

Ranma/Kuroinu Crossover: A Superstrong Shota in the Black Dog's World.

Just like the HP one I uploaded earlier today, this is a Ranma cross with a Kuroinu world. I will warn you now, it includes, again, a young Ranma. Only this Ranma stays that way, while Harry grows up over several years even in that first chapter I uploaded. This Ranma is just hitting puberty, and well... he's got Genma as a father. Enough said there. I have to admit to having had some uncomfortable moments writing this, but I reminded myself several times this world, like the world of ASOIAF is a Medieval one. Where marrying young (or at least getting in a relationship) is often done very young. So while the difference in Olga/Ranma's respective ages bother me, I still think this could be very, very funny to work on. I certainly enjoyed the fight scenes, although Ranma's inability to use smack talk obviously was an issue LOL.

As before, this was originally a much shorter pilot concept. But here, I will only have one {*} to show where the new stuff has began. Also unlike my HP one, this was edited by someone, Hiryo. He did a really good job as usual making certain I was using the right names, had things capped correctly, and even named right when it came to the two fandoms. Thankfully this could be down without hurting his soul by needing to try and find the actual original Kuro-crap.

Chapter 1: On a Chess Board, a Knight Moves Oddly

"What are we doin' this for, Pop?" Ranma grumbled, even as he followed his father through the dark of the night, climbing up the sheer cliff face, directly below the temple they had been spending time at the last few days.

"Quiet boy, they'll hear you."

"So we're stealing something again?" Ranma asked, rolling his eyes. "What is it this time?"

"Shh... we're here for the same reason we came here in the first place."

At twelve years old, Ranma had begun to realize that not everything his Old Man did was, well, honorable, whatever the older Saotome might have said, and this seemed to be a good example of that. "Er, you know what, that doesn't tell me anything, you didn't explain why we were here in the first place."

"I said Quiet, boy," Genma growled again, pulling away from the cliff face just enough to glare down at Ranma below him between the rock and his stomach. *Bah, I need to do more stomach exercises.* "We're doing this for you."

Ranma blinked, frowning up at the older man. He too was climbing up the rock face, but despite being below his father was having a much easier time of it. "For me? What do ya mean?"

“I came here to find a way to solve a certain issue that you’ve been running into,” Genma grunted before turning back to look upward, resuming his journey, leaving his son behind.

“You mean how I’m outgrowing my clothing,” Ranma quipped, then added, “Again. I think that’s just called growing up, Pops.”

His father didn’t reply, instead continuing on his way up the cliff, and after a second of hissing “Pops!” after him, Ranma reluctantly followed. *I swear if he makes a single move to anything that isn’t a martial arts scroll, I, I’ll, I’ll do something*, he thought, scowling.

What that something would be eluded Ranma at the moment. After all, his father was... well... his father, and if Ranma didn’t follow him around, he’d be forced to stay at one of the places they stayed in or go his own way. *The idea of staying in one place is kind of boring*. Most of the time when his father was ready to move on, Ranma was too, having learned everything the locals were willing to teach them. The alternative of staying wherever he left his old man though was to start traveling on his own. Ranma would never admit it, since he knew a martial artist shouldn’t feel fear, but the idea of being on his own like that scared him.

Above, Genma breathed a sigh of relief. *Thank goodness, he stopped asking questions. The boy’s becoming a little too independent lately, humph, his puberty issues aren’t the only thing I have to nip in the bud. Just the most important, damn it. I caught him checking out two of the local girls the other day, and it’s been weeks since he had a night without producing a stiffy*. Worse in a way was that girls were noticing Ranma too. Both of those were very bad for Genma’s plans for the future. *Still, this place has what I’m searching for, even if the monks refused to let me use it on Ranma without supervision*.

The temple was called the Temple of the Uncluttered Will and was a sect of Hinduism that emphasized austerity and cleansing the body of worldly desires even more than most Buddhists. They were devoted to some goddess or other, a aspect of one of the greater Hindu gods, who had found true power through forsaking bodily pleasures. Ranma and Genma had even been fed a whole spiel about how the Goddess in question became more beautiful and powerful because of doing so, during their time in the temple. According to the sadhus in the temple, only in forsaking pleasures of the body could one truly come to understand the soul.

More importantly to Genma was the fact the temple possessed a certain scroll that Genma had heard about, which denoted several pressure points. They could be used for... well, a lot of things really. Rumors were one thing, but Genma had asked questions when the two Saotomes had arrived and learned that the scrolls did exist. And that the pressure points described within could remove a person’s sexual desires. There would be no physical damage, but the boy’s body would no longer react to anything below the belt and the boy wouldn’t feel any desire or interest in girls any longer if Genma could use those pressure points on him. Indeed, the boy would actually be healthier, his inner ki redirected to the rest of his body.

