white. It had left him feeling guilty enough that he'd been extra nice to Elora in the two days since, even bringing her a special treat from the market, in the form of a sticky bun drizzled with hard-to-get caramelized honey. Alexandra had smirked openly at him when she'd seen it, and he was grateful Riveria hadn't been around to question the extravagance.

Still, for a few days the image being constantly on his mind had driven him to distraction. He'd wanted, needed even, to focus on what to do with his business endeavors, and the image of her sliding into the hot spring pool, bare to the world, would not let him achieve that focus. But then...the very same image had given him an idea.

At first it had only been an passing thought, not seriously considered, but it had taken on a new prominence when one of his friends had complained bitterly about a foreign customer canceling a major contract with his stone quarry. It had left him with a surplus of stone so large that he'd had to all-but-stop production until he could get rid of it, which was promising to cost him some of his most skilled laborers as they left for paying work. This new piece of information had made Galyn revisit his passing idea and talk to a few local business owners. There had remained a single insurmountable problem, and it had been Elora who had provided the solution to it as well. Though, admittedly, finding an excuse to ask her about the small water magics he'd see her idly playing with in the baths had taken a little awkward thought.

Still, in the end it had provided the solution he needed, and he'd given the surprised elf a new task and a significant bonus. She was, even now, quietly exploring the city and casting a spell that, with a little ingenuity and the services of a cartographer, would allow them to map the flow of the hot spring's underground pathways in and around the city. For he was going to open a public bathhouse. One, moreover, intended to cater to the entire population instead of just the rich. And he had his newfound obsession with memories of his elven maid bathing to thank for the idea.

It wasn't an unheard of concept by any means. There were public baths in the capital, though those were generally only open to the affluent and not fed from natural sources. The underground flow of hot spring water in the vicinity of Brevia Town, combined with it being a major crossroad town with a great deal of trade traffic, should have made the idea an obvious proposition here. The problems, however, had caused the only attempt ever made to fail and prevented wiser minds from even trying.

First, there were few natural outlets for the springs. All of them were small and every single one of them had already been claimed by the town's handful of noble and merchant estates for their private use. The one previous attempt at building a bathhouse had needed to spend outrageous sums of money digging on every piece of land it could acquire, trying to strike the hot spring water like one would a vein of ore. The prospective businessman had run out of money without ever finding even a trickle. Second, the cost of building a proper bathhouse, which needed non-local stone to be done decently, had been prohibitive. Third, such houses were

normally aimed at wealthy merchants and nobles, and there were few of either in permanent residence in or around the town.

Galyn, however, had solutions for each of those problems. The quarry owner had been enticed to sell his stone at, if one would pardon the pun, rock bottom prices. Not only would it prevent the stoppage in work the man was afraid of, but he'd gain a partial ownership of the bathhouse in exchange for the cheap stone, and Galyn had convinced his friend that his bathhouse would be even more profitable than those in the capital were. Meanwhile, it had occurred to him that the nomadic tribes of elves from which Elora hailed had almost certainly needed a way to find water, and with the small water magics he'd already witnessed her playing with, he'd assumed she might just know them. She had, and she was even now out scouring the town for a place where the hot springs water was both abundant and close to the surface. She'd already reported two such locations, one of which was extremely promising, and he only had her out still looking so as to be sure they didn't miss some perfect location.

Even with those things taken care of, it might have been beyond his means to build the thing with the limited resources he'd been allowed. Quiet negotiations, however, had ensured some investment by local merchants to back his own money. Moreover, without the need to pay for the baths to be artificially heated like was done in the city, Galyn's operating costs would be so relatively low that he could realistically open the baths to the entire population.

It was an idea which had initially caused the other backers to balk, at least until he'd laid out the model for his business to them. He wasn't planning to make any profit at all off the small fees for the use of the baths, making them only high enough to offset the costs of employees, maintenance, and supplies. Instead, his profit would be made by selling a wide array of luxury items, large and small, that could be easily arranged for here in Brevia due to its status as a trade crossroads. Soaps, perfumes, towels made of luxurious fibers, massages provided by skilled workers, plus the basic bathing equipment that would be needed by the thousands of travelers that passed through the town each month, virtually all of whom would be eager to wash the dust of the road off for a reasonable price.

It promised to provide a rapid and sustained source of income, one which he could further invest into other opportunities that would impress even the consortium. That he could arrange private baths for members of said consortium when they visited, at no charge, would only put them in an even more positive mind whenever thinking of him.

He smiled as he considered that last thought, then let his mind drift back to the image engraved on his mind of his maid washing herself, hands perhaps a bit more focused on her breasts in his memory than they had been in life. His eyes closed and he tipped back in his chair as his cock stirred slightly at the memory. One hand idly drifted, intending only to adjust himself a bit...

"Well, I assume from that perverted grin that you're picturing something other than the gold you'll rake in with this endeavor. Does a certain maid feature in your fantasies, perhaps?"

He squawked, arms flailing as he tried desperately to regain his balance, his jerk of surprise at Riveria's dry comment having been too much for the tipped-back chair. He failed, falling backwards with a thump, dazedly thankful for the thick carpet installed in his office. He'd

thought it garish when he first moved in and had planned to replace it, but in the half-stunned moments after it cushioned his impact, he decided that it was clearly a critical feature of the room and that it really must stay. After several long moments for his heart to stop trying to escape his chest and air to return to his lungs, he slowly clambered back upright, stopping momentarily on his knees to glare over his desk at a smirking Riveria.

The glare washed passed his majordomo like so much water flowing under a sea turtle. As he pointedly put his chair back in order, she addressed him again. “So, what are you going to do about her?”

Galyn paused, chair held in hand and only half-upright, confusion spreading across his face. “Do about her?”

Riveria rolled her eyes, motioned impatiently for him to get back in his chair, then pointedly pulled another forward to look at him across his study desk. When he’d seated himself again, still confused, she fired words with a pointed emphasis normally only used on particularly slow children. “Yes. Do about her. We had hoped that boring that peephole for you would be enough to get you moving, but clearly you need a harder push.”

He gaped at her. What?

She rolled her eyes, her tone only letting up slightly as she continued. “Do you really think dear Alex could have managed to make that without me knowing? When have *either* of you ever been able to pull a fast one on me?”

Well. Never. But still.

Taking his silence as acknowledgement, she drove onward. “We were half afraid you were actually gay, or asexual or something, given that you could have had either of us *years* ago out of the gratitude we had for you, but you didn’t even try. So, when you brought in a gorgeous elf girl and couldn’t take your eyes off her, we were quite pleased.” She glared at him. “I thought surely that the uniform would have granted you courage, but you’re too bloody-minded noble, and only looked instead of acting. The peephole at least drove you to *some* action, but you’re too plodding about it. If you don’t start working on her now, she’ll just be another employee before long, and I don’t think you want that.”

He stared at her, his mind trying to fit her words into his worldview and failing for long moments. She waited with an impatient expression, clearly wanting to hear him explain himself, but it took several minutes for him to be able to voice any coherent thought at all. Finally, he managed a strangled response. “She’s hurt! And alone. I can’t push her or it might drive her away!”

Riveria stared at him for a long moment, then took the wireframe glasses from her face, shoulder’s slumping, and rubbed her eyes with the forefinger and thumb of her free hand. It was a gesture of exasperation he knew well, and he wondered just what he’d done to earn it this time. Her head tipped back, eyes opening again as she stared at the ceiling for a moment, lips moving in what he knew from experience was a prayer to the Light asking patience for dealing with her boss. Finally, she looked at him again and explained.

“Galyn, I’ve been working on that girl since you brought her here. She liked the idea of feeling attractive to you right from the start, though admittedly there’s some spite for her former people wrapped up in it. If she hadn’t, I’d have never been able to sell her on that uniform. More to the point, unlike you, I actually managed to pry out of her what she ran from.”

Galyn blinked in surprise. He’d not asked her, afraid to chase her away, but he was immensely curious and it showed so clearly on his face that Riveria actually chuckled for a moment before continuing.

“She was weighed down by a ridiculous tradition that requires those born with the ‘silver hair’ to become leaders of their people. They tried to force her into a leadership role, based on some legends and history about those born with that rare hair color being some sort of light-touched ‘blessed ones.’ Unfortunately, the girl is a natural born follower and she knows it. Extremely talented, naturally gifted at nearly anything she tries, but so uncomfortable with taking the lead that she ultimately fled her people when they wouldn’t let up. They pursued her, with some ridiculous idea of *making* her take over as their leader or killing her as a heretic if she refused again. It was the last and most dogged of them that gave her the wounds she had when you found her, though she apparently wounded him so badly in return that it’s unlikely he survived.”

Galyn sat in silence, absorbing the new information. He leaned back in his chair, tipping it again as he tried to force his thoughts to move faster. “So...you’re saying?”

“I’m saying, idiot, that she *wants to be led*. Add to that her willingness to show off for you, and you’ve got a chance, if you’ll only act on it. It wouldn’t be *easy*, apparently the last hunter that wounded her was supposed to be her arranged lover, so she’s more than a bit skittish, but with your own silver tongue and a little help from Alex and I, you should be able to turn her into anything you want. All while making her *happy* to be with you in the process.”

He gulped, mind now going to far more erotic places, fantasies flashing through his minds eye rapidly as what Riveria just said combined with his earlier arousal. He was suddenly mortified to realize his cock was growing stiff and he shuffled closer to his desk to hide it. He flushed red in embarrassment as the grin on her face showed that Riveria knew what problems he was having. He cleared his throat, almost managing to make his voice sound normal as he asked. “What, exactly, are you suggesting, Riveria?”

Riveria smirked, seemed about to make a quip, then shook herself and took a deep breath, gazing at him seriously. “I’m suggesting exactly what you think I am. Alex and I can help you shape Elora into whatever it is you envision her as being.” She held up a hand to forestall any comment from him. “Don’t misunderstand, we will not help you do anything morally repugnant. But both you and I know you wouldn’t anyway. It’s more a matter of helping you...focus her in whatever way you desire to have it. She’s at least a little interested, is deeply appreciative of you helping her, and you’re too good a catch for her not to want you if you pursue her. Making it mostly a matter of exactly what you’re looking to get out of it.” Riviera raised one hand, palm up. “Do you want a lover? A maid that will obey every command, no matter how sexual it is, but who is ultimately only a servant.” She raised the other, palm up like the other, as if to represent a balance. “Or are you looking for a noble wife? A gorgeous and exotic helpmate and lover to appear both on your arm and in your bed.”

She lowered her hands and shrugged. “Or even something in between. An equal in most matters but a submissive toy between the sheets. What, my master, is it that you want?”

Galyn swallowed hard, staring in near incomprehension at his majordomo and friend, and thought very very hard about his answer....

End of Part 1

Chapter 5

Galyn woke from sleep with a start, needing several moments to reorient himself after a series of vivid dreams. He sat up in bed, still trying to sort out whether the conversation with Riveria the night before had been part of the erotic dreams featuring her, Alex, and Elora, or if it had actually happened. His eyes finally focused, landing on the open journal on his desk. It was coded of course, all members of the family were taught how to read the family cipher, as well as how to make their own private version, and they were drilled ruthlessly until they could read and write both as easily as they could common. Even so, he normally wouldn't have left it out of the triple-locked and magically secured drawer in his desk...except that he'd still been hovering in a half-sort of disbelief about the events of the night, and he'd written notes about them to himself for perusal in the morning. Just in case he'd missed something in the dazed stupor brought on by the unexpected confrontation.

Now, half-uncertainly, he staggered out of bed and over to his desk, ignoring his naked state and the iron-hard erection that the dreams had left him with. It wasn't his habit to sleep in the nude, too used to Alex barging in on him whenever she felt like it, but it was another thing the events of last night had brought on. By the time he'd exhausted himself going over the conversation with Riveria a dozen times, he just hadn't had the will to change properly into his night clothes, crashing mere moments after he stripped out of his day wear.

He winced momentarily at the slight chill of his bare rear on his desk chair, but it had the advantage of jerking him the rest of the way awake. Which, for good or ill, made it easier to believe what was written there in his own hand. Plain as day, at least to his eyes. How long he sat there, staring at the coded writing without really seeing it, he wasn't sure.

However long it was, he was brought out of his endlessly circling thoughts as the door slammed open and Alex traipsed into the room with her usual appalling energy. She came to an abrupt halt, eyed his nude-and-still-half-hard form, then whistled appreciatively, eyes smiling, and focused all her attention on his crotch. “Well, well, that looks even bigger than I thought it was from spying on you.”

Galyn was blushing at her frank appraisal, then frowned at the admission she'd spied on him. He considered protesting for a moment, before remembering she knew about his own spying on Elora. He grumbled and moved to his wardrobe with as much dignity as he could manage. Which, as she made appreciative murmurs on seeing his ass, wasn't exactly an overwhelming amount of dignity. The forlorn noise when he got his trousers on, nearly the equal of the sad sound a disappointed puppy might make, didn't exactly help with retaining the shattered remnants of said dignity either.

He finally managed to fight down his blush, just after pulling on his shirt, and turned to speak to her for the first time. “Yes, Alex? Was there something you needed?”

He'd attempted to make his voice firm and chastising, but the wide, mischievous grin on her face showed just how unmoved she was by his efforts. “So, Riveria said you made a choice about Elora, but she wouldn't tell me what it was! Do we get to help you turn her into a depraved slut or not?”

He choked on his own spit, spluttering in horror for a few moments, before recognizing the twinkle in her eyes that meant she was baiting him. “Allllleeeexxx...”

She laughed, then plopped down on his unmade bed and waved airily at him. “Okay, so I kinda doubted you'd let us turn her into a crazed fuck slut of some sort. Even though she's so hot it would be beyond fun.” She grimaced, then admitted. “Plus, she's got one hell of a mind, so it would kinda be a shame to just use her as a sex toy. Even though I have no doubt she'd enjoy it. You're way too nice for your own good, so she'd probably be spoiled rotten while getting more steamy sex than any one girl can dream of.” She grinned as he glared at her, the glare having no more effect than his earlier attempts at a repressive tone. Her expression shifted to a slightly more serious one as she continued. “But really, what are we going with? You dreaming of a perfect noble equal, or some sort of kinky adviser...”

He sighed, ran one hand through his hair, then gave it up as a bad job and sat back down in his desk chair, turning it around to face the bed first. She needed to know anyway and clearly she intended to pester him until he gave in. “More the latter than the former.” He hesitated a moment, a bit uncomfortable discussing his decision even with Alex, afraid she might judge him. Even though he knew better.

Not only was she his oldest and closest friend, but Alex had spent her early life on the streets and wasn't one to judge *anyone* easily. “I...feel a bit bad about it, but I couldn't pass up the idea of being able to bend her over when and wherever I wanted. To be able to order her to do...things. Fun things, I mean! Fun for her! I mean, I don't want her to be less than she should be or—”

Alex leaned forward, reaching across the distance between them, and rested one finger on his lips, an uncharacteristically serious expression settling on her face. “Galyn, if either Riveria or I thought you would abuse her, or make her something she doesn't want to be, neither of us would help you. I know Riveria told you the conditions, that we *won't* do anything morally repugnant, or let you do anything like that to her either. If she isn't compatible, and *happily* so at that, with what you want her to be, we'll call you on it and refuse to help. Even help *her* if you kept trying. Not that you would. You might be capable of guiding people to new paths for their own good, God knows you certainly did it for me and Riveria both, but you just aren't capable of the level of malice needed to force someone into become something that is against their basic nature.”

She leaned back again, removing her silencing finger, her serious expression fading to her usual playful one, and much of his fear and tension about his decision went with it. Alex, for all that she was perhaps the most...morally ambiguous? Yes, that was a good description. For all that she was the most morally ambiguous of his close friends, she had always been a perfect

barometer for his own actions. If something bothered her, it was likely he'd gone too far, and more importantly, she wouldn't hesitate to call him on it. Her acceptance of his plan to guide Elora into becoming a sexually submissive adviser, and her assurance that she'd stop him if it turned out Elora wouldn't or couldn't be happy in that role, put his mind at ease far more than his discussion with Riveria had been able to. For all her good intentions, Riveria was far more prone to ruthlessness than either he or Alex.

"Thank you, Alex." He didn't say for what, and she didn't ask. It was a moment of great companionship... which she promptly ruined by opening her mouth.

"Soooo, how to we get her to bend over and let you fuck her silly?"

Galyn facepalmed, then drug his hand down to rub away a sudden headache as he sighed in exasperation. "Alex!"

"What! That's the goal, right?"

"Yes, but subtly is... why am I discussing subtly with you? Fine. Here's the first part of the plan..."

Alex leaned forward eagerly, eyes shining with almost unholy glee as he filled her in on what he and Riveria had come up with...

Chapter 6

"So, the first site you found still looks like the best option then?"

Elora paused in her tentative eating of her soup. She'd been more than a little surprised when she was invited to each lunch with Riveria and himself, but had seemed put-at-ease when she realized it was a working lunch, where they could discuss her findings about the underground hot springs.

"I think so. At least, it has the best access to the town center of the three, though the new location I found west of town is a touch closer to the surface."

Galyn waved the information off. "No, you're right. The easy access in town is far better than getting the land a bit cheaper or cutting the digging costs slightly. There isn't as much room to expand into, but if the business goes well it won't be hard to convince a few of the nearby shop keepers to sell. It might technically be in the market district, but it's so close to the warehouses that it's hardly prime real estate."

Riveria nodded, adding her two coppers. "And its proximity to both the warehouses and the residential districts make it a good fit for the business model you've come up with."

Galyn nodded acknowledgment, taking another bite of his own soup and trying not to look distracted. It was good soup, but spiced differently than he was used to... for a reason. It was, after all, the first volley in Riveria's plan to get Elora started on the right path. He had no idea how his majordomo had come by the information, but one of the ingredients used in the soup apparently had a mild aphrodisiac effect on elves. Only on elves, apparently, which made it easy to slip into a meal without Elora being suspicious. It was hardly going to turn her

mindlessly horny, but adding it to many or all of Elora's meals would certainly help in getting her to go along with the other parts of their plans. Speaking of which...

"Well, that's settled then. I'll be leaving to finalize some documents for the purchase once we finish here. Why don't you take the afternoon off, Elora? You surely need a long soak after a couple of days canvassing the city, and I'm sure Riveria can spare some time to continue your instruction afterward."

The idea clearly appealed to her, but she shook her head with obvious reluctance. "You'll need her to help you, won't you? And I still have so much I need to do around the garden..."

It was Riveria that answered with a smile. "Nonsense, dear, the gardens have never looked so good! And as for me, I won't be needed for the initial paperwork. I'll only get involved after the book keeper and Galyn have the full contract ready for execution." She stood, gliding over to the elf with an airy manner. "Come! I've been on my feet constantly since we arrived in the city and could use a long soak myself, we can discuss how best to continue your training while we soak."

Riveria took the elf's arm and tugged lightly, Elora sliding out of her chair hurriedly in response, following along after her immediate superior as the majordomo guided her out into the hall. Galyn forced himself to remain still until the murmur of Riveria's voice, continuing to convince the elf this was a good idea, faded into incomprehension. Then he sprang up from his chair in excitement, meal still half-untouched, and darted through the door to the kitchens. Alex was waiting for him at the door leading from the kitchens to the gardens, holding up a hand to stop him from going farther. She stared off in the direction of the bathhouse, and it was long minutes before she turned to nod at him with a grin.

He laughed at her expression, smacked her ass on the way passed, and missed her deep blush and squeak as he hurried to his peeking spot. There was no way he was going to miss this! He did hear Alex begin to move behind him, her steps much slower. She had her own part to play in the little shell game that was about to be pulled on Elora, but it called for her to enter the baths only after Riveria and the aphrodisiac had a little time to work on the elf.

He reached his peeking spot as fast as possible without causing too much noise, hopped up on the crates...then hesitated with one hand on the fastener of his pants' fly. It wasn't going to be *just* Elora in there, not this time. Riveria was already inside and Alex would join them soon enough. Both knew he was planning to watch and both had assured them they didn't mind. But...he had been a friend to both of them for years and it felt a little more wrong than spying on a relative stranger did. That was probably all sorts of messed up, considering he had actual permission from them and not from Elora, but it didn't stop it from being true. Still...he'd fantasized about both of them at some point and he *did* have honest-to-god permission. His hesitation ended with that thought and his hand popped the button of his fly, his half-erect cock all but springing out into his hand in anticipation as he leaned in to his peephole.

The sight inside was glorious, quickly bringing him to full hardness. Elora and Riveria had just finished washing on the bathing stools and he had a full, unimpeded view of both of their bodies as they stepped into the bath and sank shoulders deep into the hot spring water. That was a little disappointing, but the water was clear enough to make out most of their bodies

despite being under the surface. He soaked in the sight, lightly stroking his erection as he waited to see what would happen.

For the first few minutes it was almost disappointing, but then he noticed a slow but steady reddening of Elora's pale cheeks. At first, it could have just been the heat of the water, but then she flushed dark and almost jerked in surprise at something Riveria said. The blush faded a bit after a moment, but her slightly stiffer posture had brought her nipples popping out of the water...and they were rather tight for someone soaking in hot water.

Such was his attention on them that he nearly missed Alex's entry. The two in the bath didn't, however, and as they turned to greet Alex, their movements brought his bodyguard to his attention. Galyn gulped at what he saw, throat suddenly much dryer than before. He'd know Alex was pretty, the two of them had even fooled around a little when they first hit puberty together, but her constant presence had prevented him from really noticing just how much she'd grown up since those days of awkward fumbling. She wasn't as busty as Elora, but she was still a solid handful, and her training had given her an ass that neither of the other women could match, though Elora came close, likely as a product of her own training. Alex's fiery red hair was down, for once, and much longer than he'd thought it was, falling several inches past her shoulders. It perfectly framed her face for a moment as she posed, angled just right for him to see *all* of her, including her bare-shaven mound. She flashed a grin his way and he gulped, then her attention was back on the task at hand.

His redheaded bodyguard said something boisterous to the pair in the tub, getting another dark flush from the elf and what looked like an honest-to-god giggle from his normally stern majordomo. Then she set about cleaning herself on the bath stool, being a bit more sensual about it than she needed to be. Galyn couldn't help but watch her, with the other two women being mostly covered by water combining with his new appreciation for her body, it wasn't a hard choice. His stroking of his cock had picked up a bit of speed and it was only when he felt an approaching climax that he noticed and backed down a bit. He knew what was planned and didn't want to end too early...

On that note, just as he focused his thoughts back on the trio inside, Alex all but jumped into the spring, aimed at a deeper part of the pool where she'd need to stand to touch the bottom. Instead of doing so, she grinned and half-swam a few strokes to the other women, who were grumbling about being splashed a bit by her entry. Well, Riveria was grumbling, Elora just looked a bit put out.

Then Riveria's eyes widened and she actually squeaked loud enough for Galyn to hear through his peephole. The raven-haired majordomo managed to just barely dodge Alex as the younger woman grabbed for her breasts, Alex making a disappointed noise as Riveria pushed away, deeper into the water. The whole series of events was artfully done but Galyn knew it was an act, knew because this moment had been planned for. His eyes riveted on Elora, who was looking like a deer spotlighted by magelight as Alex turned a predatory gaze her way. The elf started to move by some battle-instinct, but it was far too late, and Riveria had made sure that Elora had taken the spot that trapped her in a corner. Alex's lunge pinned the pale elf against said corner, leaving her at the redhead's mercy.

Alex gave no quarter, each hand latching onto one of Elora's large breasts as she slipped around behind the elf. Elora's gasp and Alex's cackling commentary were too mixed together for Galyn to make sense of them from what came through the peephole, but there was no mistaking the cry of pleasure and arching of the elf's back as Alex's nimble fingers found the woman's nipples. The struggle seemed to go completely out of the elf at that touch, a fact that caused Galyn's cock to throb as he processed it and noted it down in the small part of his mind still able to do so.

Elora collapsing against her brought Alex's predatory smirk back to full force and her hands roamed farther, disappearing under the water, between the elf's legs. *That* hadn't been part of the plan, but Galyn wasn't about to protest as he watched the elf's eyes bug out and actually heard a moan clearly through the wall. Knowing Riveria was about to intervene, he increased the speed of his pumping and groaned lowly as the combination of visual and physical stimulation sent him over the edge. He painted the wall below the peephole white with several shots of cum, eyes closing against his will. It was long moments before he could pry them open again and focus on the inside of the baths.

Riveria was there now, prying the elf away and bopping Alex on the head. The redhead looked chastised for only a moment, apologizing to Elora, then grinned and made some comment that caused the elf to turn crimson all the way down to her nipples. Riveria made a quelling comment, then moved off to a cabinet that rested beside the hot spring pool, where you could get at it while you were soaking. She pulled out a bottle, three saucers, and a floating platform, sending the saucers and platform drifting ahead of her with a gentle push. She followed, pouring the imported rice-wine that a past member of the family had sworn was the best drink for hot springs. Galyn didn't know about that, but it was good stuff, and exotic enough that Elora was unlikely to notice the light dusting of additional aphrodisiac mixed in. It was a far more board spectrum one that would affect the other two as well, though only mildly, and both had considered it an acceptable sacrifice.

Despite knowing it would take a while for the rest of the plan to come into effect, Galyn settled in to watch, content with the chance to view all three of the beautiful women in the bath, occasional glimpses of their bodies undistorted by water slowly re-stiffening his cock. Though he chose, this time, to ignore that stiffness. He knew from their planning that Riveria would be guiding the conversation over several useful topics, from Elora's training to Galyn himself. Alex would contribute mostly suggestive commentary, with the occasional 'innocent' physical touch designed to drive Elora's libido farther and farther up the wall.

Eventually, the girls started to prune from the water and quickly exited...which was what Alex had been waiting for. She finished toweling off before the others and darted a hand into Elora's basket of clothes, pulling out the skimpy, lacey panties that Riveria had made part of Elora's maid uniform. Alex held them aloft like a prize, making several comments on them that got stuttering blushes from Elora, then laughed and darted for the door with them, covered only by her towel. Elora started to chase after her, realized she was still naked, and froze. Riveria came up behind her and put a hand on her shoulder, shaking her head, then spoke to her. The elf shook her head wildly at first, then bit her lip cutely, before reluctantly nodding agreement with the majordomo. Both women started getting dressed in their remaining clothes, and Galyn took that as his cue to exit stage left, buttoning his fly over his once-again hard cock with a grimace.

He left, heading for the house so that he could be in place for the rest of the plan. Riveria had made sure that Elora's only other uniform panties had been among those washed by the elf earlier. There was no way they were dry yet, and Riveria was about to be awfully stuffy to the aroused elf about only wearing the properly matched panties with her uniform...

Chapter 7

Galyn really did have paperwork for the land purchase to finish up and the mind numbing process had managed to distract him, as well as get his erection to falter, in the hour before he saw Riveria and Elora again. Lawrence, his new book keeper, had stopped by to do his part shortly after Galyn returned to his study, delivering everything he'd needed to sign. Some merchants and Lords would have simply signed it all on the spot and had done with it. Galyn, however, both intended to fully understand what was going on *and* hadn't known Lawrence long enough to trust him completely. Thus it was that he was occupied reading through legal papers during his wait for the next part of their grand plan. And, as tempting as the thought of what was still to come was, he had quickly lost himself in the work. While Elora was a wonderful new distraction, one that he hoped would become more than merely a distraction in time, the papers he was working on were the first step in his life's ambition.

It was thus that he signed the last document needed for the purchase with a sense of satisfaction nearly as potent, if of an entirely different type, as that which he'd gotten from seeing their shell game with Elora work out exactly as planned. That the door opened, admitting Alex, just after he finished, merely added to his happiness. After all, her entry marked that the rest of today's plan was about to start. She took up her usual position in one corner, something that wouldn't look odd to anyone that had known Lawrence had been here. While Galyn was capable enough all on his own to not need a constant guard without an outside threat, when a relative unknown was alone with him in his own study it was much odder that Alex *hadn't* been present.

Just as Alex settled in with an admirable appearance of boredom, Riveria swept into the room with Elora following in her wake. The elf stopped as she spotted the others in the room, a blush staining her cheeks and her hands darting halfway to the short hem of her uniform before stopping and trying to simply smooth the cloth unobtrusively. Galyn tried not to smile, understanding from that motion that Elora still hadn't gotten a chance to put new panties on. Instead, he greeted Riveria, ignoring Elora for now as was technically proper, if a bit outside his usual behavior with her.

His majordomo made a few inquires as to his progress, which he answered happily, before excusing herself to 'continue Elora's training.' The elf looked startled as Riveria ordered her to begin straightening and cleaning the study. She protested that they would distract him, but Riveria merely flicked her lightly on the forehead and told her that such was the point of this exercise. Elora already knew how to clean, now she must learn how to do so unobtrusively. Or at least in a way that would bother no one.

Galyn was pretending to work again, but still caught the expression of utter confusion on the pale haired beauty's face as she tried to figure out why Riveria had mentioned those like they were two different options. Apparently, she was still too innocent to realize that a gorgeous half-naked maid would be welcomed by many just as much as one that could go unnoticed entirely. If

for entirely different reasons. He forced his eyes to his writing pad, making random strokes on an empty piece of parchment. He'd already finished and wouldn't have dared work on anything important with her there as a distraction anyway, but he still needed to look like he was doing something important.

At least, that was true until Riveria guided the elven maid to face away from him, straightening a set of bookcases on the far wall. At that, he couldn't help but glue his eyes to her hemline, gulping as it rode up nearly enough to expose her entirely...and then *did* expose her entirely when she leaned down for something. She squeaked, reaching for her skirt quickly, and he looked down just as quickly so she couldn't tell he'd seen. He looked up casually, using her squeak and shuffle afterward as an excuse. She was flushed all the way to her cleavage as she turned to face him. Then, Alex wolf whistled and began to play her part again.

"That was quite a view princess! Do it again!"

Elora jumped, stared in horror at Alex, then jumped again as Riveria put a hand on her shoulder.

"Ignore the brute, girl. Come, you need to straighten Galyn's desk."

The pair of them, the elf serene and maid blushing, made their way to his desk and he leaned back, removing the paper he'd been making random marks on, hiding it away in the middle of a stack. It wouldn't do for her to see it. There was the sound of Alex moving behind him, but he had an excuse to let his eyes wander Elora's scantily clad form now and happily did so, smiling at her as she began to fumble at straightening his desk.

Her normally deft hands were clumsy on the papers, blotters, and pens and he thought he knew why, something that made him grin at the possible success of their plan. This close, he could see now that not all her blush was from embarrassment. Her nipples were rock-hard and visible through the lace of her uniform, her breathing shorter and more ragged than her actions demanded, and her eyes more than a touch dilated.

The elf was almost painfully aroused.

Indeed, he actually wondered at just how clear the signs were. The aphrodisiacs they'd used shouldn't have had this effect alone. Were they more effective on her than they'd thought...or was it something else? A streak of innate exhibitionism would explain it. Indeed, that might even explain how Riveria had first gotten the proud clan elf into that maid outfit. It was something to consider...but not just at the moment. Just at the moment she was done with his desk and it was time to add fuel to the proverbial fire.

"Good job, Elora! And might I say, you look even more beautiful today than usual? More...natural and at ease. I guess that bath with Riveria really did help. You must tell us if you are getting overly stressed, alright? It won't do anyone any good if you overwork yourself." He used every ounce of both his natural charisma and the hard-earned charm of his profession. It helped that he meant every word, but it was still a non-trivial task to keep any hint of his knowing there was something going on here, beyond the obvious, off his face. Not to mention keeping the attraction in his eyes limited to *only* attraction, rather than lust. He suspected he had

failed at the second, though only a little, and her outfit was enough to explain away some fairly strong desire quite honestly.

Elora's blush turned wine-dark and she stammered something incomprehensible before Riveria took pity on her. Well, pity of a sort, anyway. She swatted the elf's ass lightly, drawing a half-gasp, half-moan from the startled elf, then towed her away to continue her tasks. Alex took that as her queue, standing with a catlike stretch and heading for the door. Riveria pulled Elora back, letting the guard pass first, but Alex paused and whispered something that drew an audible squeak and even deeper blush from the elf...though the blush it *also* drew from Riveria made Galyn extremely curious just what the redhead had said.

Sadly, his curiosity went unanswered as all three women left. He sighed in disappointment, reached down to adjust his pants so they were less painful against his renewed erection, and got to work on the details needed to begin construction on the bathhouse...

Chapter 8

Work had been done, dinner come and gone, and Galyn smiled as he personally poured favored drinks for Alex and Riveria. It was well into night now, a bit past the time that all three of them usually would have turned it, but they had agreed from the beginning of their planning to meet in his study at this hour to discuss the results of their efforts. They made a little small talk over the drinks, before Riveria took the proverbial bull by the horns and got the meeting rolling properly.

"I think, as I spent practically the whole day with Elora, that I should go first." Getting nods from the other two, she continued. "I think we have all seen at least some evidence that Elora is compatible with the choice Galyn made. Indeed, there were two points that stood out over the course of the day that might be suitable vectors for us to train her. That is to say, suitable vectors in which she would both enjoy the training *and* enjoy the end result. Which I think we all agree is desirable."

She left that statement hanging long enough to draw positive affirmations from the pair of them, then proceeded to highlight the points of interest. "First, I believe Elora may be a natural submissive. Alex, can you say how she reacted to your touch in the bath? I noticed it later on as well, but that was the most striking incident."

Alex flashed a grin. A wide, predatory thing that might well bode ill for Elora's future peace. "Oh yes, that *was* rather awesome, wasn't it? I suppose it might've been because the aphrodisiacs had her already horny, but there's no question that she reacted very submissively the moment I first touched her nipples." She paused for a moment, pursing her lips in thought. "Even before that she wasn't truly trying to get away from me, despite the fact that I'm pretty sure she knew what I was aiming for. It's possible it was all conscious choice, brought on by the spiked lunch, but I'd say she's at least partially submissive...and might swing both ways too, come to that."

The last part of Alex's statement seemed to put Riveria on the mental back foot for a moment, the majordomo pursing her own lips and leaning back into the cushion of her chair in thought. Then she shrugged. "I actually hadn't considered that last part, which is something of a

third point of interest, but not an overly relevant one, given the ultimate goal of setting her up with Galyn.”

Alex nodded. “True. It could still be useful to know, though.” The predatory grin was back for a moment as she added. “And a fun one, for sure.”

Riveria just shook her head at Alex’s grin and tried to get back on track. “The second point of note was one I noticed most strongly when we were in the study.”

Galyn, feeling he should contribute *something* to the meeting, smoothly inserted his own observation. “Exhibitionist tendencies?”

The raven-haired woman nodded. “Yes. They were most strong around you, likely do to both your gender and her known attraction to you. However, they exhibited themselves even in only my presence, and I suspect they may explain the much stronger arousal she experienced than we anticipated. The aphrodisiacs shouldn’t have been strong enough to affect her that much, not unless she is unusually weak to them. Certainly, the one I and Alex also consumed had only a small effect on me.”

Alex piped up from her spot flopped on a couch. “I dunno if they affected me at all. Getting my hands all over the elf, and the cute sounds she made, got me horny enough that I spent the hour between the baths and the study masturbating.”

Riveria and Galyn both flushed at the frank admission, Riveria clearing her throat and trying to move on. “Yes, well. Be that as it may, I’m fairly sure Elora has at least some exhibitionist tendencies. Both those and her submissive tendencies are things we can focus on to bring us closer to our goals. What do you think, Galyn?”

Galyn leaned back in his chair, eyes closing in thought. Riveria was right about both of them being options, but which would be best to focus on first? Which did he most desire? Unbidden, a mental image of Alex and Riveria joined his musing, Riveria’s comment during their first confrontation about how he could have had either of them years ago adding itself into the mix. Submission? Exhibitionism? Or perhaps he should widen his goal a little...consider more than just Elora. This bore careful consideration...

End of Part 2

Eventually, Galyn leaned forward again, the legs of the chair that had left the ground as he tipped back hitting the floor again with a thunk. Addressing Riveria and Alex, one clearly impatient and the other calm and collected, he gave them his decision. “Submission, I think. I imagine there will be a few opportunities to use her exhibitionist tendencies to aid and abet getting her ready, but I want her willing to accept orders first and foremost. After all, if we push her far enough along that track it will be easy to simply order her to do the things that will enflame the exhibitionist in her.” He mentally filed away his third consideration without speaking it out loud. At least for now. He simply wasn’t willing to risk his relationships with Alex and Riveria by getting greedy. He’d keep an eye on them and try and determine if it was something *they* wanted. If it was...well, he’d consider the size and shape of that particular bridge if he stumbled upon its existence.

Riveria was nodding, expression thoughtful, while Alex simply looked excited. It was, unshockingly, Alex who spoke first. “Alright! Getting her to streak through town or something would be fun, but I was hoping you’d jump straight to ordering her to do kinky things.” She cocked her head to one side. “Though, how are we planning to do that, exactly?”

Riveria rolled her eyes at the younger girl. “By not coming straight out and ordering her to do kinky things. We’ll have to come at it more obliquely than that.”

The redhead snorted but didn’t rise to the bait Riveria had trolled out for her. All three of them knew that Alex wasn’t simple minded enough to have actually believed diving straight in was the plan. She had, after all, contributed rather heavily to the first round of planning. Instead of pointlessly defending her honor in this case, she simply waved a hand for Riveria to continue, her put-upon expression causing Galyn’s lips to twitch as he tried valiantly to suppress a grin.

“I think the best approach would be to remove Galyn from the equation for a couple of days. We pushed her pretty hard today and we don’t want to cause a negative backlash by being too obvious or heavy-handed.” Riveria paused, waiting until Alex and Galyn both nodded agreement before continuing on. “Instead, I’ll focus hard on training her for the next few days. I can subtly reinforced what we did, slipping in some non-standard but unsuspecting orders. Get her to clean in certain ways, or effect specific positions. That sort of thing.”

Alex had been nodding along, but held up her hand to interrupt Riveria when the older woman paused for breath. “Okay. I can see how that sort of foundation would help before we pass her along to Galyn for him to work on her. But how will you justify it? You’ve only been teaching her in fits and starts up until now. Whenever you’ve had time around your regular duties, really.”

Riveria shrugged. “Easy. The upcoming chaos once construction on the baths starts will serve as more than enough excuse. I can simply claim to be getting it out of the way before my time is entirely committed. Which will actually help us in two other ways as well. Galyn is going to be legitimately busy for the next few days as everything is finalized with the town authorities, making his absence unsuspecting. And once the idea of how busy both he and I will be is firmly planted in her mind, we can justify adding additional tasks to her load to help him out. That will let me send her along for him to work on while also getting her feet wet on the sort of thing we want her doing on the business side, long run.”

Alex nodded in appreciation at the typically-Riveria multi-fuction plan. “Alright. I think I can see a couple of more things to do as well...”

Galyn leaned forward farther to insert himself in the conversation. He suspected they would be at this for some time...

Chapter 9

Resting against the side of a massive marble slab with a tired sigh, Galyn shaded his eyes with one hand and looked over the construction site. The last few days had been hectic, even more so than he and Riveria had imagined, though in part it was his majordomo’s absence that had made it so. He’d never quite realized just how much he’d come to rely on her efficient

organization over the last few years and realizing it now made him silently promise himself he would find her something nice the next time he was down in the markets.

Still, everything was on track despite her absence. And her reports to him about her work on Elora were promising as well. The subtle reinforcement she'd been giving to Elora's submissive tendencies and been aided and abetted by Alex's own contributions to the plan exactly as they'd hoped. Alex had proposed using her own well-known mischievous nature to keep Elora aroused and thinking of Galyn, a few pranks and regular suggestive commentary working remarkably well to enhance Riveria's own efforts. So much so, that Riveria had been able to inform him that she'd trained Elora to strip for her on command. Though, since it was related to her uniform and maid training, the same thing would not work for Galyn just yet. Even so, it was much farther than they'd expected to get with her so soon.

He lowered his hand, satisfied that his half-idle sweep of the new grounds hadn't spotted anything that needed immediate attention. He was looking forward to a soak of his own as soon as he got back to the manor...and he was looking forward to tomorrow even more. After all, not only was it going to be the first day that Elora would be assigned to assist him, it was also the official start of construction on the new public baths. He's just overseen the delivery of the marble that would be used in the foundation and the earth-mage that would be helping dig that foundation quickly had arrived yesterday. They'd gotten lucky there, his quarry-owning friend knowing of an earth-mage that was immediately available and putting him in touch. Since the woman was doing it partly in return of some favor she'd owed his friend, it was even going to be cheaper than doing it the long-way would have. Which was all to the good. The quicker he started pulling in revues from this, the better. It was an ambitious first project, far more so than his various informants told him any of the others had tried, and it was going to strain his resources right to the limit to pull it off as he envisioned it.

With that thought, he pushed off from the slab of marble, nodding to Alex as she appeared from deeper in the site, where temporary shacks for storing the equipment they would need had been set up. "All done?"

"Yeah. Everything looks secure. I bullied one of the mages into setting up a magic tripwire around the site perimeter before he left, too."

Galyn chuckled and shook his head, imagining the poor fellow trying to resist Alex getting her way. He'd likely be too befuddled to even consider adding it to the bill too, knowing her. "Okay then, let's head home. I, not so ironically, want a bath."

She nodded silently, following along a half-pace behind him, eyes scanning the half-deserted streets in the instinct of her profession as they headed back to the manor. "I'm totally joining you for the bath, I'm coated in all the dust the mages stirred up."

He looked at her, a little startled. Had she meant that literally?

She gave him a flat look. "What? You've already seen my glorious body from the peephole. I'm not waiting to get this dust off just 'cause you'll get a closer look."

After a moment, he managed a shrug, even if he suspected this was going to end in far more embarrassment for him than her...

A short while later part of his brain was reflecting that he'd been completely right in that assumption. Of course, given that Alex was currently teasing him by facing toward him while she rubbed her body down with exaggerated sensuality, the rest of his mind—as well as other firmly attentive parts of his anatomy—were telling that first part of his brain just what it could do with itself. The fact that Alex was eyeing said parts of his anatomy with obvious and blatant appreciation didn't hurt his ego a bit.

As he firmly suppressed the reflex to look away, knowing it would only add fuel to the fire and cause her to do something even more over-the-top, he desperately tried to think of anything but her soapy breasts. Failing, again, he rinsed off his body and moved to the hot spring waters with just a bit more of a rush than justifiable. He suffered through the snort of laughter that followed him in resolute silence, then sighed in defeat as Alex slid into the waters right next to him, her naked body quickly leaning into his. Deciding to get some of his own back, he wrapped an arm around her and pulled her in closer, getting a squeak of surprise in reaction. Glancing down, he was sure he saw a blush for just a moment before she abruptly pushed away and swam out into the deeper portion of the baths.

He grinned as she stayed facing away from him, though he couldn't help but take the chance to soak in her curves without her teasing grin embarrassing him. Despite having seen her through the peephole, it was only now, at much closer range, that the changes to her body womanhood had brought were really sinking in for him. He'd known, intellectually, that the flat-chested tomboy she'd been when they first met had developed curves, and he'd noticed objectively that she was considerably more than a handful now, but seeing them up close and personal was something else entirely. They weren't as big as Elora's, but they were very nearly as perky, and he found himself appreciating how well they matched the training-toned ass he could probably bounce a gold piece off of.

As she finished swanning around in the deeper part of the baths and turned back toward him, he hastily closed his eyes and pretended to be drowsing in the heat and healing of the waters. He felt her join him again, this time a good arms-length away, and when he cracked his eyelids slightly he noted her doing much the same as he was pretending to do. With his fears that she would return to her teasing once she got over his moment of boldness dispelled, he closed his eyes again and relaxed for real this time, mentally filing away her behavior for late review. It might help him figure out just what to do about her and Riveria...

Chapter 10

Galyn watched, again, as Elora walked away from him on a new task. When he'd declared her maid outfit too much of a potential danger on an active worksite, he hadn't anticipated Riveria being able to instantly produce pants that might as well have been glued onto the elf. He probably should have known she'd be prepared, given his majordomo's usual efficiency, but he'd been caught flat footed by her nonchalant presentation anyway. He also had no idea how she'd convinced the other woman that they were an acceptable alternative, but he wasn't going to question that too closely. Not given the pleasant results. No matter what the negative impact on his efficiency probably was. Not to mention the efficiency of the rest of his

work crew. At least the earth-mage was a woman, or they might not have gotten anything done at all.

He shook the thought off, again, and got back to mentally reviewing the state of the project. In the last three weeks Elora had proven, once again, that she was extremely intelligent and learned quickly. He'd been prepared to mostly use her for gopher tasks, carrying messages or fetching needful things, but she'd proven far more valuable than that. Not only did she have a surprising head for figures, but her sensitivity to magic was so high that she'd actually been able to point out ways for the earth and security magics involved in the process to be improved.

Indeed, her sheer usefulness had actually presented something of a problem in his secondary mission, that of working on the elf woman's submissive tendencies. Getting her used to taking his orders wasn't a problem, given that he was ordering her all around the site on various tasks, but giving those orders a sexual tint without being obvious about it had proven much more difficult. Thankfully, Riveria had come through again for him, this time with a list of ideas that had worked well to achieve those ends. With Alex's help, he'd worked on contriving events from said list of scenarios, events that had required Elora to either come into close bodily contact with him or Alex, where they could give follow-up orders while 'accidentally' rubbing at sensitive spots, or else situations in which some manner of clothing related disaster could be created. The one that had resulted in him being able to order her to strip before a clothing-eating solvent (which would have been harmless to her skin, unknown to her) could 'endanger' her, had been particularly memorable.

He'd even, more recently, been able to finally achieve a sufficiently teasing banter with her that he'd twice been able to order her to simply 'give him a good view' and have her actually comply. The silver haired beauty hadn't missed his eyes trailing after her ass all the time and both times he'd given the order, she'd simply bent over to enhance the effect of her pants to a degree that caused some painful issues in his own pants...

That ability to banter with her was good. Very good. Even with his ultimate goal, he had no intention of crushing her spirit, and he was sure that the elf's increasing comfort with him was a good sign for their long-term compatibility. That she was proving that she'd be an asset outside the bedroom was even better news. Indeed, as he finished his mental review, he realized that her presence seemed to have resulted in them being three days ahead of the original timetable, despite the distraction she caused to for the mostly-male work crews. And he thought it might actually have been a week if he'd had her here more often.

On that note...the number of duties she now had was beginning to be a deterrent. Though it still wasn't critical yet. Still, it might be time to start thinking which of her duties could be handled another way. He wasn't about to give her up as his maid, it was too useful a position for working on her, not to mention the uniform... But perhaps they should hire a gardener as they'd originally intended? It was something to consider, but something for later. For now, he saw the happily smiling elf woman returning from the rounds he'd assigned her, checking that the storage facilities were properly closed up for the day. Which meant it was time to go home...

Elora wasn't smiling any longer. As well she shouldn't be. Yesterday's high had been brought crashing down by today's events. As she sat in his study, scanty maid uniform highlighted by the lamps recently turned on when the sun set on the day, she looked positively frightened.

"I assume you know why you're here, Elora."

The silver-haired elf across from him flinched, then nodded while still staring at the floor. She looked a pitiable sight, all things considered, and he fought the instinctive urge to comfort her. Not only was there legitimate cause for her state, cause he couldn't ignore, but to comfort her would be to throw away a perfect opportunity for other things as well.

"Look at me!"