The sadhus had repeated many times that the pressure points in question could never be used on anyone who wasn't part of the order, a **willing** part. They flatly refused to tell Genma more, and after Genma had pushed a bit too much, had ordered him and the boy to leave the temple. However, Genma was not someone who liked being told no when it came to something he deemed important for training the boy in the art. Which was why barely two days after, so that the sadhus guard would be down, he soon found himself standing on the tiny, tiny ledge before the outer wall of the temple.

He looked down, waiting to see if his son needed encouragement or help, but had to nod in grudging approval as the youngster was only a single body length behind Genma. Genma smiled to himself in the dark, knowing it would go unseen. In most ways, Ranma was already shaping up precisely the way Genma wanted him to be. He soaked up martial arts training like a sponge and was far tougher and stronger physically than Genma had been at his age.

So much for any idea of staying home like Nodoka wanted. Bah! His mother would have ruined the boy, life on the road has toughened him up so much better! No matter how hard I push, he just comes back for more! Pity about the Cat Fist, that was a bit of a... issue. But even there, the boy showed a certain resilience. The manual said, his mind should've been broken if the training didn't take, but instead, he created his own version of it, a berserk version to be sure but still. I would wager even the Dread Master would have trouble with the boy when he falls into it.

When Ranma arrived, his father greeted him in his normal fashion. "You're getting slow boy, slow as a girl!"

"Shove it up your ass Pops," Ranma retorted, smirking up at the older Saotome, knowing that he wasn't serious this time. "I'll wager ya couldn't have gotten up that slope as fast as I just did when you were my age. And what's up with girls being weak anyway? You do know some girls are pretty darn tough?" Ranma tugged at his nose sheepishly. "And um, I kinda like looking at a few of the girls in town, ta be honest. It's weird, but lately my eyes just kind of drift to 'em. And I kinda thought this one gal on a magazine cover was, um--"

"Enough of that boy," Genma growled, grabbing Ranma by the shoulder and tugging him along, more determined than ever now to find that scroll and use those pressure points. *This very night if I can.* "We'll speak about girls once we're away from here. You need to concentrate on the Art, that's all that's important," he added, seeing the mulish expression on his son's face by the light of the moon above them. It was nearly full, which had allowed them plenty of light for the climb.

At that, Ranma relaxed a little, and nodded, moving beside his father now willingly. Yet even as he did, Ranma watched his Pops like a hawk. *Scrolls only*, he repeated to himself. *Scrolls only. Martial arts' training is like, like water from a town well, it should be free for anyone who can take it. But no gold or jewels or anything like that.*

The two of them made it into the temple without a hitch, and Ranma once again stopped, looking at the main statue on this floor of the temple. It was set on a plinth, and was huge, an image of a woman who was wearing what Ranma had heard called a dancer's outfit, with small, beady eyes set into a twisted, ugly face over a very manly body, only her hips and waist showing that this was in fact a woman rather than a man.

*Damn, I know I think this every time, but that is one ugly gal, he thought, shaking his head. I mean, the other statue, the one they have on the second floor's really pretty, and she way, um, what was the term I heard about that one woman in town? Top heavy? But this one... and they're supposed to be the same goddess? **Weird.** The only thing that's the same is her hair. Even her lower body is prettier on the second floor's statue, more, I don't know, not curvy, but more refined, maybe?*

Genma had the same initial thought, and hurried the pair along, keeping silent with ease even as they pushed through the main room with the statue and beyond.

While Genma was somewhat disturbed by the look of the statue, Ranma was fighting off an uneasy feeling of being watched. He slowed down, looking into the shadows, but couldn't find anyone there even as they hurried deeper into the temple. *Maybe I'm just more worried about this whole thing than I thought?* Only twice did they see anyone. In both cases, they were monks moving around in a guard pattern, one that Genma had observed during their time in the temple. This made them easy to avoid.

Soon, they were in the temple's basement, moving into a large room where dozens of scrolls about the size of Ranma's leg were placed in separate cubbyholes. Most would be history texts about the sect, but there were several dozen that were about the Art. "Okay Pops, which of these is the one we want?" Ranma whispered.

Genma just shook his head, and moved to one side, manipulating a few stones set to one side of the entrance. There was a click, and Genma smirked. *Heh, let's hear it for moonshine. Nothing like it for loosening tongues, even those of sadhus.* He pushed at a bookcase, and it swung inward, revealing a hidden room.