When she hastily raised her eyes in response to the command, Galyn softened his voice and gave her as disappointed a look as he could manage. It was hard, very hard. Sure, what she'd done really was potentially serious and needed to be addressed, but the excuse it gave him for what was about to happen made it difficult for him to treat it with the seriousness it legitimately deserved.

"Tell me what you've done wrong."

Elora gulped at the stern look he'd managed but squared her shoulders and did her best to answer in a normal tone of voice. "I didn't check the seals on the storehouse doors well enough. I missed that the magic hadn't engaged on one of them and it was found wide open this morning, with a few tools missing."

And hadn't that been odd? Only three tools had been missing, which was something he was going to be addressing with Alex when they were done here. But for now, he had Elora's punishment to deal with.

"Yes, and we were lucky it was only a thief, not a business rival. If they'd torched the storehouse it could have been a disaster that wrecked the whole project and ruined me, personally, on a financial level." He let that sink in, watching her shoulders slump and eyes water a little, before changing his tone to a contemplative one. "You know, if you had been one of the builders, I'd have had to fire you on the spot. And if you were more experienced I'd at least have to insist you work without pay until the amount of the losses was made up."

Elora paled, an interesting and somewhat disturbing look on her already light skin. One of the tools stolen had been infused with magic and its value would take forever for someone with her limited means to repay. She had no way of knowing that it had belonged to the earth-mage, or that the woman had brushed its loss off, saying she could make another at a fraction of the cost it would sell for on the market and that Elora's own suggestions about her earth-magic were worth far more to the woman. Galyn certainly wasn't going to tell her about that little

detail, having already sworn the earth-mage to secrecy about it. Even aside from his plans for her punishment, it was a lesson on caution far too valuable to remove the sting from so readily.

“However, given that you’re relatively new to my household, were fulfilling duties above and beyond your technical role, and this is your first serious mistake...” he let her hang for a moment, face suddenly looking hesitantly hopeful, “I think such measures would be a little extreme.”

Her whole body slumped in relief. He let her have a moment before returning some of the pressure. “On the other hand, I can’t simply let this go unpunished. It *was* a serious error on your part, after all, and not punishing you might incline you to make more.” He ignored her frantic headshake, rolling on with his prepared speech. “It also wouldn’t be good for other employees to see you not getting punishment for it. The question is, how should I punish you?”

The question was clearly rhetorical and she remained silent. He tipped back in his chair slightly, steepling his fingers under his chin and considering her with his best thoughtfully-stern expression. He let the moment draw out for a minute, two...five. She became increasingly fidgety as he apparently considered her fate, her gaze falling back to the carpet below her. Finally, he nodded and stood, moving around the desk and seizing one of the extra chairs in the room. He turned it to face the room at large and sat, then crooked a finger at her, silently demanding she come to him. She obeyed the non-verbal order quickly, standing a pace in front of him with a confused and wary expression on her face.

“As the error was one a foolish child might have made, so too will the punishment be that given to a foolish child. Remove your panties and lay across my lap.”

She gaped at him for a moment, processing what he’d just said, then blushed a brilliant red as she understood what he meant to do. She began to stammer, but he didn’t give her a chance to say anything coherent, instead making a choppy motion with his hand and firming his face and voice.

“I did not ask for your opinion, girl. The embarrassment of having your bare bottom spanked like a child will make this a punishment you remember long hence, which is the entire point.” His voice turned dry, just a touch of humor entering it. “And the gentleness with which you’ll need to sit for a few days will make it sink in properly for the short-term as well. Now, give me your panties.” He held out his hand for them, expectantly. trying to show no sign of his internal struggle not to hold his breath. If everything they’d done to prepare her up until now hadn’t been enough...

...

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It had. After a long hesitation, and with a scarlet blush that could have lit the night like a search-spell, she awkwardly stripped out of her panties, trying and failing not to flash him in the process. Her hand shook as she handed the scanty scrap of cloth to him and he struggled to keep

his face straight as he took them solemnly, placing them in his belt pouch without a word. Then, still silent and stern faced, he pointed her to place herself on his lap.

With a deep breath and slightly frightened expression, she complied, her short skirt barely covering her ass as it was positioned just right for his purposes. Not that it was destined to stay there. Now that she couldn't see him, he smiled in delight, winking at Alex who was watching the whole thing unobtrusively from the darkest corner of the lamp-lit room. It was no accident that he'd positioned the chair so that Elora's delectable rear was pointed in his bodyguard's direction. He knew she'd enjoy this almost as much as he was going to. Probably more, given what they'd planned for after.

When Alex grinned and made an impatient motion for him to get on with it, he casually reached out and flipped Elora's skirt up, putting her naked rear on display for everyone in the room. The elf started to let out a startled squeak but was cut off abruptly as he brought his hand down with a sharp crack on one cheek, turning the squeak into a yelp. He paused only for a moment, then raise his hand to deliver a matching crack to the other cheek. Again. A third time. Four, five, six. Each alternating between sides. Then a pause to admire the beginnings of red handprints on each pale half-sphere. When she started to squirm, he raised his hand and began again, ignoring the slight sting that had started to develop in his own flesh. While her rear was a bit softer than Alex's, it was still quite firm, the hard muscle of a lifetime of wandering the world with her nomadic clan overlaid with only a thin veneer of velvet softness.

He lost track of exactly how many blows he gave her, but didn't lose track of her state. When he judged her level of discomfort was in danger of moving from sharp stings to actual hurts, he stopped. She sobbed a little against him and for a long few moments he did nothing. But then, with extreme gentleness, he caressed her deeply-reddened cheeks.

Her breath hitched mid-sob.

He kept it up for a minute or two, her sounds of distress slowly being replaced by something else... When a moan finally slipped past her lips, he grinned, though the sound also loosed the last of his control over his half-hard cock. It sprang the rest of the way to attention regardless of what he wanted and he could only hope she either didn't notice in her current state...or else that she would connect it with her own clear arousal once she was back in her right mind.

For the moment, he decided to take a little bit more risk, slipping his hand down farther for just a moment, running a finger across her exposed lower lips. She jerked, another, much louder, moan spilling from her before she could stop it. He smirked at the plentiful wetness he'd felt, but decided he'd pushed his luck much too far already. He flipped her skirt back down and pushed her gently, non-verbally indicating it was time for her to stand.

She complied, slowly and shakily, seemingly trying to collect herself as she did, pressing her skirt down uselessly and looking away from him as she finally stood before him. Her upper cheeks were glowing nearly as deeply as her lower had been and it was all he could do to keep the grin out of his voice as he finally spoke again.

"Now. I think that lesson took, mostly." She darted a look up at him, then when he *did* outright grin at her, her blush deepened even further and she looked away again. "Since you

seemed to have had a bit of a *reaction* toward the end, one that couldn't be called punishment, there will be one final condition for my forgiveness of your error." He took her panties out of his belt pouch and waved them at her. "You will not get these back for the next week. You will give all of your other uniform panties to Alex. The constant reminder that you will need to watch yourself lest you give everyone a show should be a good final lesson in attentiveness."

She was looking at him again now, huge eyes showing her shock. But he wasn't about to give her time to recover, let alone time to protest. "Now, I'm sure you'll need help getting some ointment on your rear so that the sting doesn't last longer than needed for the lesson to sink in." He turned to Alex, voice as innocent as he could make it. "Alex, take her to the baths, I'll send Riveria along with the ointment so you can help her apply it. Oh, and don't forget to get the rest of her panties!"

The widely grinning redhead quickly descended on the maid, pulling the suddenly spluttering girl along before Galyn could change his mind or hear Elora protest. As Alex towed the poor elf out of the room, he grinned after them. Then, the moment they disappeared, he adjusted his pants and went to send his majordomo and her jar of ointment along. Then, of course, he had an appointment with a certain peephole...

Chapter 11

Galyn looked up in surprise as his study door opened. It was late, very late. Considerably past the point that he'd normally have been done for the day, as a matter of fact. However, his fun with first Elora's punishment, then watching with rapt attention as she moaned helplessly under Alex's hands as the redhead 'massaged' ointment into the elf woman's reddened rear in the baths, had resulted in him putting off several bits of work that really needed to be done. As a result, he'd thought he was the only one still awake. So it was quite unexpected that Alex was now slipping into his study with her serious face on.

Recognizing that fact, he carefully put away the document he'd been working on and addressed her in an equally serious tone. "What is it, Alex? Is something wrong?"

The redhead paused, sighed, then pulled up a chair to sit across the desk from him. "Yeah, we've got a problem. Namely, that Elora didn't actually forget to seal that storage room."

The pen idly twirling through Galyn's fingers, a habit he'd had since he first learned it drove one of his more unlikeable instructors mad as a youth, stopped abruptly as her statement processed. "Explain."

"Call it paranoia if you want, but I've been double-checking all the site security after everything shuts down. We don't know enough about the people we hired for this job, so it seemed the thing to do."

He leaned back, taking a deep breath and letting it out. It was obvious where she was going with this and he didn't like it. He remembered his earlier intention to address the oddity of the missing tools with her. It seemed he shouldn't have let circumstances and a beautiful elf put that off. "You checked the seal after Elora had been by and it was secure."

His bodyguard nodded. “Got it in one, boss. Everything checked out, which meant that I took a much harder look than the local guard did when they investigated, too.”

“And what did you find?”

Alex leaned back in her chair, blowing at a strand of hair that had fallen into her face. Her voice was irritated when she started speaking again. “That’s just it. I didn’t find a damn thing. No marks that anyone had been inside at all. Nothing to indicate anyone had been there except the missing tools. Worse, there was no sign of the spells or physical locks having been forced. Boss, whoever did this was either *very* good, or else had inside help.”

“Fuck.”

She grinned a little at his single word response. “Accurate. But I’d save that word for use with Elora. That ass...” She gave a dreamy little smile in memory, then shook herself and dropped back into serious mode. “My main concern is that it might have been someone from the family. Though, there aren’t many of them that would be inclined toward doing so little damage. Julia maybe, or Edward, but the others?”

Brow furrowing in thought, Galyn nodded. She was right, of course. Very few of his rivals within the family were big on subtlety, at least for something like this. Sabotage was frowned upon when the scales came due at the end of the competition, but allowing yourself to *be* sabotaged weighed even more heavily against you. As such, it was a fairly common tactic early in the game, where it could do the most good while still allowing plenty of time for the perpetrator to run damage control with the elders regarding their image. It also meant that, if someone tried it at all, it was usually a grand thing rather than a small act like this. It wasn’t worth the reputation risk for something that wouldn’t have much effect. Doubly so since *trying* but *failing* was considered an even nastier mark against whoever tried. Which meant...what? Was it simply an opportunistic shot by someone who’d been mostly trying to gather information? Or something else entirely...”

“Are there any locals that could be behind it? Toes we’ve stepped on or factions we’re threatening by bringing the family business in?”

Alex shrugged. “It isn’t impossible. But nothing you’ve done should have pissed any locals off enough to risk angering your family. For the most part you’re plan is actually going to be good for the local traders and merchants. And you know that each town is scouted for any serious underworld trouble before the elders pick them out for each generation’s competition. Keeping things as fair at the outset as they can and all.”

Which was more or less what he’d been thinking. In truth, the security he’d set up for the site was overkill, an aggressive deterrent to the few of his family rivals that might have risked trying blatant sabotage. And Alex was right that the report on the town hadn’t shown any serious underworld threats. Oh, the town was big enough, and on a critical enough trade crossroad, that it had a chapter of the thieves’ guild. But the guild wasn’t likely to interfere this early in a Gesen Consortium choosing. Later, when the targets got richer, sure. But angering the consortium for a few stolen tools? No. Not a chance. Which left...what? An enemy or rival of that earth-mage, maybe?

“Keep on this, Alex. Something isn’t adding up,” he paused, frowned, then sighed and added, “and I think it’s time to call in that marker with the twins. I’d have preferred to reserve that favor until much later in the game, but I want the magical security at the manor itself beefed up. No one from the family would target us here, but this just doesn’t feel like any of them. Not even Julia. Better safe than sorry.”

His bodyguard nodded firmly. “Absolutely. And...I think I can convince the twins not to take this as complete repayment of the favor. It was a pretty big thing for you to keep quiet about. Plus...” her eyes gained a mischievous twinkle, “I’m pretty sure Danny has a crush on Riveria, so if I bill it as a serious security concern...”

Galyn snorted. “Just make sure I’m there to see Riveria’s face if she finds out.”

She shot him a grin and stood. She made to leave...then paused and raised a finger, as if remembering something else. She turned so he could see what she was doing, reached down into her cleavage...and pulled out a pair of skimpy panties. Then she repeated the action twice more. She tossed them on the desk in front of him and her eyes met his with a smolder in them. “She was *so* much fun. I can’t wait to see what you get her to do next. And I totally owe you one for the excuse to make her squirm like I did in the baths...” With that parting comment, she turned and left.

Galyn grinned and shook his head, picking up a pair of Elora’s skimpy uniform panties and making a mental note that he really needed to figure out if Alex actually swung both ways, or if she just enjoyed the way Elora specifically reacted. Given his bodyguard’s personality, he could really see it being either option. Regardless of which it was, it was certainly useful to him in regards to the his elven maid. Though, the parting shot *did* bring a question to mind. A far more pleasant one than thoughts of just who had broken into that storage shack and why.

Namely, what exactly was he going to do with Elora? At this point it was painfully clear that their plan was working, something he’d had such serious doubts about that he hadn’t put much thought into the long-term. And, he supposed, he probably still shouldn’t do so. There was every chance that either he or Alex had pushed things too far today and Elora would be gone by morning...but if she wasn’t, he really needed to consider what to do with her next.

Hmmm. Well, this time he’d used a punishment. But throughout the last few weeks she’d responded well to rewards as well. Perhaps he should focus on one or the other? Sexualize either her rewards or her punishments? Both would need to be used in the long run, of course, but in the short-run focusing on one or the other might lead to a useful advance. On the other hand, he could mix the two from the onset, though the balancing act of doing so might have its own complications. And, of course...there was also Alex and Riveria to consider. Now that Elora was responding to his commands, at least somewhat, he might just be able to use her to figure out what to do about the two other women. A fact-finding quest of sorts. That could also help with training Elora, indeed it might help balance her submission with the need to make her into a capable assistant, but it would likely slow the rate of her growing submissiveness, since she’d be actively plotting alongside him. What to do...

End of Part 3

Chapter 12

Well, Elora hadn't left during the night. Better, while she had blushed profusely around both him and Alex for several days, she had also started giving off more blatant signs of attraction, staring when she thought they weren't looking, blushing at complete random, and even stuttering once or twice around Alex. Which was admittedly a bit of a complication, as her increased interest seemed to be split between Galyn himself and Alex, which might very well indicate that his bodyguard had been right about Elora possibly swinging both ways. But, whether that was true or not, it wasn't a serious issue yet, and it was very possibly merely an artifact of the situation combining with the random doses of elf-specific aphrodisiac they'd been irregularly slipping into her meals.

As such, they'd decided not to back off of Alex's occasional provocations, though they'd made sure to balance it with plenty of interaction with Galyn. In the ten days that had passed since the spanking incident, Galyn had found legitimate minor causes to punish the maid twice, each time choosing to demand she turn over her panties for a day as a reminder of the cost of mistakes. Surprisingly, the elf hadn't made even a token protest, though the jury was still out on the cause of that. Riveria thought it might be another sign of her possible exhibitionist streak, whereas Galyn and Alex were on the fence as to if it was that, or fear of another spanking, that got such ready compliance from the silver-haired beauty.

Regardless of which it was, the punishment, combined with some aphrodisiac-laced sweets he'd given on three other occasions as minor rewards, were continuing to push Elora along, driving the banter that had developed between he and his maid to develop an ever more flirtatious tone... Which brought them to the plan for today. He'd been waiting for Elora to do something that genuinely deserved a big reward, but with things settling into a routine, it was only this very moment that she had finally done something noteworthy...though potentially headache inducing.

"So, they'll take over handling most of the gardening work, in exchange for a safe place to reside and a daily allotment of sweets?"

Galyn eyed the half-dozen ethereal-looking beings trying to hide behind Elora's legs, peeking around her like shy children and talking to each other in a language that sounded like nothing so much as the rushing of wind and babbling of water. He'd been more than a little startled when Elora had asked him to accompany her, only to bring him to an out-of-the-way patch of garden where the half-transparent little creatures had been nervously waiting. His initial staring as he tried to figure out what on earth they were had nearly sent them running, Elora having to spend some minutes reassuring the wispy beings, who really looked like nothing so much as caricatures of children made out of pure wind and water magic, that he wasn't going to hurt them.

"Yes! I think it's a fair deal. The logging to build up the town has left the forest too thin to support all the wind and water sprites that used to live in it. These few were the ones I could convince that I knew of a safe place for them to live. They're terribly shy creatures, even with elves, so I'm afraid not many of them were willing."

Galyn was trying his best not to look baffled. He'd never even known wind and water sprites were *real!* Trying his best to roll with the weird situation, he decided to focus on the important questions. "Okay. You're sure they can do the work? And that they won't cause any problems by being around humans?"

Elora nodded vigorously. "Oh yes! Their wind and water magics are much stronger than mine. I wasn't able to coax any of the earth sprites to come, they're really a lot more stubborn about moving places, but even without them these ones can manage the garden far better than I was. The only thing they may need occasional help with is moving soil, since only the earth sprites can do that easily."

"And being around humans?"

Elora shrugged. "To be honest, it's unlikely you'll ever even see them. The forms they have at the moment at the most physically real they are capable of being without help. Most of the time only a mage or an elementally-sensitive elf would even be aware of their presence. And, so long as no one actively bothers them, they'll be completely happy residing in their pools and plants."

Galyn nodded, feeling like he was getting more of a handle on the situation. "And since these are private grounds, enclosed entirely within our own walls, they'll be safe from having their homes damaged by loggers and hunters..." He frowned for a moment. "What's with the sweets, though?"

Elora actually giggled at that, taking a largish pastry wrapped in a cloth out of one pocket. The instant she unwrapped it and bent down to offer it to the sprites, they seemed to forget their shyness and swarmed her, tiny fingers pulling off chunks of the sugary sweet. Galyn watched in fascination as the pastry bits seemed to disintegrate into the tiny magical bodies, then found himself trying not to laugh at the blissed-out expressions on the sprites' faces as it did.

"Simply put, sugar is among the easiest things in existence to convert into mana. It's why you'll never hear of an elf without a sweet-tooth! And if sugar gives a natural boost to the mana reserves of any elf...the effect is many times more powerful for beings who are almost purely *made* of mana." The pastry was gone now and Elora folded up the cloth to put back in her uniform's apron pocket. "Not only does it feel good for them to get the extra rush of mana, but it's a practical gift, since they'll be using more power to deliberately shape a garden than they would normally use just to keep a forest healthy."

Galyn nodded, the last pieces of the strange situation slotting into place for him. He quickly went over things in his head, then shrugged. There didn't seem to be any downsides at all, assuming they could be counted on to do as Elora said they would. Given that she'd yet to disappoint him, he thought it likely they could handle it. "Very well, I accept their terms. Since I doubt they'll willingly seek out anyone but you, you'll be responsible for delivering them their sweet payments, as well as making sure they have what they need and are doing their jobs."

Elora's smile was huge as she accepted the new duty with a nod and a short bow. She seemed to genuinely want to help them...and the tasks of handling them would still take up far less of her time than managing the garden herself did. Which, since he'd been looking for a way

to cut that burden out of her workload...meant that she was definitely due a big reward. After all, a few pastries were a lot cheaper than hiring a gardener!

Before she could excuse herself back to her regular duties, he stepped forward and laid a hand on her shoulder, preventing her from fully straightening. "You've done something good, Elora. Well above and beyond your regular tasks. As such, you deserve a reward. A small bonus will be added to your pay as part of that...but I also make an effort to make rewards for major accomplishments just as personal as punishments for major failures." He saw a bit of the blush spring up on her cheeks as she undoubtedly was reminded of her spanking, but her half-bowed position sadly hid most of it. He carried on as if he hadn't noticed it at all. "Come see me in my study after your duties tonight, I think I know a reward you will enjoy. Alex and Riveria are certainly fond of it." He added the last bit to ease the tension he'd suddenly felt in her shoulders, then let go so that she could rise properly. "Dismissed. And keep doing such good work!"

He parted from her, grin spreading across his face as he turned away from her to head back to the house. Finally! He had his excuse for a bigger reward...and it was completely justifiable too! Now...to make sure that there was a fairly strong dose of that elven aphrodisiac in tonight's dinner...

Chapter 13

It was a few hours after dinner when Elora appeared before him in his study. He held up a hand to get her to hold for a few moments as he finished off the document he was working on. With a final flourish, he signed the paper, blotted it, then filed it away with others just like it. Only then did he look up at Elora with a welcoming smile, who was patiently waiting for him to get to her.

"Ah, time for your reward! You're in for a treat, or at least I hope you'll consider it such." He stood and moved out from behind his desk, motioning at a cloth-covered object not normally in his study. He moved to the long object and whisked away the cloth, showing that it was actually a comfortable-looking cot taken from the servants quarters. His family had always believed in treating servants well, so while small, the cot was quite well designed and padded for comfort. He turned to a suddenly worried-looking Elora, chuckling at her expression. "Not to worry, I'm not planning anything...extreme. You see, I'm quite talented at giving massages, at least according to fervent testimony from Alex and Riveria. I figured, given how hard you've been working, both here and at the build site, that you could probably use one." He gave her his best wry and disarming smile as he added, "Normally, I'd offer one in either my own bed or yours, but I felt that you might not be quite comfortable with that, so I had Alex help me move a spare cot into the study."

As Elora processed his words her face cycled through a number of complex expressions. Relief that he wasn't suggesting something...more intimate. Several different kinds of excitement at the idea of a massage. And, just possibly, a little bit of disappointment that he wasn't taking it farther? Well, if there was disappointment there, his plans would hopefully squash it thoroughly.

When she finally seemed to settle on a mix of relief and longing, he pounced. "Well then, why don't you strip so we can get started?" As a blush raced across her face, he chuckled. Time to see how far he could push her. "Come now, we're both adults here, and I believe I've seen

your naked rear quite a few times in the past week. I'll even turn away and let you get situated face-down before we start, if it will make you feel better.”

More emotions flickered across her face with lightening speed, then she surprised him by shaking her head. Too late, he remembered their banter from the worksite, where her solution to the order ‘entertain me,’ had been to bend over in skin-tight pants. While occasionally out of her depth, Elora wasn't timid...and apparently she'd taken his offer to go easy on her as a challenge. Though, it was also possible that the stronger-than-usual dose of aphrodisiacs that had been working on her for the past few hours might have had a little to do with it as well...

Whatever the case, Elora didn't ask him to turn around, instead actually swaying from side-to-side with a seductive rhythm as she slowly stripped out of her uniform. There was a tiny hesitation when she stepped out of the pile of her dress and apron, but it was barely even a stutter in the grand scheme of things as she reached back to unclip her bra. He gulped as the white lace fell with somehow absurdly little pomp or ceremony, affording him his first close-up look at her bared breasts.

And what magnificent breasts they were. Despite having seen them through the bathhouse peephole, he had no need to fake the awe that filled his face as her pale mounds came into view. They were just as large as he'd thought they were, possibly even a touch larger, almost too large to look natural on her frame. But only almost, the lithe muscle visible across Elora's entire body, not bulky but undeniably there, gave her frame just enough extra umph for the size to seem right. He gulped a moment later as the bra fell away completely and he was finally treated to a clear view of her nipples, the peephole having been too far from the waters of the bath for him to get more than a general idea what they looked like. She had surprisingly small areola for the size of her breasts, adding a bit of cuteness to the raw appeal of their size and inhuman perkiness.

His mind managed to recover a bit by noting that, despite the warmth of the room, her nipples were rock solid. Added to the flush on her face and upper chest, it was clear that she was aroused...a fact that was made even clearer as her hands moved south, drawing attention to her skimpy panties. Her skimpy *white* panties...that were nearly transparent with wetness against her sex. She hesitated more visibly at the waistband of the damp underthings and Galyn forced his eyes upward, looking into her eyes and giving a gentle smile, offering reassurance.

It must have helped, for though her flush was overcome by a blush, her body bent, hands pushing her panties to the floor. When she straightened, the blush had actually faded slightly, and she stood for a long moment, almost defiant, as she let him soak in the last part of her body. Of course, he'd seen the beautifully streamlined lines of her lower lips before, from even closer, but he still took those long moments to appreciate the sight before meeting her eyes again and waving her to the cot with another smile.

That seemed to have been the right reaction, as some subtle tension faded from her face as she moved to obey, laying face-down on the cot, folded arms making a pillow for her head. As much as he wanted to simply stand and admire the sight she made laying there, he knew he'd be better served by proving he really was only aiming for the promised massage...mostly. As such, he tore his eyes away from her nude form and took the two steps to a side table, taking from it the scented massage oil he'd discovered years ago. There was a little magic in it, just enough to

warm the skin gently on contact...and to smell like what the person it was applied to would find most soothing. It had already been keyed to him, so that it wouldn't react to his own desired scents, only to hers, and as he moved back to the cot he wondered what it would smell like.

Elora tensed for a moment as he got onto the cot with her, but relaxed again as he simply straddled her legs to get a better access. He brushed her long silvery hair out of the way, then uncapped the bottle and poured a suitable amount of oil on his hands, before finally reaching for her shoulders and making contact... an earthy smell of deep forest and the fresh wind of an ocean breeze. Somehow, the smells that shouldn't ever encounter one another mixed into something that fit the elf below him quite well. He smiled, taking a deep breath of the scent, then frowned at the renewed tension he felt at his contact with her skin. He wasn't sure if it was the unexpectedness of the scent or the newness of his touch on her vulnerable body, but it wouldn't do at all.

Instead of digging into her shoulders to begin, as he usually did with Alex and Riveria, he merely traced the tops of her shoulders with a light touch, spreading a thin film of the oil so it's warmth would begin to sink into muscle, then added a touch more oil to his hands and moved both of them to her right arm, beginning to trace his way down that limb. He did not linger overmuch on the way down, simply spreading the oil again until he reached her hand. She startled a little as he picked it up gently between both of his larger hands and began to work on it with intricate precision, lacing his fingers between hers, rubbing her palm with a gently pressing thumb, traveling up each finger in turn to massaged each life-callused digit.

Elora slowly relaxed as he spent several minutes on just that one hand. She finally breathed deeply of the scent as she did, murmuring a pleased sound as it registered in some part of her mind. Taking that as his cue, he began moving slowly but steadily up her arm, adding oil as needed and giving each muscle individual attention. Finally, he reached her shoulders again and moved a bit more firmly across them to work in more oil before repeating his previous actions in every detail on her left hand and arm. By the time he returned once again to her shoulders, nearly three quarters of an hour had passed and all tension had flooded out of Elora's body, leaving her a pliable puddle of contentment.

He still didn't stay long at her shoulders when he returned, stroking with a set of long flowing sweeps that ended at her neck. To the murmured surprise of the elf, he reached down under her throat, stroking under her jawbone and behind her ears, before calmly working the muscles of her neck for a few minutes, the finally returning to properly work on where he'd first started. The oil had been given plenty of time to do it's work, soaking in and loosening the tight muscles of Elora's upper back. No matter that her body had better musculature to support those glorious mounds of hers, they still inevitably took a toll on Elora's shoulders and back. The elf outright moaned as he sunk fingers deeply into the warmth-loosened knots, near orgasmic sounds of bliss flowing from her lips.

There was no attempt at restraint in those sounds, the elf likely far too lost in the sensations by now, and Galyn smiled, even if the sensual sounds caused a painful throb in his long-sense-hard cock. Renewing the oil on his hands once more, he gave a light massage to Elora's mid and lower back, grinning wryly at a sound that could only be called a verbal pout when he didn't do more than that. Alex made a similar noise, though slightly less sensual, whenever she overdid her training enough that he offered one of these massages. Still, it wasn't

without reason...multiple reasons, that he didn't linger there at the moment. The first was that he needed to let the oil sink in for best effect, the second...well that was for later.

Passing over Elora's ass, though promising himself he'd be back, he moved down to her thighs and began repeating the quick pass down each leg that he'd done to each arm. He spent a good fifteen minutes on each foot, drawing outright gasps of pleasure by the time he finished, and lingered at her inner thigh on both legs, leaving her actually mewling and pushing her sopping wet core toward the nearby hands. *That* widened his eyes a little. While Alex had often been clearly aroused by his touch at this point, it was never enough to overcome the relaxed puddle of bliss she became to make her take action. With Rivera, she often outright fell asleep by this point. Was it merely the aphrodisiacs at work? Or was Elora's body more perhaps more sensitive? Whatever the case, he reluctantly evaded her efforts and moved back up her body. She stilled as he pressed his body against her for the first time, stilling her efforts to get stimulation with his body weight...and also bringing his erection to press against her ass as he finally worked on her middle and lower back.

The stillness didn't last and he nearly let out a moan of his own as his actions wrung more gasps of pleasure from her, her ass subtly wriggling against his hard-on. Fearing to lose control, he moved in for the kill sooner than he'd intended, reaching under her body to brush the warming oil against the sides of her breasts. When her only reaction was to buck against him, he smiled widely and set about properly massaging her breasts, even managing to get some of warming oil onto her diamond-hard nipples, which drew the loudest and most erotic cry yet as they started to heat.

He was half tempted to stay there, to make her cum just from the nipples he suspected were one of her weak points, but he'd made a promise to himself about her ass... With that in mind, he backed off slightly, to a whimper of disappointment from her but mild relief to him. If she's bucked into him even once more he was fairly certain he'd have had an embarrassing mess in his pants to deal with. He took the moment needed to apply more oil to center himself, then applied his hands to her rear. She jerked into him, her moaning starting anew, as he refamiliarized himself with the half-spheres. They were just as nice a mix of soft and firm as he remembered from the day of her spanking. Remembering her reaction to that, he lightly slapped one cheek, getting a startled spike in the moans...but no cry of pain. Grinning at the new information, he passed on using it for the moment. He had a better target...the needy core just inches away.

Finally taking the dive with a ear-splitting smile, he spread the unresisting elf's legs ever-so-slightly and pressed his whole oil-cover hand over her sex. She bucked desperately into him as the warming oil set into her pussy, providing intense pleasure...but not the right kind to finally push her over the edge. Finally, after agonizingly long seconds, he curled his fingers and pressed two of them home in her sopping core. The elf bucked and keened for a long moment, body shuddering as a climax hit her. But he wasn't done. Instead of letting her climax die down, he thrust the fingers in and out while rubbing her clit with his thumb. Her body shuddered violently a second time the moment he touched her button, then she frozen utterly still, voice trailing off in a raspy scream with the last of her breath.

An infinitely long moment later she collapsed forward on the cot and didn't move. He nearly panicked for a moment, until he found the strong pulse at her neck. Then he chuckled,

grinning in satisfaction as he realized what had happened. Her mind simply couldn't take any more pleasure and she'd passed out. Well...they could always work on that later. In the meantime, he should get her to her actual bed...after he relieved the pressure in his pants while he still had such a nice view, of course...

Chapter 14

“So I trust you enjoyed your reward?”

Galyn's voice was polite as Elora served them breakfast the next morning, even if his eyes were dancing with mischief. Elora blushed scarlet in response, stumbling and nearly losing a plate. Her mouth opened to reply, but nothing came out. Then Riveria came to her rescue...sort of.

“Oh, I think it's obvious she did. At least to us and the neighbors. She's quite the screamer.”

Elora stared in horror at the majordomo's stern face, causing Riveria to crack, a grin and a wink replacing the stern visage. “Oh, relax girl. Alex and I have both had massages from him. He's never made me cum my brains out like you clearly did, but I kinda wished he would have gone that little bit extra most of the time. I always ended up too tired to masturbate and really frustrated the next day because of it.”

This time Alex and Galyn joined in the staring, though there was no horror in their expressions. Riveria just blaisely took another bite of toast, apparently supremely unbothered by their reaction. Eventually, Alex of all people changed the subject.

“So...wind and water sprites, huh?” Turning to face Elora, her own piece of toast waving for emphasis, “they sound useful. Doubly so since no one sees them normally. Do you think you can get them to talk to me? It might be a good idea to have them look out for anyone suspicious trying to come through the garden. It's the weakest point on the property, from a security standpoint.”

Elora looked like she could have kissed Alex for the change of topic, immediately zeroing in on the conversational lifeline she'd been thrown. Galyn shook his head as she and Alex began talking about ways and means that she might convince the sprites to chat with his bodyguard. He tuned it out, trusting Alex to see to any security measures that needed to be made. The previous conversation made it tempting to dwell on Elora instead...but he pushed that too aside in favor of planning his day. As much as he'd like to focus more on Elora after she'd responded so beautifully to the massage, he still had a major project underway and today was the start of the second stage of construction. The foundations had been completely finished, the speed of completion courtesy of the earth-mage and a few of Elora's magical suggestions, and it was now time to build up the walls and facilities properly. That meant he needed to make final decisions on how the interior would break down. Most of that was done already, of course, but a few minor touches to the design had been left hanging until they were sure how strong the flow of water from the spring they'd tapped would be. He drifted off in thought, tuning out the conversations happening around him...

It was much later the same day, as Galyn was idling a bit at the construction site after making sure all the Is were dotted and Ts were crossed, that Alex approached him with a grimace on her face. Shifting his mind from pleasant fantasies about breaking in the smaller private-party baths with Elora when everything was up and running, he looked his bodyguard and security consultant over. There was no blood or other signs of struggle, which eliminated one reason to grimace. That made the most likely reason for her grim-faced approach... "Still nothing on the theft?" Her expression tightened instantly. Yep, he'd hit the nail on the head. Much as he half-wished he hadn't, or hadn't had caused to think of it at least.

"A little, actually...sort of. Maybe." Alex's expression turned a bit wry as he rolled his eyes at the qualifiers. She went on before he could poke fun at her for them. "Turns out that a couple of other minor magical items had gone missing before our break in. But that's not exactly a new thing in a town that hosts a thieves guild chapter and there's no way to tell if the other thefts were related to ours at all. They weren't tools and weren't taken from anywhere even half so secure. Then there's the sprites..."

Galyn blinked in surprise. "The sprites?"

Alex nodded. "Yeah, Elora got them to talk with me. Well...with her about what I wanted to ask, at least. I don't exactly speak wind or rock or whatever that language is." She brushed the tangent off as unimportant and continued. "I had to be careful what I asked, since we never told Elora that the break-in wasn't because of her lapse in judgment. I didn't think it would be an issue, given that I really intended just to convince them to keep an eye on the estate in the future. Unfortunately, they've apparently already seen something. Someone, rather."

"What! You're serious?"

Alex nodded, face once again set in grim lines. "They've noticed someone or something skulking around the edges of the garden boundaries. Just beyond the wall. Apparently, the walls don't really stop them from sensing things so long as their connected to their element...but they didn't have a solid description of whoever it was. Other, that is, than saying they think it's another elf. Apparently, elves are easier for them to sense in general but harder for them to actually find if they're trying to be sneaky."

Galyn frowned, rubbing his forehead in thought. "An elf? Hmmm, I don't suppose it could be one of Elora's clan either here to help or harm?"

Alex nodded in response. "Yep, that's what I thought too. Sadly, we can cross off 'help' from the list. Elora said there were a couple that might have tried, but any of those that would, would have left a sign for her to find letting her know they were around." Alex hesitated for a moment. "She seemed most worried that her final pursuer might have survived somehow. She described how she wounded him, though, and I've gotta admit it seems pretty unlikely." She scowled and added. "Worse, there's no way to know if it's connected to the thefts either. And yet it could easily be that we're overthinking it with the Elora angle and it *is* related. If the thefts are connected, I can't think of a single reason Elora's pursuer would need a few building tools. A random elf merc, on the other hand, would be a good option for one of your family to pay off for sabotage and could account for both the thefts and the skulking. But without a sure way to connect the skulker and the thefts, we have to assume it might be two entirely different people

with wildly different motives. Perhaps sabotage on the one hand and stalking our maid on the other.”

Galyn joined Alex in her scowling as he considered that. Then sighed and shrugged. “The twins will be here by the end of the week. After that, I’d like to see someone *try* to get into either the estate or the build site. Until then, we’ll just have to keep our eyes open...but we should also probably curtail any solo trips out of the estate by Elora.”

Alex nodded firmly in agreement. “Absolutely. Might also want to see if Elora knows how to use a dagger or staff or something. Clearly she defended herself after running from her clan...but how?”

Galyn cocked his head at that, not sure he liked the idea of arming Elora, but ultimately it was logical. “Alright. Check her out on weapons and if she’s any good, arm her with something subtle. Is there anything else?”

When Alex indicated that there wasn’t, he parted ways with her, head now full of much less pleasant thoughts than breaking in bath houses with his maid...

Chapter 15

Galyn twirled his pen in silence, eyes only half focused on Elora as she cleaned his study. Five days had passed since Alex came to him at the build site and so far either their precautions or simple luck had prevented any new issues. With the twins ever closer to arriving, that was a relief, though Galyn knew he’d remain tense until the upgrades to security were finished. As it was, he was trying hard to put that problem from his mind and focus on Elora.

He’d been afraid she might be skittish after her strong reaction to his massage. While he’d fully intended to make her cum that night, he’d thought it would be a more subtle and gentle thing, rather than a violent pair of climaxes that knocked her out. Thankfully, after the morning-after embarrassment courtesy of their breakfast table banter, she hadn’t seemed to react at all, simply going back to the status quo...

No, that wasn’t quite right, actually. It had been a subtle change, but after the third time she ‘accidentally’ made some minor and harmless mistake, resulting in him taking her panties for the day, he’d realized that she was doing it on purpose. It was also obvious, in hindsight, that she’d picked the three days he’d be around the most, giving perfect performances on the two days he’d spent mostly at the build site. That this was the also the third time she’d ‘cleaned’ his study in those same five days, always with subtle bending and flourishing that gave him glimpses of her naked or lace-clad rear, only made the situation more amusing...and a bit troublesome. As much as he appreciated the views he’d been getting, it would undermine their end goal a little for her to be constantly seeking out punishments. As it was, he’d been trying to decide what to do about it. Alex and Riveria thought she was probably trying to provoke another spanking...but that just meant he should probably choose something else.

His eyes fell on a side-table as he thought and a book caught his eye. The book itself wasn’t important, but it reminded him of another bit of reading material he’d finally gotten from home. Right after he’d first taken Elora in, he’d sent off a letter to the main family hold, requesting any verifiably correct information the family library had on the elven nomad clans.

Historical information of that kind was well within the permits of the game to ask, but he'd been concerned that even his family's impressive collection wouldn't have much on the elusive groups. He'd been right about that...but 'not much' wasn't the same as 'nothing.' Two days ago a courier had arrived with a fairly thick tome written by a kingdom elf who had somehow befriended the clans. The material was somewhat dated, but the long lives of elven kind tended to make their societies change only slowly, so by the large it was likely still mostly accurate.

It had also been rather fascinating. Given their habit of eschewing contact with humans, Galyn had known almost nothing of the clans despite the broad education his family connections had provided him with. He'd been far more familiar with city-elves, though that was technically an improper and somewhat rude term for them, and said elves tended to be rather rigid and hidebound in their thinking. Elora, however, wasn't anything like that, and now he had some idea why. According to the tome he'd been skimming, the initial break between the nomads and the other elves had been one of ideology. The 'wilder clans,' as the book had named them, had been formed not from elves that preferred nature, as most humans assumed, but from those elves who had resisted the more structured confines of cities and government. In years long past any human remembrance, there had been a split between those elves who saw a good idea in the cities and fortresses humans had begun to build up out of stone and iron instead of mere wood and brick...and those who hadn't *hated* the ideas, per se, but whom had no interest in being confined within those cities and what they considered overly-structured laws. In that age, there had been no such thing as an Elven King and those elves who formed the nomad clans had been those seeking to remain that way, to answer to no one but respected elders.

The clans had changed since then, of course, for something like three or four thousand years had passed from the initial split. The clans themselves were more organized now, with their own leadership and traditions...but they remained far less rigid and structured than their city kin. They practiced far more free-flowing magic, like he'd seen Elora use, and lived off the bounty of the land rather than farming or mining for food and minerals. Galyn privately thought that they likely only had a few more centuries before both human and elven kingdoms carved away at the large swathes of remaining wilderness too much for their way of life to remain...but for now it worked for them.

It also wasn't really the focus of his current thoughts as he remembered other more...interesting...sections of that tome. Sections he'd marked out as being possibly useful regarding Elora. Perhaps it was time to make use of that knowledge? After a moment of consideration, working the half-formed idea into a complete plan, he nodded to himself and stopped twirling his pen.

"Elora! Front and center!"

The sudden crisp command startled the silver-haired beauty, causing her to drop the object she'd been dusting under. The surprised expression on her face got a wry smile from him. Apparently, *that* one hadn't been planned. He suppressed a chuckle as the flustered elf pulled herself together, righted the thankfully-unharmed object, and darted to the front of his desk, coming to attention before him with a half-nervous, half-anticipatory expression. Galyn leaned back in his chair and forced his expression to turn more serious. Elora straitened an extra little bit and he smile internally. Good, he still had it.

“I admit I’m unsure what to do with you at the moment, Elora. It has become clear to myself, Alex, and Riveria that you are actively seeking out punishment.” Elora only flinched a tiny bit, not trying to deny it, and Galyn made a mental checkmark next to his theory that she hadn’t been trying overly hard to hide it. “While I will be the first to admit I enjoy the types of punishments I’ve been giving you...if they lose their value as actual punishments, I will have to get more creative. And trust me, while some of the creative options might be fun in their own way, they will *definitely* be punishments you don’t really want.”

He let that sink in for a moment, observing as she swallowed hard this time, expression a little wary now, then he sighed and leaned forward into his desk, clasping his hands together and resting them under his chin. “For the moment, you haven’t done anything truly harmful, so I’m not going to do anything drastic. However, be aware that there are lines you do not want to cross from now on. Playfully desiring punishments will be acceptable, but you must learn the times and places it’s okay, as well as how to signal with body language that such is what you want. Otherwise, I will be forced to make every punishment a real one, and you will not enjoy that. Tomorrow, you will be turned over to Riveria to...explore what those lines and means are. Tonight, however, I cannot let you go without some measure of punishment so that the lesson sinks in.”

Concern and interest warred on her face and he gave her a wry smile. “What I have in mind is probably not what you want, as it might be a little embarrassing for you. But, that is why it will serve as an actual punishment instead of reinforcing a bad habit. You understand?”

Elora nodded hesitantly, clearly a little wary of what he intended.

“I’ve been doing a little reading on the clans. Unless they have changed much since the tome I have was written, since you were of marrying age, you should know the *Erde Lasbelin*. I am very much interested in seeing it, so you will perform it for me.”

His maid’s expression was shocked and a blush was rapidly spreading from her cheeks all the way to her chest. She seemed unable to speak for quite some time, mouth opening and closing. Then, finally, blushing darker than he’d ever seen on her, she squeaked out a response. “O-okay...I’ll do it. Just to...just so you can see.”

He nodded and stood. Seeming to understand his intent, she backed away as he grabbed one of the chairs facing his desk and turned it to face the room instead. Then he leaned back in it and waved her to get on with it, his smile tinted with amusement at her still wine-dark expression. She practically stumbled to the middle of the room, then closed her eyes, taking a long pair of steadying breaths. Her blush began to fade a little and, eyes still closed, she began to move.

The dance began as a subtle thing, a swaying of her body that somehow highlighted her every curve. As the swaying built it became *more* so subtly that he couldn’t have told you were it changed, only that it had somehow become an undulation and rippling of muscle that emphasized every inch of exposed skin. Then Elora’s eyes snapped open, raw fire and passion shining out of them with a power that took Galyn’s breath away. Their eyes met for a moment that seemed to last an eternity, then she whirled, launching into a set of lithe movements that somehow emphasized each part of her body in turn. Her movements became more and more

passionate as her hypnotic gyrations built a thin layer of sweat over every muscle. Then, somehow, in a movement Galyn couldn't even follow, her dress was on the floor and she began to close the distance to him, her movements intensifying yet again. Another flash of movement as their eyes met and she was topless, the balance of her body changing without the support of her bra, gyrations wider but somehow just as fast. She twirled suddenly, spun around behind him, and came back in the nude, hips now rotating and legs scissoring in and out in time with her other movements to show off her glistening sex.

Her sex, he abruptly realized, that was glistening with far more than sweat. Her dance began to still, the slower motions seeming somehow to emphasize her raw sexuality in a way not even her previous gyrations could have. Her eyes met and captured his, drawing him in to bottomless blue depths, an ocean of banked desire. Then she spun away once more, bowed deeply to him, and half-stood, back arching, heaving breasts thrusts upward, arms behind her for support, and legs slightly parted, presenting the entirety of her body to him. Her breast heaved to pull in air and her body trembled with a combination of arousal and exertion.

He stood, silently, and drew near to her, touching her leg and running his hand up her body, passing over her core before continuing on to caress each breast. Then he leaned over her, left hand going down to cup her sex possessively. "Mine" he whispered, then reached for her shoulders and pulled gently, accepting her weight as he kissed her deeply. The kiss went on until neither could breathe, then he smiled gently down at her and lifted her to her feet.

"You will leave your clothes here and visit both Alex and Riveria in their rooms. You will not re clothe yourself with anything beyond your cooking apron until after lunch tomorrow. Do you understand?"

Elora gulped, but nodded, almost timid. She bowed once more to him and then left with a growing blush...and a bit more speed than she probably meant to. Galyn collapsed back into his chair and shook his head in disbelief... When he'd asked her to perform the courting dance, used for an elven maiden to confess her interest in a partner, he'd meant to embarrass her as he observed from an enjoyable academic viewpoint. He had not anticipated...that. The raw pull of the emotion, desire and passion...and something more. Something that he suspected had driven her to do the *full* dance, rather than just the part whose name he had used. Unless his book was very wrong, she should have stopped well before she had...except under certain conditions. Conditions that technically shouldn't have applied here. But she had gone through all the rest of the dance...and he had found the proper response burning in his mind, his body moving almost against his will as he stood and...completed the claiming.

Yeah. He had no idea what was going on, or what he was going to do about this tomorrow. That had taken things so much farther than he had intended that he wasn't sure what to do now. Abruptly, he stood. He hoped Elora had chosen to visit Riveria first...because he really needed his majordomo's advice...

End of Part 4

Chapter 16

Galyn hadn't been lucky. He'd seen Elora heading into Riveria's room just as he himself headed into the upstairs hall where he and his two primary retainers had their rooms. He hesitated for a long moment over what to do, but ultimately bit the bullet and decided to visit Alex instead. She was less likely to have the advice he needed, sure, but she might have some interesting feedback from Elora's visit to her. At worst, it would kill some time until his majordomo finished with the elf and he could slip in for a visit to her as well.

Decision made, he ghosted down the hall to his bodyguard's room, which was the closest to the master suite for obvious reasons. Her door was slightly ajar and he heard movement inside, so he simply pushed it open and slipped through...only to freeze as he came face-to-other-interesting-body-parts with the source of those sounds.

Alex was naked.

Alex was naked, legs spread wide, with one hand pinching a naked nipple and the other buried three-fingers deep in her pussy.

Her eyes had been closed when he entered but some instinct must have alerted her that she was no longer alone and they popped open just as he took a final reflexive step into the room. Surprise showed in his bodyguard's face for just a moment, then it twisted into a new expression of rapture as her fingers hit something sensitive. A moan slipped out and Alex gave a full-body shudder that seemed to last forever...yet be over far too quickly at the same time.