Inside, was another statue. But unlike the statue on the second floor or the one in the main hall, this one depicted both the ugly form of the goddess and the good-looking form of the goddess merged into one, as if the right and left of the other statues had been pressed together, fusing along a line that was made to look like it wavered if you looked at it from one angle or another. As if the two sides were warring with one another, trying to overcome their antithesis.

More importantly to Genma, whereas both of the other statues were simple stone, this statue was made of gold, silver and a few gems for eyes. *Jackpot!*

At the base of the statue was a wooden stand in which the scrolls Genma rested. Seeing them, Genma hastened towards them, but he also continued to eye the statue greedily. *I wonder how many bottles of sake I could get for just one of those eyes. It's a waste to have such pretty things down here where only the monks can see them anyway. After all, what use do monks have for such riches?*

As he followed his father into the room, Ranma paused, his hackles rising as he whirled around, staring everywhere. *Gods it really feels like we're being watched, but there's no one here. This is getting freaky. Huh, could the monks here have some weird ninja trick to blend into the shadows? We gotta get out of here.*

In his sudden worry about what could be sneaking up on them Ranma had taken his eyes off Genma, a fact he realized, as he finished surveying one of the shadowed corners of the room. He turned back rapidly and was unsurprised to see his old man working one of the eyes on the idol loose. *FUCK!* "Pops don't you dare, you said we were only here for the scrolls!"

"Quiet boy. We need the funds anyway, or do you want to go back to dine and dashing hmm?" Genma snorted.

Ranma leaped forward, grabbing at his father's arm with both hands. "I don't, but that'd be better than being a thief!" To Ranma's mind, stealing food wasn't really stealing. Just survival. So, while Genma had a point he did not relent. Yet Ranma's added weight didn't stop Genma. In fact, his weight aided the older man's efforts.

With a low *pop* the stone Genma had been trying to pry loose came free. Moreover, as it did, there was a rumble that seemed to shake the room, and the feeling of being watched quadrupled. So much so, even Genma felt it and paused, his hand closing around the gem as he whirled towards the door.

But as he did, a voice spoke from the idol, its voice feminine but so authoritative it made any schoolteacher Ranma had ever run into seem small change in comparison, and made Genma shiver in fear, wondering why the voice sounded like his dead mother. **"Thieves! You would take from this sacred place, begone!"**

"Wh, wait, what is happ—" Genma began, only to be interrupted as some kind of energy blasted out from the idol, slamming into Genma and Ranma where they were struggling.

For Genma, he found his body suddenly frozen, then his world going dark. The next instant Genma opened his mind to find himself in the air several miles above what looked like a snow-capped mountain. "Well... fuck..." he muttered before he began to fall, "aerial style, don't fail me now!"

The fact he was now alone would not occur to him until he woke up in a local hospital dealing with numerous broken bones and frostbite. For Ranma's journey was even stranger and much longer.

For him, there was no sense of his body freezing up, just everything about him suddenly shifting away. The world turned black and white on him, up became down, yellow became strawberry as his senses became overloaded with whatever was being done to him.

As it did, a female voice whispered into his mind. ***"For all your momentary courage to do to the right thing, the child of a thief is often drawn to such a life, regardless of what he or she wants. Instead, go where you will find new influences and where perhaps your skills will do good."***

As the weird feeling of 'your brain is out of order, please install a new one' faded, Ranma found himself in an entirely new place. Gone were the wood-lined walls of the temple's basement and the freaky statue. Instead, he was in the air of some kind of hall, large, made of stone, with expensive-looking tapestries on the wall, tapestries, which showed scenes of forests and things like European dragons or gryphons and other things of that nature. The stone of the room was dark black, the floor looking like black marble, where it wasn't covered by a large red carpet that led to a pair of doors.

As Ranma landed, he heard a voice, a female voice, but not the same voice as that of the supposed Goddess who had sent him here, coming from behind him. This voice didn't reverberate in his head or give him a headache, but it certainly sounded angry, and Ranma shook his head, getting over the weirdness of magic being real and it being used on him quickly, turning with his hands raised in a stance towards the voice. "Listen lady, I... I...eee..."

Ranma's voice trailed off as he looked at the woman standing there. She was definitely a woman, not a girl. In fact, she was more of a woman than Ranma had ever seen or even dreamed of, since girls had begun to appear in his dreams in the first place.