Galyn finally managed to unfreeze his mind as Alex's eyes, glazed over a bit this time, opened again. "Uh, sorry Alex, the door was open and...um...never mind, I'll just go." He moved to leave but a most un-Alex like giggle from behind made him look back. When he did, she held up a somewhat shaky hand to stop him.

"Don't go. It's not like there's anything you didn't just see anyway, right?"

Galyn blinked in shock, mind feeling sandbagged by events. "Err, but...?"

Alex laughed outright this time, a full-throated sound that was much more normal for her...and which did interesting things to her bare chest that weren't helping him get his mental focus back. "Relax, boss, I'm not mad. Anything you saw was my own fault for not closing the door." She finally shifted into a slightly less lewd position, pushing herself up farther on the pillow under her and closing her legs. "I knew the door hadn't closed all the way when miss nudist elfy left, but I was so turned on by her visit that I didn't care. So, like I said, totally my fault!" A hand, fingers still glistening with her own natural lube, waved him into the room and he found his feet reversing to take him toward her, sitting on the end of her bed when she pointed to it. "Now, what was it that brought you here in time to catch the evening show? Something to do with you sending your poor innocent maid naked into the wolf's den?"

Galyn shook himself, forcing his eyes up to meet hers by main force of will. "Umm, actually, yes. It can wait though, if you want to...errr...clean up?"

Alex smiled and shook her head. "Nah, I'm totally planning to go another round, but that can be after you say your piece. Unless the view bothers you?" Her smile turned to a teasing grin as she brought both hands up to cup her ample chest, pushing her breasts up and framing them

with her arms. Galyn couldn't help the reflexive look down into that heavenly valley and his gaze stuck for long seconds when he did. Then he wrenched his eyes free again with another supreme effort of will. Alex simply chuckled and let her hands drop. "You can look if you want, boss. It's not like you haven't seen 'em before."

"Um...be that as it may." Galyn paused, struggling for a moment to remember why he'd even been coming to see her. Alex rolled her eyes and made a get on with it gesture, which didn't help given that it made her uncovered chest jiggle again. With such delightful distractions making thoughts fuzzy, it took a long few seconds for Galyn to finally remember. When he did, he straightened and managed to look up from where his eyes had once again wandered down the moment he stopped to think.

"Actually, it *was* to do with Elora, as it happens. Though it was more just looking for opinions and options than it was anything else. Things...kinda got a little out of hand with her earlier."

Alex snorted with clear amusement. "I'd kinda guessed that, considering she showed up here without a stitch on and telling me about your orders. Poor girl looked like she was caught between dying of embarrassment on the one hand or falling over and frigging herself in sheer horniness on the other. What on earth happened?"

Galyn took a deep, deep breath, doing his best to put Alex's current state of dress out of his mind, and told her. It took nearly a quarter hour to relay the entire series of events, then half an hour more to answer a fascinated Alex's questions. Finally, Galyn got to the crux of the matter.

"I'm pretty sure it was a bit too far, a bit too fast. Oh, she responded beautifully, but I think if I pressed things aggressively right now it might not end well, despite that."

Alex nodded, expression thoughtful, seeming to have long forgotten her nudity as she moved into a cross-legged pose on the bed that...exposed her quite a bit. Galyn tried not to notice, but given the rock-hard erection painfully pressed against his pants, he was finding that a bit of a tall order.

"I think you might be right. Like I said, she seemed caught between emotions when she visited me. I imagine Riveria's calming presence probably took some of the sting off after but she's still almost certainly in a brittle place. She's clearly interested in you or it couldn't have gotten so out of hand and from what you said her reaction was largely positive." Alex let out a puff of air, drew a deep breath of her own, then continued. "*But*, it was also a big jump from anything up to that point, even the massage. Particularly that claiming bit at the end. You're going to need to back off but do so in a way that still shows interest without being pushy."

Galyn blinked twice, then scratched the back of his head. "How the devil do I manage that?"

His bodyguard waved dismissively in his direction. "Specifics we should probably discuss with Riveria, but it won't be that hard. You can follow up what I found out about her combat skills as one way to spend time with her that doesn't come on too strong and I bet Riv can come up with some idea for a date or something that will work even better. You know, the

sappy romantic stuff, maybe with just a hint of spice to it so that you still feed miss elf's desire for a strong hand."

Galyn considered for a moment, then nodded. That was surprisingly sound advice, coming from his usually impulsive friend. Though clearly she recognized her own limitations in pointing him at Riveria for specific planning. Besides, he thought to himself as he caught his eyes wandering over Alex's exposed body *yet again*, he already had one other thing that he wanted to get Elora's help with, didn't he? Given Alex's reaction to him catching her masturbating, it was high time he stopped dragging his feet and figured out just what was going on with his two closest companions. He had a rather strong inkling that he knew where that was going to end...but he needed to be sure. He wouldn't lose their friendship for anything...and he still had to figure out how *he* felt about it too, if what he suspected was correct...

With all those thoughts spinning in his head, he finally got back up, thanked Alex for her advice, and headed to the door. To his surprise, she hopped up off the bed to give him a peck on the cheek, then showed him out and wished him a good night and pleasant dreams. As he rubbed the spot where she'd kissed him, he thought to himself that, yes, he *really* needed to get this figured out. He'd probably waited far longer than he should have already...

Chapter 17

Galyn gasped as the dull head of Elora's spear cracked against his ribs, *again*. He tried to roll with the blow but only managed to reduce the force slightly, leaving him hunched over and vulnerable. He dropped the heavy rapier that was his own personal weapon of choice, signaling his surrender with his now free hand. Elora backed off and he collapsed to the group with a groan, drawing laughter from Alex, who was watching from a bench off to one side of the small practice yard.

"You've gotten rusty, boss. Though, Elora's good enough that I think you'd lose even if you weren't. And to think, that spear isn't even the type she's truly familiar with, just the closest substitute I could find her."

Galyn groan again and rolled over onto his back, throwing a rude gesture Alex's way before letting his head fall to one side to examine the barely-sweating form of his elven maid. She wasn't, thankfully, completely unmarked. He'd gotten her at least twice, once hard enough to draw a little blood despite the lack of a true edge on his training blade. It was merely a thin line on one exposed arm but it was still a sign that he'd done *something* to her in the last hour. Which, sadly, was probably pure luck. Elora had proven ridiculously good with the spear Alex had found for her, even if it truly wasn't the right type. Certainly, he'd be recovering from a lot more bruises than the elf. Or that would be the case, if he hadn't had some handy elixirs on hand. Thankfully, access to such items as were needed to maintain personal combat skills was granted by the family without impacting their standing in the inheritance game.

Speaking of those elixirs, Alex was holding one up in his direction. He nodded at her, then forced himself to his feet and staggered over to accept it. He downed the foul-tasting concoction, shuddering as an unpleasant sensation of liquid-fire poured through him the moment it hit his stomach. Thankfully, with such a weak dose, the sensation didn't last long and most of his aches and pains fled along with it. Feeling better, if still physically exhausted, he grabbed

another elixir and offered it to Elora for the cut on her arm. To his and Alex's surprise, however, she turned it down and pulled a simple bronze disk from the pocket of her workout gear instead.

"Thank you, master, but it is not needed. This will be enough for such a shallow wound." Holding the disc to the cut, she closed her eyes and took a deep breath in. To her audience's surprise, the disc began to glow and the wound rapidly sealed.

"Huh, I didn't know you knew healing magics, why didn't you say so?"

Elora's eyes popped open, looking startled at Galyn's question. "What? I don't know anything like that!"

"Uhhh..." He pointed at the unblemished skin of her newly-healed arm.

Elora blinked down at it, seeming not to comprehend for a moment, then realization lit up her face. "Oh! That's not healing magic, that's just an elf thing."

Alex, looking incredulous at that pronouncement, pipped up before Galyn could process that. "An 'elf thing,' really? How is being able to heal yourself with a bronze disc an elf thing?"

The maid looked blankly from Alex to the disk, then shook her head. "I didn't heal myself with a bronze disc. I absorbed mana that I had previously stored into it. Elves are like sprites, in some ways. We are, first and foremost, creatures of magic. While we have much more of a physical form than the sprites and other creatures of pure magic, we're sufficiently magical that simply absorbing a lot of concentrated mana can speed our healing up greatly." Elora shrugged, seeming to dismiss what she'd just revealed as unimportant. "It's not something you see used for big injuries, though, since it takes too much mana." She held up the token for inspection as she continued. "I store all the extra mana I have at the end of every day in these bronze tokens, since they hold mana fairly well. Each one has at least a full day's worth of total mana in them and I just burned through almost all of what was in this one just to heal a small cut."

Galyn nodded. That did seem pretty inefficient. Still useful though. Saying as much only got a nod and a shrug from Elora, but that casual response was actually fairly heartening. His maid had obeyed his previous orders from the night before in full, preparing both breakfast and lunch in nothing but an apron. Unfortunately, minus the emotional and physical high from the night previous, she'd been incredibly skittish and visibly ill-at-ease with the situation at breakfast. Enough so that he'd wanted to rescind his orders...but knew doing so would send a weak message.

Instead, he'd verbally ordered her to clean the baths a day earlier than normal, sending her into an environment both removed from his immediate presence and conducive to nudity. Sending Alex after her to tease the elf halfway through her cleaning, pushing Elora into at least a mild state of arousal, had combined with the environment to ease her skittishness a great deal by lunch time. It was when she was finally released from the previous order that he'd sprung the plan that he, Riveria, and Alex had quietly concocted between them to fully get the situation settled back into something approaching normalcy.

Rather than letting the elf change back into her regular uniform, Galyn and Alex had presented her with training leathers and the closest approximation to the elf's weapon of choice, as she'd described it to Alex earlier, that Alex had been able to locate quickly. It wasn't a very good fit, being a fairly regular spear rather than the staff whose top third was a curved blade that the elf had described, but Elora had just spent the last hour proving that she was deadly dangerous despite the poor fit. Galyn, after all, was no slouch, and she'd handed him his ass repeatedly.

Thankfully, from the way Elora was smiling slightly in his direction, the give and take of sparring, plus the clear enjoyment Elora had taken in the physical exertion, appeared to have wiped any remaining uncertainties from his maid's mind. At least for now. Returning back to the light flirting and small rewards/punishments from before her dance for a week or so would likely finish the job. Then, of course, they could work on getting her back to that level of obedience in a more gradual way. In the meantime, however, he had one more thing he wanted to see to today, something he hadn't spoken about with either of his two advisors. And for that, it was about time to call a halt to this, or at least his part in it.

"Alright. I've clearly let my training slide just a bit too much. I think I need to hit the baths to recover a bit, but Elora still looks quite ready to play. Alex, why don't you go a couple of rounds with her to give a full evaluation, then the pair of you can hit the baths once I'm out?"

Alex looked surprised. Sure, it was something that she needed to do, but their original plan had called for all three of them to hit the baths together. Given Elora's nudity throughout the day so far, they had figured that move for a completely safe way to make sure the elf didn't simply repress what had happened. They may have wanted to put her back at ease...but they also didn't want her to forget how the powerful moment had affected her.

His bodyguard opened her mouth, likely to suggest they simply go with him, but Galyn flashed her a handsign. It was one of a number of private signals they'd worked out years ago and it caused Alex to close her mouth with a click. She nodded acknowledgment, then turned and gestured for Elora to follow her into the ring. Before Elora could obey the summons, he addressed her. "Elora, once you're done bathing get back into your regular uniform and come to my study. I have a project I want some possible magical help with."

The bight-eyed elf, clearly still riding a physical high and eager for another round of sparring, gave a quick bow and a 'yes, master,' then followed after the redhead eagerly.

Galyn smiled at the nice view from behind both of them presented in their tight training leathers, then shook himself and headed for the baths. It was time to sort out just what it was that Alex and Riveria wanted in regards to him, what they *really* wanted, even if they'd never ask for it. He was playing this a bit more by ear than he'd have liked, but that's why he wanted the time alone to think while soaking...

It was nearly two hours later when a slightly tired but happy looking Elora finally arrived in his study, freshly bathed and dressed once again in her regular uniform. Thankfully, Alex had gone elsewhere to prep for the twins arrival the next day...which was exactly why he'd asked Elora to come here after she and the redhead were done in the baths. After Elora had sketched a

formal curtsy to him, Galyn surprised her by waving at one of the chairs across from his desk and inviting her to sit. There was a tiny bit of uncertainty in her expression and body language as she obeyed.

“You can relax, Elora, this isn’t about anything bad. It’s simply that covering everything I want to might take some time and it would be silly to make you stand for all of it.” He nodded to himself when that comment caused most of the uncertainty to fade, then grabbed the bull by the horns. “Now, this new project I want you to work on isn’t a formal part of your duties. It’s simply that sparring with you earlier has once again reminded me that I have only the most shallow understanding of your skills and abilities. An observation, I must sheepishly admit, which I should have done something about already, given the number of times you’ve surprised me with some bit of magic or other useful talent.”

He gave her a sheepish, self-deprecating smile as this sank in for her, then stood from behind his desk and made his way over to the small cabinet that held various spirits. Pouring a finger of whiskey for himself and a small glass of a sparkling wine for her, he brought both back over to his desk. Passing hers over, he picked up the thread of his conversation. “Now, I have two things in mind for correcting this oversight on my part. One, is a simply letting you tell me yourself of any skills and abilities that come to mind. Any that you are comfortable sharing, at least. As for the second, I have some ideas for a few little tests I can give you, such as using Alex and Riveria as safe targets for you to show me subtler skills in scouting and information gathering...”

And thus began a multi-hour, highly enlightening, conversation between him and his maid. Getting to know his elven muse better and setting the seeds for figuring out just what he was going to do about his closest retainers...

Chapter 18

The twins had arrived exactly on schedule. Which, for Danica and Elyas Black, was something of an outright miracle. While Elyas wasn’t too bad about such things, Danica was infamous for her inability to be on time for anything. Though, come to think of it, Alex’s idea that Danny might have a bit of a crush on Riveria might explain the exception in this case. As he’d observed his slightly-older, branch-family cousin interact with his majordomo, he was pretty sure Alex had been right, too. Which was fairly hilarious, given that the two were about as polar opposite of personality and habit as two people could be.

Unfortunately, as humorous as it was the watch Danny around his majordomo, the presence of the twins crawling all over the house with magical inscribing tools for the last several days had put a bit of a damper on any new developments with Elora. Oh, he’d taken her panties again once over a minor error, but by the large it just wasn’t worth the risk of their guests complicating things. There was some argument for the idea that a good excuse to tone things down had been a godsend...but if it lasted much longer it would risk undoing some of the hard work they’d already put into Elora up to this point.

Of course, none of that had come as a surprise. They’d known the twins were coming and had planned around the problem in advance. Which is why Elora was standing before him in a new set of clothes, fresh from a day being fitted for them at Riveria and Alex’s joint direction. It

had been a painfully easy thing to justify, on grounds of Elora slowly becoming as much assistant as maid. Her maid uniform simply wasn't suitable for places like the construction site, scouting as she had for the hot spring channels, or even the simple traveling they would inevitably do down the road. While Riveria had supplied the elf with some better-suited clothing, it had clearly been simple, standard fare. Well-fitted to Elora's spectacular body, certainly, but not a uniform by any means.

This was.

Moreover, in addition to being clearly a uniform, it showed far more skin. While it didn't show nearly so much as the maid uniform, for purely practical reasons, there was no denying that it was custom designed with an eye to titillate just as much as it was to be practical. The entire outfit was made out of a combination of traveling-grade leather and durable-but-light cloth where the leather wouldn't allow enough movement. It failed to cover her pale shoulders at all, the top instead being a back-laced, sleeveless, corset-style design, though one that was intended only to hold the clothing on rather than cinch or reform, since restricting her breathing in traveling clothes would have been foolish.

Even so, with her non-human body structure the top had an easy time pressing her breasts together and slightly up, leaving a truly spectacular valley of cleavage on display. From there going down, there was another small strip of pale stomach visible between the corset top and the start of the somewhat more modest bottoms. Said bottoms were much more modest than the top, a set of semi-tight leather pants which stopped well short of the painted-on sort of look, nor were they particularly low cut at the hemline. Galyn knew precisely why that was...but Elora didn't. Not yet and probably not for some time. He also knew that there wasn't anything on *under* them though...for now.

There were other pieces to the outfit that stripped away some of the blatant sexuality without removing it entirely, making it considerably more fit for polite society. Among those bits were a thin but sturdy leather belt with a few pouches hanging from it, long detached sleeves that turned to fingerless gloves covering three quarters of her arms, and an elegant leather choker that worked to draw the eye away from the visual shock of how much of her breasts were exposed. A leather thong holding her hair behind her, rather than letting it flow loose as it usually did, completed the overall image. Inscribed versions of Galyn's personal sigil on the belt, choker and gloves helped mark the entire outfit as a uniform, rather than merely nice traveling clothes. The marks could also be taken to heavily imply his claim upon her...but that was a point that he'd only make out loud at a much later point. For now, they were passed off as simply being part of the uniform.

As he finished looking her over appreciatively, Galyn noted that she was outright preening under his attention. A good sign to be sure, particularly given what he had planned for the rest of the day. He stood from behind his desk with a smile and finally addressed her. "You look just as beautiful in that as in your maid uniform, Elora. Or out of either of them, for that matter." He let a wicked smirk touch his face for just a moment as she blushed, then continued on in an upbeat tone. "Now, I think it's time to break it in. You've been working hard to accommodate our guests and I've been stuck behind my desk entirely too much since they arrived as well. What say you, I and Alex go on a little adventure today? One of the locals

mentioned a spectacular little spot to me that I've been just dying to check out, but it's far enough out from town to be a day trip rather than a quick excursion."

Elora blinked at him in shock. "But, we both have so much to do!"

Galyn nodded, face becoming slightly more serious. "We do, yes. But all work and no play simply leads to a person burning out. More to the point, Riveria and I planned this day to be a free one in advance. The twins were always going to need a day where the house was completely empty, so it made good sense to plan a little vacation from our labors when they did. She herself is going to spend the day elsewhere, so it will only be you, me, and Alex."

Elora thought that over for a moment, then a bright smile slowly spread across her face. "Umm...in that case...it sounds good! I admit that a break sounds wonderful, with as busy as we've been these last few days."

Galyn chuckled and nodded, then gestured for her to follow him to the kitchens, where he knew Alex was waiting for them in her own traveling leathers...

Elora gasped as they finally broke through the thicket and into the small forest glade Galyn had been steering them toward for the last two and half hours. He was almost startled at the suddenness of finding it, having assumed they'd end up needing to backtrack a few times to hit the right location, but his thoughts in that direction died quickly under the spell of the glade itself.

It was every bit as special as his sources, which hadn't been local at all but rather a note in the estate records, had said it would be. The clear centerpiece of the clearing was a modest waterfall that fed a largeish stone pool of crystal-clear water. Rays of light poked through the dense packed forest to light the waters with a majestic glow and wildflowers spilled across the clear space around the pool, like a waterfall all their own that tapered off slowly as the trees all around cut off the sun that could reach them.

Even a simple glance spoke to the fact that someone had spent at least a little effort on this place, long ago, for there were flat stones in just the right places to help control the encroachment of the surrounding wilderness into the glade, and Galyn was almost sure he spotted a faded magic rune carved on the face of one of them. The overall effect, even after what was obviously decades or centuries of little attention to the glade, was to create the wild-yet-ordered appearance of a perfect little enchanted hideaway.

Galyn grinned as Elora squealed in delight and all but danced forward into the glade, taking everything in with a whirl, then stopping to close her eyes and simply breathe in the air of the place. Or perhaps the magic of it, in the literal sense, since he was almost sure he'd seen her glow there for a moment... Shaking that thought off, he let her be for the moment, moving to a larger flat stone next to the pool, this one raised enough to have been spared being overgrown by nature. He took off the small pack he'd been carrying, motioning for Alex to do the same with both hers and Elora's, which the elf had dropped at the glade entrance when she darted into the clearing.

Once she joined him with to the other packs, the two of them quietly took out the large meal that they'd split between the packs, setting up their lunch while they waited for Elora to finish...whatever it was she was doing. They had just about finished their meal preparations when the elf joined them with a slight blush on her face. Galyn wondered about that, considering that they hadn't done anything to cause such a thing yet, but didn't have to wonder long. Alex wasn't the most tactful sort, after all.

“What's got you blushing girlie? Imagining the boss ravaging you in the pool?”

Elora's blush grew much darker for a moment but she shook her head. “Ah...the magic of this place. Um...well, it seems that this place has been used quite a few times for...romantic encounters. Not recently, I think. But enough over the years to leave a mark on the magic here.” Elora hesitated for a moment, seeming uncertain about something. “I actually think this might have been an elven handfasting site, long long ago, back when the that ritual was a bit more-” Elora abruptly broke off, blushing even darker than Alex's comment had made her and waving a hand back and forth frantically. “But even if it was, the magic has faded to almost nothing. I think it's only still there at all because others have made romantic use of this place often enough to keep it from fully dying.”

Galyn tucked away that piece of information, as well as Elora's unfinished thought about what sounded like an old version of the handfasting ritual the elven nomads used. Something to check into later, but aside from being an even better background for today's plans than he'd thought, it wasn't otherwise relevant at the moment. He gestured to the slightly over-the-top spread of food that he and Alex had just finished setting out. “Well, ladies, I don't know about you, but after that hike I'm more than ready for something to eat.”

Alex grinned hugely back at him and dove for a leg of turkey, preserved piping hot with a little bit of magic. “Hell yes! I'm starving!”

Galyn chuckled and reached for the food himself, Elora doing the same only moments later. As they filled their bellies they chatted on various topics, Alex even taking the lead in the conversation at one point by asking Elora when the nomad clans could possibly have been in this part of the world. It was an easy, peaceful scene that let tranquility soak into their very bones. But then the meal was over...and Galyn and Alex had *plans* for Elora. Still, there was no need to break the spell, indeed that was the last thing they wanted. A smooth escalation was called for and Alex was the one to start it off.

“Whew! That was delicious. But now it's time to enjoy the water.” The redhead rolled to her feet with the languid, sensual grace of a cat stretching in sunshine, then started pulling off her clothes with no sign that it was a big deal. Elora looked startled but far from alarmed. Indeed, her blush was back as she watched Alex's overtly-sensual stripping.

When the redhead was fully nude, she grinned broadly over at Elora. “Well, what are you waiting for? You can't swim in your brand-new clothes. Get them off! I know I'm gorgeous, but even Galyn is ahead of you.” She motioned toward her boss and Elora's head whipped around, eyes widening as she realized that, yes, Galyn had stood during the last part of Alex's own show and already had his shirt off.

Her eyes glued themselves to him as he stripped off his pants, but before she could see him go farther she squealed in surprise. Alex had come up behind her and tugged on the tie of her corset, starting to untie it for the elf. Alex's deft hands had the corset off before the elf could even think to protest. "Come on, elfy, you can stare at Galyn's cock later. The water is callllling to us!"

There was a brief tussle between the two of them before a barely-resisting Elora found herself once again naked in his presence. Though, this time, he too was shorn of his garments. Alex fled to the water with a parting slap to Elora's ass that made the elf squeak and jump...but Elora hesitated to follow as her eyes tracked downward on Galyn's body. He just grinned and let her look, knowing he made a favorable showing in the half-hard state that their naked bodies had already driven him to. As she licked her lips in appreciation of what she saw, his cock hardened a bit more. Shaking off the ego-stroking her glazed look was giving him, he moved toward the water, throwing a parting comment over his shoulder. "If you like it that much, you're more than welcome to come bathe with me at the estate."

His comment got another startled noise out of her as it broke through her distraction, but he also finally saw her start moving toward the pool herself from the corner of his eye. She was beat-red again but, given the state of her nipples despite the pleasantly warm air of the glade, he suspected it wasn't entirely embarrassment this time. He smiled to himself as he slid into the water and pushed out after Alex, who was already almost into the center of the large pool.

For a while, they simply swam and played in the water, even Elora seeming to forget about their combined state of undress as she soaked in the relaxing spring water. Eventually, however, Alex splashed to the side of the pool, climbing out and stretching in full view of the other two. She turned to face them with a grin. "I wanna stretch my legs and explore a bit, I'll be back for my clothes eventually!" With that, the redhead grabbed her swordbelt and boots from their pile of stuff and set off without another stitch on. Which caused even Galyn to blink in surprise, since he hadn't quite expected her to have the sheer gall to go off without dressing again, even if the bit about exploring was something they'd pre-arranged and she wasn't really going to be far away.

Elora was clearly surprised as well, staring after the other woman as she vanished into the trees. When she looked at him incredulously, he laughed, shrugged, and headed for the side of the pool himself. "Well, I'm not up for naked exploring, but I think I've had enough of the water for now. How about we sun on the stones for a bit? Maybe I can even give you a bit of a massage."

He climbed out, facing her fully so she could get a good look at his body again before lying back on against one of the sun-warmed rocks. One he'd chosen with malice-aforethought to put his lower body and one-again-hardening cock directly where she could see it. Then he waited.

This was the most uncertain part of the entire plan, since Elora could simply choose to stay in the water until Alex 'came back.' But they'd stacked the deck in their favor, not simply by easing her into it...but also by spiking the food with an aphrodisiac after not having given her any in several days. It had actually been one of the broad-spectrum ones, meaning Alex had

undoubtedly been affected as well, but she'd waved it off, claiming she'd happily find a place to watch and masturbate to the show.

It took a few minutes of dithering but eventually Elora made the decision they'd wanted, exiting the water and clambering up onto a rock near him. He'd shut his eyes to seem as non-threatening as possible but now he slowly opened them and turned his head to look her over. To blatantly look her over. She flushed...but he was pretty sure it wasn't embarrassment at all this time, particularly as her eyes kept roving to his mostly-erect cock. She hadn't fully laid down yet, so he took the chance to casually reach over and pull her to him. She squeaked but didn't fight as he pulled her down next to him, wrapping one arm around her and pressing their sides together.

To his surprise, she didn't even tense up this time, instead just pressing against him of her own accord, cheeks flushed. Well, that was certainly promising. Still, slow and steady was the name of the game today. He laid back fully and closed his eyes again, waiting for her to fully adjust to the new status quo. Then, after several minutes had passed, he began playing with her hair. Several more minutes and his other hand got into the action, snaking across his body to begin a gentle caress of her toned stomach. Her breath hitched for just a moment, then evened out again, perhaps just a bit faster than it had been before.

He took his time expanding the reach of his hands, slowly widening and shifting attentions, touching her everywhere he could reach *except* her more intimate areas. It wasn't a massage, not a reward, there was no excuse for this other than that he wanted to caress her body. She didn't fight it, never protested, even began lowly whimpering as the need to be touched elsewhere built with no satisfaction. Then, a moan slipped out as one hand finally slid between her legs and caressed her pussy. She tensed just slightly but relaxed into more quiet moans as he didn't turn aggressive. He performed the exact same slow, methodical buildup on her sex as he had on the rest of her, even leaving entirely for minutes at a time. Finally, her silence broke.

“Please.”

Her voice was quiet, barely audible, but there was absolutely no mistaking the request for anything but what it was. And today's goal wasn't to make her beg loudly and desperately for it, it was simply to get *her* to ask for it directly at all. And so he gave her what she wanted, his hand dipped and parted her folds, plunging a single finger in deep but slow. Her hips bucked and her body writhed, the reaction all out of proportion with the new amount of stimulation. He held her tighter with the arm behind her, restricting her motions, but allowed her to hump against his hand as he slowly plunged the finger in and out. A dozen strokes, two dozen, three. She was moaning and repeating her earlier plea now, begging for yet more. A second finger. Faster. Harder. A third finger.

With a wild cry her sex convulsed around his fingers hard, but he didn't let up. She almost came a second time...but he stopped cold, even forcing her completely still with his leverage, just as she was about to peak a second time. She cried out in confused frustration...then again in surprise as he stood, sweeping her up in his arms and taking her to the raised stone that held their food. He placed her facing to it and she caught herself by reflex, bent over the stone, inflamed sex facing him and tits hanging free, arms holding her just above the stone. He leaned over her without putting more than a fraction of his weight on her. Reaching under, he grabbed

her breasts gently and whispered into her ear. “You know, Alex could come back at any time, to see you like this. Bent over and presenting yourself to me. I wonder, would she be shocked? Or just disappointed that we hadn’t invited her to play.”

Her breath caught, not in fear, but arousal at the idea he’d just whispered to her. Smiling at that conformation of several things, he shifted to place his cock between her legs, resting against her pussy. She tensed, even as aroused as she was, but he just chuckled quietly in her ear. “No, not yet. Not until you freely acknowledge that it belongs to me.” Her tension fled and her moans started up again as he simply began thrusting along her lips, making sure to hit her clit with every pass. Soon she was tightening her thighs around his cock and pressing back to meet every thrust, desperate for more, desperate to cum again.

He didn’t disappoint her, increasing the speed and force of his thrusts as much as he could without risking accidental penetration. He grabbed her nipples and pinched hard, pulling this way and that, to great effect as she finally cried out his name and climaxed a second time. But he didn’t stop, had no intention of stopping until he’d cum himself. Elora came again quickly from the over stimulation, her arms giving out as she did. But he simply lifted her himself, changing the angle slightly, allowing him to speed up even more for his last dozen thrusts.

He came hard, deliberately spreading the coating of cum over her pussy, thighs, and stomach with the half-dozen pulses. Then, his own arms suddenly weak, he slowly let her down, leaning her back against the stone. Her eyes were glazed over and she panted like a woman just finished with a marathon. He smiled down at her and was about to say something...when a wolf whistle interrupted him.

“Whoohoo! Encore, encore! That was *hot*. I came twice just with my own fingers watching.” Alex sauntered up from where she’d been leaning against a tree at the end of the clearing.

Galyn looked at her in surprise. This hadn’t been part of the plan...she was supposed to come back having ‘not seen anything.’ Instead, she closed with the wide-eyed and suddenly alert Elora, leaning down...and swiping some of the cum from her stomach with one finger. She brought it to her mouth and licked it off.

“Mmmm, pretty good. You try elfy!”

Alex ran her finger through the cum again, then brought it to Elora’s lips. Galyn held his breath as she hesitated for a moment...then the elf leaned forward and sealed her lips completely around Alex’s cum-covered digit, closed her eyes, and sucked. She moaned a little at the taste, making Galyn’s cock stir again, but then she retreated back to lean against the stone, clearly exhausted.

Alex grinned at him and Galyn shook his head. Maybe Alex was the one he should really be assigning punishments to...

End of Part 5

Chapter 19

As Galyn idly massaged the globe of Elora's red ass his mind wandered a bit, contemplating the changes that had occurred in the household over the past few weeks. The twins had finished their job on the wards the day after the excursion to the old elven glade and Galyn had immediately moved to do two things. One, of course, was the escalate the seduction of Elora. The day after the twins had left (extremely reluctantly in Danica's case), he'd given Elora her first order to strip without a reward or punishment being involved. It had been a critical moment in many ways, particularly given that there hadn't been any trickery involved at all. No aphrodisiacs, no special circumstances, just a tiny bit of situational arousal and an order. Though outwardly calm, he'd internally been full of anxiety, knowing that her reaction in that moment would likely define their relationship going forward. For her to willingly participate, with no external factors or excuses...

Thankfully, Elora had hesitated only a brief moment before complying, cementing in doing so her own interest in and willingness to submit to his sexual orders. From there, the escalation had been slow but steady, until now he had established the ability to simply order her to let him play with her...though this time had been a punishment. Hence the red that he was slowly and idly soothing out of her lower cheeks.

The second thing he'd done was begin to take advantage of Elora's 'tests' of her information gathering abilities. Combined with his own observations and carefully chosen conversations, he now had as near a definitive answer to his questions about Alex and Riveria's interests as he was likely to get. Short of asking them outright, at least. Which meant that he was going to need to have a conversation with Elora soon...possibly. He hadn't quite worked out the order in which he needed to do things. The simple truth was that he was aware, from both his previous reading and from subtly questioning his maid, that multi-partner arrangements were not abnormal among her long-lived kin...but he didn't know what his silver-haired maid's own opinion of them was. Nor was he officially involved with Elora just yet and he wasn't certain which needed to come first, the conversation or the official involvement...

A moan from the woman in his lap refocused his attention from the mental blind-alley it had once again wandered into. He blinked, looking down at her and realized that his hand had apparently wandered entirely on autopilot. He was no longer gently rubbing her reddened ass, but instead caressing the outer folds of her dripping sex. Well...he hadn't planned on that. He'd planned to leave her aroused but chastened for her mistake. Hmmm, he could still do that...or he could take advantage of this to push her a little farther along her path of willing participation? After a long moment of thought while he continued to play with her sex, he made his choice.

"Well, I think you've learned your lesson." He flicked her clit, drawing another moan. "But perhaps I should order you not to touch yourself tonight. Yes, that *could* help the lesson stick, I think."

Elora made a distressed, pleading noise as he flicked her clit once again.

"What's that? Well, you're not supposed to *like* the idea. That's the point in punishment. Still...I could be convinced to let you *earn* forgiveness instead. You'd have to follow my orders to do something nice for me. If you do, I'll let you cum tonight. If not..."

He stopped playing with her, gently pushing her off his lap and on to her knees. She looked up at him with arousal-darkened eyes and a pleading expression. He chuckled and unbuttoned his fly, his thoroughly erect cock quickly pressing up through the opening, almost slapping the elf in the face. “Your slutty moaning and squirming has left me in need of release. If you want to cum, you’ll have to ask my permission to make me cum with your mouth.”

Elora’s eyes had zeroed in on his cock the moment it came into view. As he presented her options to her, she licked her lips, eyes darkening farther as she learned the condition for her own release. For several long heartbeats, she did nothing, then she raised those lust-laden eyes to meet his own mischievous twinkle. “Please, master, may I suck your cock? May I please taste your cum? Even if you tell me I can’t cum in turn, I want to. Please?”

Galyn’s cock twitched and he barely suppressed a shudder of desire as he looked on the eager face that was so earnestly making eye-contact with him. He realized, distantly, that he may have made an error. He had thought this would be pushing boundaries for her...but instead she looked outright desperate to do what he’d asked. Had he stumbled on a fetish of hers? Whatever it was, the small part of his mind that constantly tried to analyze everything around him was rapidly being drowned out by the pulsing beat of his own desire.

“You may. If you do a good job, I will reward you. If you don’t...you will not cum for three days as punishment. Do you understand?”

She flinched lightly at him upping the ante but didn’t seem overly concerned. “Yes, master, I understand.” Her eyes fell to his rod again. “May I start now, master?”

“You may.”

Rather than bringing her mouth forward immediately, Elora raised her hand and used the nail of her index finger to draw a slow, barely-there line up the underside of his cock, drawing out another twitch. After it jumped again, she folded her hand around him, fingertips just barely meeting around his girth, and give a single firm pump of his shaft. He gasped and she smiled, then she leaned forward and lowered her mouth to his head.

She stopped with her lips just barely brushing his tip in a gentle kiss, then her tongue flicked out with perfect precision, scooping up a drop of pre with barely a whisper of sensation against his sensitive tip. Before he could demand she stop teasing him, her tongue came out again, this time in a long swirl around his head that nearly caused him to lose control and buck up into her waiting mouth.

Any thought of protest was lost to him when a second swirl was followed by her descending mouth engulfing him. She didn’t pause at just his head, instead slowly sliding down until she met the hand now gripped around his base. She hummed around him, the divine sensation causing him to buck into her despite his best efforts at control. She rode the thrust out like a champion, not the slightest sound of protest making it to her lips. Then the hand was gone...and Elora finished deep throating his cock completely, lips kissing his pelvis as she hummed more strongly.

He nearly lost it right there but Elora clearly had other ideas. She stopped humming and drew back up as slowly as she’d gone down, stopping with just his cock’s tip in her mouth. Her

hand encircled his shaft again as her second came up to cup his balls. She toyed with them gently for nearly a minute, providing some stimulation without so much danger of him going over the edge. Then, when she seemed to sense he had calmed down, she repeated her earlier swirl and descent...only a little faster this time.

It wasn't until the third pass that he realized she'd settled into a complex and, most probably, *practiced*, loop. He neared the edge several times, each time more intense than the last, but never quite went over. He almost forced the issue but something about her body language stopped him. She wasn't trying to control or dominate, just to make his pleasure last as long as possible and become as intense as she could manage.

Even so, his patience had limits, and he gently reached up to touch her hair the fourth time she backed him off. She seemed to understand completely, just from that touch, and this time when she descended it was faster and far more intense as she used the muscles of her throat to contract around him with swallowing motions. Nor was it a single motion this time. As soon as her lips touched her hand, she went back up and plunged again. Then again. Then the hand was gone and his shaft was lodged deep in the throat as she hummed powerfully into his groin.

He thrust up wildly, completely lost to the sensations as he came at last, more powerfully than he could ever remember cumming before. Nor did the sensations end. The moment he began to cum, she started to bob her head, milking his cock for every last spurt and drop of cum. Stars danced behind his eyes as his orgasm finally stopped. It was only by sheer force of will that he remained conscious as Elora cleaned him with her mouth and fell back into a kneeling position as she waited for him to recover.

Said recovery took some minutes. Eventually, however, the stars had faded from his vision and he was able to focus on her beautiful face again, smiling at the hopeful expression upon it.

“Did I do good, master?”

Galyn nodded and smiled. “You did amazing, Elora. Enough so that I truly feel as if I should reward you beyond allowing you to cum... However, if I treated you as I desire right now, it would undermine the punishment I have delivered. Go then, you may cum at your own hands if you wish and perhaps you can earn the reward I have in mind if you offer again tomorrow, of your own will.”

Elora looked very much like she wanted to offer it again immediately. Instead she stood and bowed in acknowledgement of his dismissal and returned to her rooms...where her fingers would doubtless be getting a workout.

Chapter 20

The next day it was time for an altogether less pleasant meeting. Not that the company wasn't nearly as gorgeous in her own way as Elora, but Alex was here in her role as his bodyguard and security chief, not as potential eye candy. Galyn tipped his chair back in one of his favorite thinking poses and got things started.

“So, I take it you've investigated the idea I had about the thefts?”

Alex grimaced from her place slouched in the chair across her him, rubbing her eyes. “Yeah. I checked into it alright. Unfortunately, I couldn’t prove anything conclusive...though there’s enough circumstantial evidence for me to agree you’re probably right.”

He sighed. “But not enough for the guard to accept it as a lead and track it down?”

Alex shook her head, expression annoyed. “No. Not without greasing a few palms at least and the coffers are too thin for me to advise that. The grand opening next week will change that quickly, if even half of what I’ve heard while checking into this is true, but for the moment it wouldn’t be a good use of our limited funds.”

He remained silent for long heartbeats, then stood and moved to the small cabinet bar in his office to make drinks for himself and Alex. He used the practiced motions of mixing a shared favorite of theirs as a sort of pseudo meditation to help clear his head. By the time he offered Alex hers and took his own to look out the second story window, he’d gotten the jumble in his mind sorted out a little.

“As much as I would have preferred to find a smoking wand, I suspected it wouldn’t be that easy. Whoever this fellow is, he slipped passed the site security far too smoothly for him to have fucked up elsewhere. Were you at least able to get some details on him?”

Alex shrugged, sipping at her cocktail. “A few. Not from any of the people that he’s taken stuff from, but some loose descriptions from a couple thieves guild members and hunters that have caught glimpses of him...and from the sprites.”

His head snapped around sharply to pin her with his eyes. “The sprites? I was right about him being around the grounds then?”

Alex grimaced and took a much larger swallow of her drink. “Yes...and no. He was apparently poking around *all* of the merchant and noble estates. The one sprite that had more than a vague ‘feel’ for him was one whose territory abutted up against the back of two other estates before Elora gathered the sprites up to work for us. Best guess is that our elf was looking for someone or something but hadn’t narrowed it down farther then the estates...and then the twins showed up and our own security skyrocketed. Apparently, he noticed, since the sprites say the one time he came close after that he fled almost immediately.”

Galyn let out another sigh, returning to his desk, but choosing to sit on the corner of it and sip his drink rather than return to the chair. “So...odds are it’s Elora he’d looking for.”

Several expressions flitted across Alex’s face and she raised a hand in a cautionary gesture. “I admit, your theory about him stealing powerful magic items to drain for healing wounds makes sense. There’s certainly no other pattern to be found in what he stole...and if the bastard chasing her lived through what she did to him, that whole magic-draining bit could *maybe* get him on his feet with how many items have been stolen. *But* it could still be a dozen other things, boss. Hell, with him looking at *all* the estates, there’s a chance that it’s not even aimed at us!”

He finished off his drink in one pull, then gave her a dry look. “But you don’t think that’s the case.”

She sighed, grumbled, and tossed back the rest of her own cocktail. “No. No, I don’t. Even with the proof being so tenuous, I think it’s probably that final pursuer she told me about. Though how the fuck he survived the wounds she gave him long enough to start stealing magic items I don’t understand.”

Galyn drummed his fingers on his desk, thinking over the situation yet again. After a few long moments, he admitted to reality. “I think we’re just going to have to keep Elora inside as much as possible for the next couple of weeks. He clearly doesn’t want to tangle with the new security, so that will keep her safe for the moment. On the occasions she has to go out, we’ll have to arrange excuses for you to go with her as backup. Hopefully, if our fears are justified, that will keep our elven stalker at bay until we can afford to take more proactive measures.”

Alex scowled. “I don’t like it...but your right. Fuck.” She took a deep breath, let it out, then added. “The spear we’re having made for her is almost done. I can use that as an excuse to go with her on her next market day. That and her trips to the site, which have both of us along, are the only times she’s ever out of the estate on assignment. Finding reasons to tag along on her personal trips will be harder but she doesn’t make many of those.”

Galyn nodded along. “And I imagine, with the grand opening coming up, that Riveria can provide us some excuses to keep her busier than usual to cut down the personal trips farther. We’ll have to make it up to her later, though.”

A lecherous grin spread across his bodyguard’s face at that comment. “I’m sure we can come up with some...rewards...”

He rolled his eyes at her but silently agreed. He stood and gestured for her to do the same. “Now, why don’t you and I hit the training yard and the baths before bed, if there might be trouble, I want to shake the rest of the rust off my combat training...”

Galyn sank into the water next to Alex with a small groan of relief as the hot water eased his aching muscles. Using elixirs all the time lessened the effect of training, so this time he had forgone the magic in favor of natural healing for his abused muscle and sinew. Alex, who rarely used the healing elixirs at all, had just grinned at him and made sure to leave a couple of extra-nasty bruises during their sparring. An evil, evil woman.

Of course, he planned to get a little bit of his own back, as well as setting the stage of the conversation he needed to have with Alex and Rivera. Alex had been a bit surprised at him inviting her into the baths with him...but he needed the chance to really confirm first hand what all his information gathering and observation had concluded. And right now was the time to do it.

“Come here, Alex.”

Alex, whose eyes had been closed as she basked in the heat of the hot spring waters, looked at him in confusion as he gestured to the place in front of him. He grinned crookedly at her.

“If my shoulders are aching, yours have to be an order of magnitude worse. The least I can do for you tacking my own training on top of yours is give them a bit of a massage.”

Her eyes lit up at the mention of a massage. She knew perfectly well how talented his hands were. And this was Alex, not Riveria or Elora, so the thought of their nakedness being a problem likely never even occurred to her. Well, not beyond it making it even better, anyway, if someone actually asked her about it. As evidenced by her saucy grin and wink as she made the motions needed to move in front of him far more sensual than necessary.

Her drawing it out for effect meant it took a minute or two to get her situated in front of him. He'd chosen a place where the bath shelf was wide so she could sit between his spread legs instead of needing to kneel in front of him...but it was still tight for two people to fit. Which didn't seem to bother Alex a bit as she deliberately ground her naked rear into his groin as she settled in. He rolled his eyes...but it was a good sign for what he had planned.

Once she finally settled, he brought up his hands, brushed her hair gently out of the way, and began to work on the knots in her shoulders. For nearly fifteen minutes he let the bath fall silent as his skilled hands worked the tension out of his bodyguard. His work drew moans and groans that finished the job her firm ass being placed against him had started, stiffening his cock into an almost painful erection against her. Something she noticed, despite her distraction, given the way she began to subtly move her ass to tease it. Which he took as a sign it was time to take the plunge.

His hands stilled...but before she could do more than groan lightly in disappointment, they drifted down her body in a feathery, teasing, caress. Her groan of disappointment turned into a very un-Alex like squeak of surprise as those roving hands cupped her breasts and began kneading gently. The redhead half-froze, seemed about to say something, then simply squeaked a second time when he lightly pinched her nipples. He leaned forward and whispered, his breath drawing a shudder from her as it tickled her ear.

“If you want me to stop, all you have to do is say so.”

He accompanied the words with a firmer pinch, pulling a little at her rapidly hardening nipples. She shook her head in response, then moaned as one of his hands began to trail down her body farther. He caressed her stomach in time with her breast for long moments, then dipped the final distance, fingers finding her slit as she willingly parted her legs for him. For a few more minutes, he contented himself with lazily caressing her folds, occasionally flickering across her engorged clit with the lightest of touches, drawing an ever-increasing number of moans and considerable squirming as the redhead in his arms sought greater stimulation.

Finally, as Alex became more and more vocal and restless, pushing back into his erect cock in retaliation for his teasing, he gave in and plunged a finger inside her. She gasped, back arching, then proved her flexibility as she twisted slightly and a flailing hand managed to grab his hardon behind her back and begin stroking him. He let out a grunt of surprise but went with it, adding a second finger and beginning to thrust into her core. With his thumb working her clit, she didn't last long once he began to properly finger her, her pussy spasming around his fingers as she cried out in pleasure.

He hadn't intended things to go any farther but as she came down from her peak, her hand released his shaft and she rotated in his arms, her hard nipples and soft breasts pressing into his chest as she captured his mouth in an aggressive kiss. His hands went to her waist by reflex as much as design, but the feel of her hips under his fingertips reminded him of the limits he'd set for himself and he added enough strength to his hold to prevent her from mounting him. She seemed to understand and accept, with only the slightest sound of disappointment, but she didn't let it end there. Instead, her hand found his cock again and she began rapidly stroking him as they continued to kiss, clearly intent on getting him off as he had her.

That much, at least, he was willing to allow. Less than two minutes later the prolonged stimulation of their encounter took its toll and he emptied himself into the hot spring's waters. They kissed, more gently now, for another minute or two as they both fought to rein in their desire for more. Eventually, Alex sighed and reluctantly slid off his lap, returning to her original seat. She looked at him expectantly and spoke.

"That was amazing Galyn...and I admit I've wanted that and more with you for years. But what brought this on? I thought your heart was set on Elora?"

Galyn sighed at getting outright confirmation. He closed his eyes for a moment, ordering his thoughts, then opened them to make eye-contact with his oldest friend. "I...admit I was being kinda dense about you. Maybe about Riveria too. And...I *am* set on having Elora." He paused, letting her process that, but he pushed on before she could potentially get upset. "The thing is...you seem almost as interested in Elora as I do. Also, the elven clans regularly practice multiple marriages...so...uh..." Now that he said it out loud, his previous thoughts on the subject seemed absurd. Sure, Elora might accept him having other lovers, but Alex and Riveria weren't from that society.

But...Alex looked more intrigued than upset. Maybe it hadn't been such a stupid thought after all?

"They do? I didn't realize that...Hmmm, if you're offering what I think you are, Riveria will be pleased."

"...What?"

Alex grinned at him. "Surprised? Riv and I sorted it out between us years ago. That if you ever showed an interest in 'taking advantage' of us, we'd try and steer it so we could both have you. If you were even a tiny bit less noble, you'd have been royally fucking our brains out *years* ago." Alex sighed, then added. "But that nobility is part of what makes you *you*, so we decided we couldn't just tie you down and have our way with you so you'd get the point. When Elora happened along we were both pretty disappointed...though also pleased, since we wanted you to have *someone*, even if it wasn't us."

Galyn's mind was reeling. Years? They'd been wanting him to take them, *both of them*, for *years*? "Uhh...er..." He fought to cudgel his brain into spitting something useful out, but he was at a total loss for words for the first time in years. Thankfully, Alex seemed content to wait his mental stuttering out, without even her usual snarky comments even. Finally, he managed to latch onto a thought and get it out. "Umm, you realize I haven't spoke to Elora about this yet, right? That's kinda why I stopped you from going farther earlier..."

A look of understanding spread on Alex's face. "Ah. That makes sense." She frowned a bit, then shrugged and smiled at him. "Still, this means Riveria and I have an actual chance. And if you're right about elves and multiple partner arrangements, I'm sure Riveria and I can *convince* Elora to be alright with it. She's certainly given both of us a proper eye-fuck once or twice in the baths."

Galyn sputtered at her bluntness, then shook his head. Okay...so this went better than he'd had any right to hope. Now, he just needed to push things forward with Elora...he set that aside from now, drawing Alex to his side and simply enjoying the rest of their bath together. Elora could wait until later.

End of Part 6

Chapter 21

Galyn blinked, took a moment to rub his eyes, then blinked again as the sight before him didn't change. Elora, too engrossed in cooking breakfast, didn't seem to notice him as he slowly edged through the kitchen and into the dining area, sitting down at the head of the table next to a patiently waiting Riveria and a sleepy-faced Alex. Knowing Alex wouldn't be of much use for at least a few minutes more, Galyn turned his questioning look to his majordomo.

"Is there a reason Elora is cooking breakfast in only an apron? Not that I'm about to complain about the fashion choice...but..."

Riveria smirked at him, putting down the papers she'd been skimming as she waited for breakfast to be properly served. "Alex and I are planning to ambush her today, now that you've finally decided to think with your dick properly. Ordering her to fix breakfast in just the apron, in order to better please you, was just a small opening gambit to get her in the right...mood. You know I believe in stacking the deck as heavily as I can on critical operations."

Galyn shook his head, confused expression morphing into an amused smile at his majordomo's phrasing. "Well, I can see you're taking it seriously, at least. You know I did tell Alex I wasn't sure about which way things should be done, right?"

The dark-haired woman gave him an amused look of her own, her lips just barely curving up at the edges as was her wont. "Of course you did, Galyn. But you took so many years to get around to bending us over and fucking us properly that we aren't willing to wait for you to get around to it yourself. We'll take care of her willingness promptly."

The tea he'd been sipping came out his nose at the Alex-like comment, which seemed to wake the redhead herself fully, his bodyguard not even trying to stifle a laugh as he stared at his majordomo's calm expression. Alex managed to recover herself and speak up before Galyn got over his shock at hearing that sort of thing from the usually-proper woman.

"Oh, boss, that was AWESOME. Riveria, you need to surprise him more often! But really, boss, I *told* you she'd be enthusiastic about it. She's been gagging for it from you even longer than I have!"

Instead of the repressive look Galyn expected his majordomo to give his bodyguard...the woman nodded seriously. “Indeed. I will be *most disappointed in you* if I can walk properly for a month after we’re done. You made me wait so long I’d all but given up hope. I even feared you were gay for a little while, back when I kept arranging for you to walk in on me half-naked.”

Mouth hanging open, Galyn spluttered, finally managing to get out a strangled, “Wait...that was *on purpose*?”

“Of course it was, you silly man. One doesn’t *accidentally* walk in on a woman bathing five times in a single month without her learning to lock the door properly. Seriously, you can be really dense sometimes.”

Alex came to his rescue...sort of. “In his defense, he was only what, seventeen back then? And you were, what, 23 and just as stunning then as now? And he was still kinda scrawny? I mean, sure, it was *super* obvious to me, but I was already starting to figure out I wanted a piece of him too, so I was sensitive to it. He probably just thought you were teasing him, or that he had the best bad luck ever.” Alex cocked her head to one side and leveled a teasing look across the table. “Come to think of it, that’s almost cradle robber territory, I never considered that...”

“He was 18 and I was only 22. Four years isn’t *that* much difference.”

Riveria’s glare could have sent an army running, but Alex just raised her hands with a defensive grin. “Sure, sure, calmly now. You’re too young to be so sensitive about age jokes. Besides, with tits like yours who cares about the age difference? I mean, I’ve got nice knockers, but I think yours might actually be a bit bigger than even Elora’s. Though hers are unfairly perky for that size...”

It was at just that moment than an unsuspecting Elora walked in carrying a tray...and not wearing a stitch, not even the apron. Alex seized the perfect excuse to give the blushing elf an in-depth once over as she set the tray down.

“What do you think, Elora? Are Riveria’s tits bigger than yours?”

The elf blinked, startled, looking uncertainly around the table. Which was just fine with Alex, apparently, the redhead going on without really waiting for a response. Slapping one fist in her other palm, she grinned at the elf as she continued. “I know! We can find out in the baths later! We’ll measure your boobs and Riv’s boobs and compare ‘em. We can use mine as a standard of measure!”

Galyn was just starting to recover from the effects of this unexpectedly interesting breakfast conversation. Brain finally working again, he looked at Alex speculatively. Was all of this a well-rehearsed plan to push Elora the way the two of them wanted? Or just Alex being Alex? It was impossible to say. Still, it might behoove him to keep an eye on the baths later...

He shook the thought off for now, content to enjoy being served a delicious smelling breakfast by his gorgeous, naked, maid. He smiled at her as she served him first, basking in how far he’d already come and the promise of what tomorrow might yet bring, if he was lucky.

Galyn knew full well he was going to pay for his distraction today. The grand opening of the public bathhouse was just days away and he had a seemingly unending stream of details to sort through and paperwork to complete...but he simply hadn't been able to focus. Not even knowing that he'd suffer for this tomorrow...and probably a few days beyond tomorrow for that matter. The temptation of watching Alex and Riveria work on Elora all morning and into the early afternoon had simply been too great, however. Of course, the fact that Alex was deliberately being provocative herself, even insisting on a heavy-handed, nearly-nude, unarmed spar with Elora, wasn't exactly helping. He'd not been able to look away from that one and no amount of paperwork overload tomorrow would make him regret it even for a moment. Elora had seemed utterly unbothered by it, something about it being a fairly regular thing among same-gendered groups in the elven clans...at least until Alex had started getting deliberately handsy. The surprise of Alex tweaking her nipples had lost Elora the second match and Galyn more than half-suspected a few of the final matches between the red-faced Elora and smirking Alex had been thrown by the elf just to feel Alex straddling her...and the teasing hands that came with that.

That had been one of the highlights of the day but far from the only occurrence. And Riveria had gotten in on it too, ordering a nude or scantily clad Elora around in the most provocative way she could manage, even using a feather duster on the elf's naked rear to *encourage* the maid to do certain tasks properly, regardless of her state of undress. By mid-afternoon, Elora was looking ready to both jump out of her skin *and* jump the next person to so much as look at her suggestively. No, Galyn couldn't bring himself to regret his distraction today, all things considered. Particularly not at the moment, considering what his majordomo had nonchalantly dropped off on his desk not twenty minutes ago.

He shook his head in bemusement as he stared at the scrying bowl Riveria had left with him. Apparently, Danica had made it on the sly for her, tying it into the security spells so it could freely see anywhere inside the boundaries of the estate. Including, of course, the bathhouse where Riveria and Alex had just towed a moderately-confused-looking Elora... His majordomo had apparently outright bribed the other woman with a joint trip to the bathhouse...and a massage for the twin from Riveria's own hand. Given the crush the girl clearly had on the older woman, Galyn wasn't surprised Danica had given in, though he did intend to have words with her about not doing that sort of thing. Sure, he trusted Riveria implicitly, but if some other man or woman she developed a crush on abused it regarding family security... Yes, he certainly needed to have a word with Danica and her brother. And possibly the elders.

But that was for later. Much later. For now, he had a bathhouse to watch from a much more comfortable vantage point than a pile of crates. Not to mention the scrying spell included actual *sound*. Yes, this was much better than the peephole, even if the peephole had a certain special charm all of its own. Putting other thoughts aside, he looked into the scrying bowl, watching appreciatively as all three girls stripped off and began washing up with the water from the bathhouse basins, getting the grime of the day off before taking a dip in the hot spring-fed pools. Riveria and Alex were bracketing Elora, chatting with her as the three of them cleaned up, both of them putting a bit more grace and sensuality into the process than was strictly needed. Galyn was pleased when he activated the sound feature of the scrying bowl and Alex's teasing voice came through clearly.

“Soooo, elfy, which do you like better? Riveria’s boobs or Galyn’s cock? I mean, personally, I think the boobs look more interesting...but the cock would feel a lot better once in use, you know?”

Poor Elora was blushing so deeply, with either embarrassment or arousal, or possibly both, that she couldn’t answer in more than mumbled stutters. Riveria’s follow up comments only seem to be making it worse...

“Oh, I don’t know. From a pure fun perspective, I think playing with your or Elora’s breasts might be the more enjoyable. There’s a lot you can do with breasts and women’s moans are so much more...varied than men’s, usually. Of course, if you’re talking pleasure instead, a nice big cock like Galyn’s certainly has the edge...”

Alex nodded, looking thoughtful. Then she reached over and a darting hand hefted one of Elora’s tits, groping gently but firmly, smiling at the squeak that was followed by a moan. “Hmmm, you’re certainly right about the noises!” She let go of the frozen elf’s chest and stood, done with her washing. “But, we still have business to complete! We must compare your and Elora’s boobs! Inquiring minds demand answers.”

Riveria rolled her eyes, but her answer was surprising...at least to Elora...probably. “Very well, I admit I’m a bit curious myself. Well, that and I know you’ll never let it go until we find out. How do you plan to measure? Given the differences in density and musculature, doing it by eye would be difficult.”

“And boooooooringgg. Nope, I’ve got a better plan! Come here!” Alex pulled Riveria to her feet, then moved the pair of them face-to-face before Elora...who was looking something like a deer caught in mage-lights. “Even groping might not give a good measure, since that would be subjective to their feel, but if we do this...” Alex pressed herself against the majordomo, their breasts pressing together in a wonderful way that had both Galyn and Elora gulping. “We can use my tits as a relative measure! Alright, if I just move a little like so...” Alex moved her breasts around Riveria’s in a manner that looked suspiciously useless for any sort of measuring, “I’ll get a good idea!”

The redhead stepped away...and both she and Riveria turned and grabbed a startled Elora by an arm each, pulling her to her feet. “And now, your turn!” With no more warning than that, they spun Elora to face Alex and the two were pressed together. The elf froze, eyes wide, then moaned helplessly, eyes closing in enjoyment, as Alex’s rock-hard nipples repeatedly rubbed across her own. Riveria pressed into the elf from behind, her own unclad breasts pressing into Elora’s back as she leaned in to nibble at an earlobe. Elora melted into the pair...and didn’t resist even a little as Alex leaned forward and captured her in a searing kiss.

Distracted by the kiss and the overload of sensations built by the day’s ever-increasing arousal, Elora barely noticed Riveria’s hands trailing down her body, inserting themselves between the other two women and caressing her toned stomach...then they dipped lower and the elf *definitely* noticed, eyes snapping open even as she moaned wantonly into Alex’s mouth, hips jerking involuntarily to try and get more pleasure from the two fingers that had just plunged into her depths.

Alex finally pulled away, needing to breathe, but didn't let up. Instead of giving Elora time to think, to maybe pull away from them, she lowered her head to nibble at the elf's collarbone even as she pulled back just enough to insert her own hands to pinch both of the other woman's nipples. Elora's pussy clenched around Riveria's fingers, her voice crying out a climax, but neither woman let up, Riveria beginning to rub and pinch the elf's clit even as Alex dropped down farther to nibble and suck at a nipple. They prolonged the first peak...then drove Elora to two more even more powerful climaxes before finally letting her collapse against them, breasts heaving and eyes dazed.

Grinning, the two of them helped the elf stagger to the hot springs and slide in, the baths slowly beginning to revive their lovely maid even as the pair of them joined her. Silence stretched on for several minutes as the trio simply soaked, letting any remaining stress bleed away. Eventually, however, Elora broke the silence with a single question in a confused voice.

“Why?”

Riveria sighed and Alex tensed slightly, before forcing herself to relax. The redhead didn't speak, knowing this wasn't the time for her particular methods. After a few more moments of silence, Riveria spoke for the both of them. “Consider it a...sample of what could be. I suppose.”

The elf between them only looked more confused by the response and Riveria chuckled dryly. “Yes, that was a bit cryptic, I suppose. But it wasn't really meant to be. It's just that this isn't the easiest topic to get at.”

And that was the limit of Alex's patience. “We want to talk you into sharing the boss so we can all fuck him senseless...and you too. Riveria and I both swing both ways, though she more so than me.”

Elora's expression went from confused to goggle-eyed as that sunk in...and Riveria slapped her forehead with one hand. “Alex! We were supposed to ease her into the idea!”

“You were taking to long, better to get right to it.”

The older woman let out an irritated growl, reaching around Elora to smack Alex on the back of the head. Turning to the wide-eyed elf, she started speaking to her in a gentle tone. “The truth is, both Alex and I have wanted Galyn for years...but he has his eyes set firmly on you. Not that I blame him, I'd jump you in a heartbeat myself, and that just from your appearance, let alone the fact that I actually like you.” She paused, letting the shock and confusion from that statement fade from Elora's face before she continued. “However, recently he's admitted that he finds both of us attractive too...and a point was brought up that your people aren't quite as prudish about the whole harem thing as most are. Is that...true?”

Being asked a direct question, finally, seemed to help focus Elora. It took her a few moments to answer, but her voice was surprisingly calm when she did. “Yes, it is true. With the extremely long lives of our people, we consider it irrational to believe that any of us would not eventually find more than one person who we could love. Multiple partners at once aren't normal, even so, but neither are they rare. I knew at least three such groups growing up...including my own parents. My dad and all seven of my moms.”

Alex let out a low whistle and Riviera smiled hopefully. The raven hair woman asked the next question with that hope audible in her voice. “Would...you be okay with a relationship like your parents had?”

There was a long pause as the elf considered, during which the other girls (and Galyn!) held their breath. They were all anxiety as she finally spoke again, her words coming slowly but surely. “I...had not thought to find love at all. I was to be forced into a specific marriage, despite that not being the way of our people. Yet...here, among people so strange, I have found a man who I wish to give myself to. Who I have been trying to bring forth the courage necessary to tell that very truth to.” Elora paused, took a deep breath, then continued. “Yet, it is also true that I have felt affection and lust for those closest to him. Not as strong, this is true, but it there...and I think all would be happier if none were left to loneliness. That *I* would be happier if they, if *you*, were to be included.”

Alex whooped, grabbed the startled elf in an embrace, and kissed her as thoroughly as she knew how. When the stunned maid was released, Riveria did the same thing, and she was an even better kisser than Alex! Head, swimming, Elora faintly managed one more sentence. “I take it this was real then, not just a test or some sort that I could fail.”

Alex laughed as Riveria assured her it was very real, then she tackled the elf with intent to do more than just kiss...but before she could Riviera interrupted her. “No, we need to discuss something Elora said before we get lost to our passions again.” When both of the others looked at her in confusion, she went on. “Elora said she needed to work up the courage to tell Galyn. Now, I think the next few days will be bad for that, what with the Grand Opening coming, but the night after the Grand Opening seems a good time, doesn’t it? How about we help you work on your delivery...”

Galyn shut the scrying bowl down with a smile. That had gone far better than he had any right to expect...and he *really* needed to try and get a few things done. He very much didn’t want to be buried in paperwork the day after the Grand Opening.

Chapter 22

The last few days had been their own special sort of hell. Not only had Galyn needed to be in about a dozen places at once to get things ready for the opening, but his dire need to concentrate and pull long hours to make up for earlier distractions resulted in spending almost no time at all with Elora. With Riveria equally busy, he had even worried that the time to think might result in his maid developing wet feet about her decision. Thankfully, Alex had stepped into the gap to keep Elora’s attention and *interest*. Which was an impressive feat in its own right, as his bodyguard and chief of security had plenty on her own plate in the run up to opening night.

But it had all paid off now and Galyn was smiling as widely as he ever had as he watched the full bathhouse and the lines outside of others who wanted to give them a try. Even better, the merchants were doing a brisk trade, so much so that several of them had taken the time to run him down and effusively shake his hand. They all knew that this crowd was going to be the largest in some time, with people wanting to try something new, but if even a tenth this many people visited in an entire typical day the profits would be enormous. As it was, Galyn had been a little blown away when Riveria brought him an estimate showing that over a quarter of their

investment was going to be recovered this night alone. He'd known, both intellectually and instinctively, that this had been a good idea, but even his wildest dreams hadn't imagined the half of what was actually happening. Which meant that the various expansions he'd been half planning were going to be a near-certain thing. Unless, of course, interest died out far more completely than expected.

Swearing, again, that he'd not count his chickens before they hatched, he leaned back against a pillar, taking everything in from his second-story vantage point. Very few people would ever know the little nook he was in was there at all, it being both magically and physically concealed for reasons that would be obvious to anyone who realized it could see directly into *both* the male and female baths. He admitted to himself that he was enjoying the view of a few of the woman down there...but that hadn't really been the point of the nook. Instead, it and a few others like it were combination security and observation posts, letting his people keep an eye out for any trouble and allowing him to put his fingers on his business' pulse, watching for usage patterns, counting noses, and taking note of anything that could be improved upon. He'd already made a dozen such mental notes, however, and was quite ready to be done for the day. With a last appreciative look at an extremely curvy barmaid rinsing herself off before dipping into the pools below for a soak, he pushed his weary body back off the pillar and set off to find Alex and Riveria.

It was time to finally get some blessed sleep! Sure, a part of him thought that the symbolism of taking Elora tonight would have been nice but he was far too exhausted for that. Perhaps tomorrow...or the next night maybe, given how busy tomorrow was likely to be as well. A part of him groaned at being kept waiting when Elora was finally fully within reach but he couldn't and wouldn't let his enamored with his lovely elf get in the way of his dreams of leading the family.

It was actually another three days before it happened. The first two had been unquestionably the result of how busy everyone in the household was...but according to Riveria and Alex, the third was the result of Elora panicking about the idea he'd reject her. The pair had spent most of an entire day getting her back into the right frame of mind, confident he'd accept but still of a mind to submit rather than claim him herself. It was a delicate balance, one likely made possible only by the strong submissive tendencies they'd long since discovered in her nature. The same tendencies that had made her flee her life and people rather than be forced into the poor fit of a leadership position.

But now she had come to him. In his rooms, not his office, and without a stitch of clothing on. He smiled gently at her, patting her hair as she kneeled before him. She took a deep breath, looked up into his eyes, and said the words he'd been waiting for.

“Master. I desire to be yours.”

Instead of reacting exactly as she expected, Galyn reached down and pulled her to her feet. She was clearly startled, then seemed to relax as he guided her to his bed. He wasn't quite done with her yet, however. Instead of pushing her down before him, he rested against her naked back and pulled her onto the bed in his lap. A little more effort resulted in him leaning back

slightly against his headboard, legs spread enough for her to sit between them with her own spread slightly in turn. His words were quiet, but whispered directly into her ear, causing her to shiver as his hands began to move along with his statements.

“Be sure you wish to do this, Elora. For if you give yourself away to me, I will not give you back or give you away. Your body will be mine to do as I wish with. You understand?” She nodded without hesitation and he continued. “Do you really?” Galyn’s hands moved to cup her breasts. “These will be mine. If I wish to pleasure them or take pleasure from them, you will obey. If I demand you not touch them at all, you will obey. If I decide they need to be bigger, or smaller, and hire the magics for it, you will not be able to protest...for they will be mine to do with as I wish. You accept this?”

A shiver raced down Elora’s spine and she whimpered, arching into his touch and whispering her agreement. He smiled, kissed the back of her neck, and his hands moved downward, one stopping to caress her toned stomach as the other gently cupped her mound. “And this too will be mine. If I wish to fuck you, you will bend over and accept it. If I wish for you to be denied, you will take no pleasure from it until I change my mind. If I wish to loan it to Alex or Riveria for their use...you will obey because I say so. You accept this?”

Elora let out a low, pleading moan, panting and clearly aroused beyond anything Galyn had ever seen from her, even in the old elven glade or the recent day when he watched her in the baths with Alex and Riveria. He gave her pussy a light slap and repeated his question.

“Ah! I accept, Master! My pussy is yours, my breasts are yours, my mouth and hands and ass and all the rest of me for you to use! Please, Master...please...”

A finger roughly thrust inside her drew a half-scream of pleasure and Galyn whispered in her ear. “Good girl.” With no more than that, the elf in his arms peaked, crying out her master’s name in a pleased daze. Before she could recover, Galyn flipped her over, sliding around her and grabbing both wrists in one hand. He reached for his nightstand, pulling a binding cuff Alex found for him, fastening it around Elora’s wrists to trap them in place. She mewled and struggled for just a moment, merely to test the bonds, then subsided and awaited his orders or actions. He smiled gently down at her, caressing her upturned ass with one hand as the other reaches for the bedside table again, pulling out a collar that was only subtly different in design to that of her traveling uniform’s choker. This one, though, has a lock hidden behind his personal sigil...and a little magic in it that she won’t discover until a bit later.

He fastens it around her neck from behind, producing the key and locking it around her neck in a gesture of ownership that causes her to shudder beneath him, her breathing beginning to turn rapid and shallow again. He fades back just long enough to remove his own clothing, then kneels behind her and grabs her hips, pulling her ass into the air and pushing her face and tits firmly into the bed. He places himself at the entrance to her sex, tip firmly but gently against the wet entrance, he leans over her and whispers into her ear as he slowly thrusts home. “*You are mine. I will protect you and keep you, always until the end of my days...and you will serve me as I desire in exchange.*”

Elora cries out an answer, reaffirming her choice...and the collar glows, its magics taking hold. They are nothing nefarious, nothing that forces her compliance, only a willing contract for

him to always know certain things about her. Such as if is lying to him or if she has been touching herself without permission. Information only...but more than enough. Not just for him, either, for the moment the contract sealed she gained the knowledge of it, and that set her off again, her pussy clamping around him with brutal power.

He grunted, almost cumming despite only just getting started. But he held out, somehow, and just as she began to come down from her second peak, he began to truly thrust into her, building in speed and power as she breathlessly called out for more. Time blurred, Elora cumming twice more as he built to a pounding, brutal pace, then he exploded inside her, the elf screaming her master's name and climaxing again as he unloaded what might be the largest single load of his life into her in a half dozen powerful pulses.

Minutes passed as he tried to push through the drained feeling from that massive ejaculation. Elora was still beneath him, gasping for air. Eventually, he realized he was still hard and buried inside her. His mind cast back to the drink a smirking Alex had brought him just minutes before Elora arrived. The little witch had added something to it, surely? Well, he'd have to thank her for that, possibly by fucking her into an incoherent mess just like Elora. For now...

“We're not done yet, love. There's still one more part of you I haven't claimed.”

As Galyn pulled out of her pussy, cum leaking out from the sheer amount he'd poured into her, he lined up on her other hole...and Elora stirred. She whimpered with a mix of exhaustion and desire and he grinned as he began slowly pushing his well-lubed cock into her ass. Somehow, he didn't think Elora was going to be up for cleaning tomorrow....

He'd been quite right, of course. Elora hadn't even stirred until well past noon. At which point she'd needed both a recovery potion and a trip to the bathhouse courtesy of a grinning Alex and smokey-eyed Riveria, before she could even walk properly. And even then, she'd gone straight to a nap before coming to a dinner that Galyn had fixed himself. She'd tried to apologize for that, but he'd grinned and waved her off. He'd also, however, ordered her to meet them after dinner in the room Riviera had converted for use as a fitting room of sorts back when getting Elora her first sets of clothes. She had come, of course, following her orders to the letter. She stood, nude before the three of them, as Galyn revealed why she was here.

“Now that you're mine, it's time you finally get the last piece of your uniform.” Elora looked at him in confusion, wondering why he had summoned her here with both her traveling clothes and maid uniform...but ordered her to wear neither. And, for that matter, why Riveria and Alex were present as well. Smiling at the confusion on his elf's face, Galyn continued. “I know you must have thought our failure to include panties with your new traveling outfit was just an added element of eroticism...but the truth is we designed that outfit from the beginning to be compatible with the last piece of your submission. It's also why your traveling pants aren't skin-tight, since that wouldn't have allowed a comfortable fit.”

Riveria moved to Galyn's side, holding out something that looked like a belt...sort of. But only sort of, for a flexible metal band ran from the front of the belt down to a wider cup, split into two, then recombined and climbed back to the belt. That there was also a lock prominent on

the front of the 'belt' portion began to make this item's purpose slightly clearer. Not that Galyn was about to leave it all to conjecture. He was proud of this little plan, after all.

"You have declared yourself mine. That you will not only be mine to use as I please...but that your sex is mine to command. This chastity belt will serve as proof of your commitment." He allowed only a moment of seriousness before adding with a twinkle in his eye. "And, of course, since I had a mage friend who is both a major pervert and owed me a huge favor for getting her a recommendation into the University of Aritnal, it also has some additional features that will make wearing it *fun* rather than...restrictive."

Galyn stepped forward, holding the belt up. "Spread your legs a bit, please."

There was only a bare moment of hesitation from Elora before she closed her eyes, took a deep breath, and obeyed. This drew smiles from all three of the others and Riveria stepped forward to help Galyn secure the belt to their maid. The cup proved to be, as expected, a guard for her pussy, with the minimal material of the rest of the belt feeling firm but not terribly restrictive or invasive. Galyn clicked the lock shut and stepped back.

"Go ahead, take a few steps with it. See how it feels. Then we can go over what all it does."

Elora complied, not just walking, but gliding through a few dance steps and martial movements. Eventually, after several minutes of experimentation, she admitted. "It is quite comfortable...and quite secure, I think. The plate didn't shift even a little, not even when it really should have under the stress of my movements."

Galyn nodded happily. "That's one of the simpler enchantments, though quite a strong one. It conforms to your body when active. You will find it impossible to remove by any non-magical means...and even with magical means you would find it difficult."

Elora blushed, cleared her throat, then waved at the belt and asked. "Umm, how will I..."

"Pee?" It was Riveria that asked and she chuckled when Elora blushed deeper in mortification. "Don't worry, I helped Galyn design that little treasure, so such things have been accounted for. The plate will turn into a grate when you have the intention of doing such things, and the entire thing is self-cleaning. It cleans both you and the belt itself, so there will be no issues. Of course, attempting to touch yourself through the grate will only cause it to turn to a solid plate of mithril again."

Elora sighed in a not-so-subtle bit of obvious relief. Getting another chuckle from Galyn and Riveria and an outright laugh from Alex in response. It was Alex that spoke up next. "Oooh, get on to the fun stuff already!"

Galyn laughed at her eagerness and obliged her. "Well, for one thing, it has no actual key...I've programmed it to recognize myself, Alex, and Riviera's magical signatures. Only we can remove it for you. But aside from that...Galyn sub-vocalized a word and suddenly Elora moaned, bending double as something penetrated her abruptly. "It has some other features..."

End of Part 7

Chapter 23

It was storming outside. It had been for three days. A massive series of storms had rolled in off the coast, bringing the entire town to a near stand-still. It was bad for the bathhouse business...but, to be honest, the residents of the manor were largely relieved. Between the sales percentage the new merchant stalls in and near the public were providing and the more direct sales of soaps, towels, and other bath accessories, the bathhouse had already almost broken even, so popular had it proven in the two weeks it had been open so far. That popularity would certainly die down a bit once the novelty wore off a bit but they would likely still do a brisk business, not to mention that there were several plans to increase traffic and sales if things died down more than Galyn deemed acceptable.

With those facts in mind, all of them had been more relieved than dismayed when the unseasonable series of storms drove everyone inside. Each of them had been in dire need of a few days to catch up on sleep, paperwork, and just generally decompress. Not to mention, of course, that they had their new, eager toy to play with...and some other encounters to seek out. The first day had seen everyone but Elora struck by lethargy and everyone had simply lazed around to recover some energy. Day two had inspired a bit more activity...and several rounds of fun with Elora and the features of her new belt. Galyn had to admit, watching Alex drive their poor maid to distraction with the erotically inclined enchantments of the elf's latest uniform addition had been among the most arousing things he'd ever seen. As had Elora's eager servicing of Alex in order to finally 'earn' an orgasm.

Now, however, on day three, Galyn's attention had been diverted to his majordomo. He had to admit to himself that he'd been more than a little surprised the day before when Alex, who he'd assumed would pretty much jump him the first chance she got, had pulled him aside. She'd quietly encouraged him to make Riveria his first conquest between the two of them, explaining that it would mean far more to the older woman whom he'd unintentionally ignored. Alex, herself, hadn't ever attempted to directly draw Galyn's attention the way Riveria had and thus didn't have any hang-ups about her failure to interest him. It had been a surprisingly insightful side to his oldest friend, a side he'd rarely seen, and once he was sure it really wouldn't upset her, he'd agreed with her assessment and spent the following afternoon preparing a proper setting. He'd had to risk a short venture out of the manor during a break in the storms, hence the delay until this very afternoon, but it had been worth it...hopefully. Part of him was nervous, even knowing how much his majordomo wanted him, but his preparations gave him confidence. He was going to do this right, including having used Elora and Alex to distract his target up until this point as he got everything properly set up.

With that thought at the front of his mind, he took a few moments to run his eyes over his preparations with care, checking for anything he'd missed. The small but cozy table for two, set on Rivera's covered second-story balcony, with a little extra magic to dim the sound of the downpour to that of a pleasant rainy day. Candles perfectly lighting the scenes in their glow and a hand-prepared-by-him meal of Riveria's favorite exotic dish, a type of noodles in a complex white-sauce that he'd learned how to fix for her years ago. He nodded in satisfaction, making sure the charm magic on the dishes would keep them warm just a little bit longer as he stepped back through into Riveria's quarters. As master-of-the-house, he could enter any room freely and had taken advantage of that fact to set the scene in the comfort of her own rooms. They were far more to her taste than he'd known his would have been, set with luxuriant velvets and silks he'd

never cared for, joined by a thick-pile carpet bare toes could sink into with an odd sensuality. Here, too, he'd taken the time to add a few more touches. He'd dimmed the magical lighting and added scented candles of black current and violet, creating a hazy, heady scent that matched the lighting of the room. With one last nod of satisfaction for the touches he'd added, he crossed to the door just in time for it to open, revealing the startled face of his majordomo as she returned from 'instructing' Elora.

Before the raven-haired beauty could truly process his presence and casual dress, he swept her into his arms, bending her backward ever so slightly as he pressed in for a firm-but-gentle kiss. Riveria stiffened for just a moment before moaning and relaxing into his grasp, wrapping her arms around him as she poured more feeling and passion into their first true kiss. They were both lost to the world for some time, breaking twice for breath, before Galyn finally managed to remember the waiting dinner and, reluctantly, pulled away from what he knew would be his latest addiction. That had been...unexpectedly powerful. More so, in a way, than even with Elora. Though only in a way.

Riveria growled a protest as he backed off and he chuckled in response. With a gentle pull, he guided her unresisting body toward the specially prepared balcony. "Now, now. Let's not get *too* far ahead of ourselves, yes? We'll need strength for what is yet to come tonight...and neither of us have eaten just yet."

She blinked up at him, confused for just a moment...until they stepped outside. She came to an abrupt halt as she took in the scene, her kiss-addled mind taking a few blinking seconds to truly process what she was seeing and smelling. Then she surprised him by giggling happily. It was an unusual sound for the woman and he stared at her as she went up on tip-toes to buss his cheek with a kiss.

"You didn't have to do all of this, silly...but I love the fact that you did. Shall we gather the strength you implied we would need?"

She slid away, putting a sway into her steps that disrupted any chance he had of a witty response as he stared. He shook himself and, rather than open his mouth and make a fool of himself, simply stepped up to pull her chair out, bowing her into it. She smiled and sat down, then let out a low moan of delighted anticipation as he whisked the magic warming-cover off the main dish.

"Oh, Galyn! My favorite...wait, did you?"

He grinned, knowing she knew Elora had been far too busy to make this, even if she'd known how. "Of course, I snuck out to get the few things I needed and set our elf and mischievous bodyguard to distracting you. It takes a few hours to get this right, after all."

The dinner went extremely well. Galyn had learned long ago that he was no master chef and likely never would be, but he compensated by using exacting measurements perfected over dozens of attempts on the same dish. That meant that dishes like this, a favorite of someone important to him, were exactly right every time he made them and this time was no exception. With the lazy, cozy background of the rain and candlelight, the two of them fell into a sleepy-but-charged atmosphere, eschewing any talk of business or plans in favor of simply chatting about anything and everything that came to mind. Neither knew exactly how long their meal,

complete with a flakey, chocolate pastry for dessert and several glasses of fine quality wine from the manor's cellar, lasted. But, as the candles burned low, they drifted into the bedroom...

The longer-burning scented candles had filled the room with a pleasant haze. Riveira took it in with a deep breath and a slow smile, then pulled away from him, pushing him toward the bed as she did. He let himself fall partially, coming to rest sitting upright on the bed, looking at her expectantly. To his surprise, however, she didn't join him, instead taking another step back and beginning to sway hypnotically. There was no music, no sound, but either would have only detracted from the performance. One by one, as swaying was joined by slow spins and hands caressing the length of her body, pieces of her outfit drifted to the floor, leaving a little more of her lightly tanned skin on display each time. Yet the remaining filmy material of lacy underthings and her careful movements still managed to conceal her most sacred places from his burning, eager gaze. Even at her bra fell away, her hair and a partial spin hid her breasts from view. Then her panties, too, fell to the floor and she gracefully turned to face him, her raven hair, now slightly tousled, settling over her breasts. The black locks half-concealed them, being long enough to almost reach her belly button and partially obscure her taut, lightly muscled stomach. One had coyly cupped her sex for just a moment...then, with a subtle flick of her head and a smooth step forward, her flushed body was opened fully to his hungry gaze, rock-hard nipples and arousal-slickened sex on display and within his reach.

She squeaked when he grabbed her and pulled her in...but that squeak became a moan as she was pulled onto his lap and into a searing kiss that made even their earlier passions pale in comparison. She moaned again as her legs wrapped instinctively around his waist, feeling the evidence of the effect she'd had on him rub her ready sex with only the thin material of his pants in the way. Then, in a movement too fast for her to even process, she was on her back and he hovered over her, pressing her into the softness of the mattress. Neither of them were quite clear, later, on how he lost his clothing over the next few minutes, their minds far too enflamed by mutual desire to care for the details of how it happened. To them it seemed that, virtually from one moment to the next, he went from clothed to nude, his erection sinking into her body with no silly last-minute questions or hesitations. Only as his slow thrust hilted him to the base in her core, did the two finally pause to revel for long moments in the sensation of finally being one. They paused for long moments, staring into each other's eyes...then Galyn grinned and pulled his hips back just a little, giving a tiny thrust forward and receiving a low moan in response as Riviera's eyes fluttered closed.

Galyn lay across her, much of his weight on knees and elbows as he leaned in to initiate another passionate kiss, simultaneously rolling his hips in another slow thrust. The position, with his arms outside hers and his weight pinning her, effectively left her at his mercy. Far from bringing her any discomfort, this seemed to push her passion up a notch as he continued with more small, slow thrusts and passionate, lingering kisses. Her arms would, on occasion, move as if to wrap around his back or neck to hug him closer, only to be foiled by his own arms holding them tucked by her side. Each time this happened, her lips and tongue would become more insistent, as if they were trying to communicate all of the lust that the lack of embrace denied her. Noticing this, he teased her a couple of times when she did this by pulling his head away and kissing down her jawline or sucking on an earlobe, refusing to return to her lips no matter how she craned her neck. She would mew pitifully after several minutes, until Galyn grinned against

her skin and returned to her mouth, pressing her head back into her pillow as their lips mashed together and tongues renewed their battle for dominance.

He repeated the cycle several times, before finally giving in to her increasingly desperate noises and shifting his position slightly, finally allowing her to embrace him fully. This, in turn, freed his own hands, leaving them within easy reach of her enticing, heaving breasts. While not as perky as Elora's, Riveira's were perhaps even larger, made to appear even more so by relatively small areolas surrounding proportionately large and impressively erect nipples. Some part of his mind noted with appreciation that she had no tan lines to differentiate her breasts from the surrounding skin, telling him he'd somehow missed her tanning topless on a regular basis. Which was beside the point at the moment, as his fingers finally had the chance to sink into her body in ways he'd wanted to since the day he first met her. Her mouth broke away from his to express wanton desire as his fingers caressed and kneaded, expertly seeking out every sensitive spot of the large globes he'd desired for years. Galyn had no interest in denying that he was definitely a breast man, no matter how much he may appreciate the rest of the female form, and Riveria's were among the most glorious he'd ever see, perhaps second only to Elora's.

His expert appreciation was driving his lover to a frantic state, their slow love-making clearly no longer enough to satisfy as she attempted to thrust up into him. He chuckled at the writhing mess of a woman below him, her disheveled hair and sweat-covered body never more beautiful. He was tempted, oh so tempted, to draw it out farther, to see what more glorious sounds he could draw from her body. But now wasn't the time for that. Later, another day, almost certainly, but tonight he longed to be complete with her as much as she with him. And so, he obliged her obvious desires. On his next withdraw from her body, he pulled out of her almost completely, ignoring her whimper of protest...and slammed home roughly, the protest turning to a scream of pleasure as he reburied himself within her depths. More long, powerful thrusts followed. Slowly, at first, but with increasing rapidity as both of them began to near the point of no return.

As Riveria's moans became continuous, he felt his own end approaching. He increased his pace farther still, intent on lasting long enough for her to finish with him but knowing he was past the point of no return, now. A half-dozen strokes later, he groaned loudly as he erupted forcefully deep into her. He continued to thrust as evenly as his body and pleasure-wracked mind would allow, his eruption finally triggering Riveria's own. She shuddered beneath him as the walls of her sex clamped down to the point he could no longer thrust. The timing was perfect, as his still-thrusting shaft had been buried at the deepest point of her when she clamped down, leaving them exquisitely locked together as they rode out their climax. Once she was finished and he was empty, Galyn's sweaty, panting body dropped onto hers and they lay together, trying to catch their breath, while he softened ever-so-slowly inside her. Once he slipped free, he rolled clear of her to free her of his weight, laying beside her with as much of their bodies touching as possible. For long moments, as they basked in the afterglow and caught their breath, they didn't speak. Then, Riviera finally broke the silence.

“Wow.”

Galyn looked over at the normally verbose woman, her expression dreamy, and couldn't help but chuckle. Before she could recover more of herself, he began the process of starting

another round. After so many years of waiting, she deserved far more than a single pass, after all...

Chapter 24

Galyn was wrenched from sleep by the sound and feel of the inner-layer intruder wards springing to life. He lurched out of bed by reflex...or tried to. He stumbled and fell face-first into the thick-pile carpet of Riveria's room as he got tangled with the naked body of his majordomo, who was trying to spring out of bed at the same time. For a moment, they both panicked and struggled brutally with one another, only for their brains to catch up to where they were and who the other was. Wasting no time on foolish apologies, they scrambled apart and reached for some sort of weapon and covering, even as the feel of the intruder moving rapidly through the manor came to an abrupt stop nearby, the brutal sound of blades rapidly clashing indicating either Alex or Elora had been far quicker to react.

Galyn had managed to get just his pants on in painful haste just as the clashing of blades began and he threw himself recklessly through the door with his belt-kife, the only weapon he'd had on hand, raised. Alex was there, just half a dozen steps down the hall, dressed in just her underthings and blade flashing with a speed Galyn could barely follow despite regularly training with her. Unfortunately, her opponent, nearly as slim and roughly of a size with her, wasn't just keeping up, he was pressing her hard. Without a thought, knowing he'd never be able to keep up in that melee, he flipped his blade and tossed it with precision at the first opening he spotted in the enemy's blade work. The cloaked intruder side-stepped the blade and blocked the seamless strike Alex had tried to take advantage with...only to cry out and spin a moment later, barely blocking another strike from Alex.

He, the voice had been clearly male despite the slimness of the body, began trying to disengage immediately, only to barely dodge a spear of flame that came from just behind Galyn. Riveria, with a sheet pulled around her body and arcane words spilling from her lips, had joined the fight. Galyn stepped back, grimly, knowing at this point he was a liability without a proper weapon. The man shouted some word of his own, causing a flash of light that gave him just enough of an opening to dive through the window...straight off the second floor and out into the storm. Galyn cursed, throwing open another window for a chanting Riveria to fire another spell, a missile of pure magic, at the man...but he was already gone, the storm hiding him bare meters after he'd come up from a roll and lunged away from the manor in a sprint.

A limping sprint.

Was it the fall?

“Get away from the window!”

Galyn obeyed the snapped order from his bodyguard, looking over at her reflexively. She was grim-face and holding the broken, blood-dabbed shaft of an arrow. Elora, armed with her own weapon, skidded to a halt beside her with a bone-white face. Not the fall, then. Someone had hit the intruder, grazed him with an arrow. A quick glance at the windows of the upper floor showed that a third window had a missing pane where the arrow had entered. An impossible shot in this weather. A difficult one even in bright sunshine.

“Elven make. And there’s a little magic in it, I think. Make sure you don’t touch the blood, we might be able to use it to track him later.”

Riviera was examining the arrow and her comment made Galyn nod, then frowned in turn. An elf would have been able to see through the storm to some extent. Add in a little magic and the impossible shot become merely insanely difficult. But...Elora was one of the only elves in this entire city and was standing next to Alex, breathing somewhat hard from a sprint, holding her spear and dressed only in her chastity belt and a hurried chest wrap. So, where had the arrow come from?

“Alex, did you get a good look at whoever it was? And, just as important, how the fuck did he get in?”

Alex passed the arrow to Riviera, who took it back into her rooms. His bodyguard frowned even as she eyed the windows warily. “No, he had his hood up the whole time. I *can* tell you it was an elf, though. Which, given how impossible that bow-shot was, means we had at least two elves involved. I’m assuming one is our thief...but the other?”

Galyn ignored the question for a moment. “No distinguishing features?”

Alex shrugged, her body slowly starting to un-tense as no more arrows or intruder alarms came. “Brown hair, long enough for the hood not to fully cover. Moved with some stiffness to one side, even before being shot. *Extremely* skilled with a blade, as you saw. Otherwise? Nothing useful.”

“Damn.” Galyn closed his eyes and thought things through, his adrenaline-charged brain flying through scenarios, dismissing some and marking others for farther consideration. “And the wards?”

“That’s probably easier. The external wards had to be powered down to a minimum lest the storm destroy them. They still should have tripped an alarm, at the least, but even someone of merely moderate skill could probably have bypassed that outer layer in their current state, if they could survive in the storm out there in the first place, that is. Those are some nasty winds, with lots of lightning and hail.”

Galyn hummed in acknowledgment. “And that would have left only the manor wards themselves. Which *were* triggered, even if not fully. Brute forcing them fast enough to slip through a broken window in the less critical areas, then bolting straight to the family wing...”

“Yeah, that’s what I’m guessing. Without the alert from the outer wards, the inner protections wouldn’t have come up to full power. At rest, they aren’t strong enough to repel a brute-force approach. That’s supposed to save on mana costs but...”

Galyn sighed at her helpless shrug. “But this time, it bit us on the ass because of the storm. Which, unfortunately, also implies that our intruder had some idea of that fact. Whoever he was, he has at least a working knowledge of magic and ward schema.”

“...It might have been Tannivh.”

Alex and Galyn's gazes both snapped to Elora, speaking for the first time since she appeared. Both of their expressions twisted into grimaces, but it was Alex that spoke first.

"Didn't you kill him?"

Elora looked deeply troubled at the idea, nodding shakily. "I stabbed him straight through the stomach, my spear going clear through and pinning him to a tree. And that, after I'd already injured him seriously. He should have bled out in minutes..."

"But?" Galyn heard her hesitation and prompted her to continue.

"...But, he was the son of our own version of a ward crafter. He had little to no magical talent himself, just enough to do a few parlor tricks like creating a burst of light, but he had centuries of exposure to ward crafting via his family. They were well known for their talent in it."

Galyn grimaced even as Alex let out a string of impressive curses. He grimaced again when she got more colorful as she went, wondering where on earth she'd gotten the idea of wishing someone to be 'anally fucked by the diseased horse they rode in on.' He sighed as she only picked up steam, trying to tune her out as he asked Elora if there was anything else. That she hesitated for a moment finally got Alex to stop cursing."

"Elora?"

Their elven maid flinched at his comforting tone. "I recognized the arrow. It's from my clan...and from someone I know specifically, I think. I just don't know if it's a good or bad thing?"

Alex and Galyn looked at each other, then back at the maid. Neither said a word, but Galyn gestured for her to continue. Elora did so, haltingly.

"Arrow types are often recognizable from one clan to another...but some elves even among each clan insist on making their own. If they do, they often mark them in some way, usually on the shaft just behind the head or just below the feathers. Mostly, this is so that any contests or hunts they might enter have a way to verify their shots, a matter of pride for the best archers and hunters."

When Elora hesitated again, Galyn stamped down on his internal impatience. He reached out to caress her cheek, cupping it when she tried to flinch away. He met her eyes, trying to make his own lack of condemnation appear in his own. He must have succeeded to some extent, for his tense maid relaxed a little and continued.

"The arrow had a mark, one I'm very familiar with. The crafter is, or at least was, my closest friend in the clan. She hated my choice to leave...but didn't join the hun. She didn't even give me away, despite the fact that she caught me leaving. I do not know why she would be here, though."

Alex looked interested. "Could she have followed the hunters? Trying to make sure you made it?"

Elora hesitated. “It...isn’t impossible. But, if she did, it might explain Tannivh’s survival. She is his half-sister. While they were not close, even hated each other in a way, she might have tried to save him if she found him after I staggered away from where we fought.”

Galyn’s mind whirred and he nodded slowly. “And yet, if she didn’t like him and *does* like you, she might have followed him after that to make sure he didn’t hurt you.”

“It’s...possible.”

They stood there for long moments before Alex shook herself. “Well, whatever and whoever it was or wasn’t, we can’t do much about it until the storm passes. Boss, you better go turn the inner wards up to siege-levels, just in case he’s up to trying again. It’ll mean we have to recharge them a lot sooner, of course, but better that than having our throats slit in our sleep. Once the storm breaks, I’ll have a talk with the guards and see if there’s anything more we can do...and maybe Rivieria will be able to do something with the blood on that arrow. In the meantime, Elora and I will do what we can with the windows.”

Galyn nodded, running one hand through his disheveled hair as he finally processed that they were all standing, half-naked, in a hall with broken windows and water slowly pooling from the storm. “After you get dress, I trust?”

Alex laughed and nodded, then swept Elora up with her and moved off. Galyn, after checking on Riveria, headed to his office and the ward control stone hidden there...

End of Part 8