Skin the color of milk chocolate, long legs, thick but not fat thighs on display due to a pair of long boots being paired with a bikini bottom of all things. A firm stomach, which was mostly on display thanks to what the woman was wearing, some kind of purple dress/bathing suit thing, whose main job seemed to both cover the most important bits and not a bit more than that. Some kind of odd tattoo was there, standing out against her skin, black on the light brown of her skin. Above that, two breasts the size of Ranma's head and then some was covered by two more bits of purple bathing suit/whatever kind of clothing the woman was wearing.

The face of the woman too was gorgeous, a small, firm looking mouth currently twisted into an angry snarl below high cheekbones and lively looking golden eyes, narrowed in anger to go with the snarl as the woman glared back at Ranma. Oh, and she also had long ears, like the

kind Ranma had once seen on the cover of a computer game the son of a dojo he was staying at was playing. In addition, small crackles of energy moving over the staff she carried in one hand.

For a split second Ranma took in the sight before him, words failing him as his brain tried to shut down from too much stimulation on top of the impact of what he had just gone through. Then the reality of what he was seeing registered. *Fuck, she's a sorceress and I just appeared while she's getting ready for bed or something.*

Fighting the urge to whimper and run away, and praying the woman was the forgiving sort, Ranma snapped his head to the side, his face flushed as he brought one hand up to cover his eyes, blubbering, "S, sorry! I don't that is I..." he bowed deeply, still not looking at the woman. "I'm **so** sorry, miss!"

Olga, Queen of the Dark Elves and Garan castle, found herself somewhat nonplussed as the boy who had just appeared in the air of her thrown room looked away, bowing rapidly so hard he looked like he was hurting himself. Her fury slowly drained away as she realized this was something new and unusual, not part of the attack on her castle. It would be just like the infamous Black Dogs to use a sacrificial lamb to try and surprise her but this boy was definitely not acting like one of those animals would.

Looking closely, Olga took in the human boy's face, blinking as she realized how young he looked. *Moreover, is that Imperial he's speaking? Odd.* Olga knew the language but hadn't had much experience with the spoken form. She took a moment to study him more closely, tapping the head of her staff thoughtfully. *Young, definitely even younger than I thought, although considering how well-formed he is, I suppose my lapse can be excused. Fit, extremely so, I've never seen a youth have such defined muscles as this one has, though why in the world he's wearing clothing so small and yet so formfitting I don't know. Blue eyes, I think, he turned away so quickly I couldn't tell, and good balance to right himself in midair before he could hit the floor.*

"Boy," she asked, some of the tension of the moment leaving her.

Ranma looked up, then looked away, blushing even brighter, shaking his head again. "S, sorry!"

"Boy," Olga said again, this time in Imperial, a faint smile appearing on her lips. *His reactions are so innocent, they almost remind me of Chloe when I first took her in.* That amused her and made her look past the boy's race for the moment.

"Y, you speak my language?" Ranma asked, still looking away.

"A bit," Olga admitted. "Where did you come from?"

"I, I don't know, I..."

“And why aren’t you looking at me?” Olga interrupted him, frowning now. She watched as he looked at her again, only to blush a color more like that of fresh blood than flesh, as he turned away again, this time turning his entire body away. *Oh, he’s still embarrassed. This is quite fun. Even if he is a human he seems an innocent and, he’s... kind of cute too. It feels like a betrayal to even think that, but I suppose a boy so young is truly innocent of the horrors his race have performed on mine.*

“It, it’s embarrassing,” he muttered, staring at the far wall. “I’ve never...” he stumbled to a halt, still looking away.

“You’ve never seen a dark elf?” The term ‘dark elf’ was spoken in her normal language, Imperial not having its own word for her race. *That would explain why he isn’t running in terror at seeing me.*

But Ranma didn’t respond to it, still looking away, although Olga could see he was now looking at her out of the corner of his eye. *The boy thinks he’s being subtle. That’s even more amusing.*

“I’ve never, never seen someone so pretty before. It, it’s hard to look at ya and think at the same time for some reason,” he mumbled his eyes now locked on her as if mesmerized despite his face still being turned away.

At that Olga laughed, a true honest laugh for just a moment, and then, both she and the boy were startled as something hard slammed into the door.

Olga looked at it, then back to the boy, but by the time she did, the boy was gone, and Olga blinked in surprise. *What, how? I felt no magic, blast it, I should have remembered that my castle was under attack, damn that human boy for distracting me!*

The door groaned from another powerful blow and Olga set aside the boy, the mystery of where he had come from as well as the momentary amusement she had taken in his innocent reactions to her, and stood from her throne. Firmly holding her staff forward, magic power crackling around it for a moment as she moved.

Olga frowned shaking her head as a wave of weariness hit her. *What is going on!? It is as if my connection to the ley lines has been frayed, pulled away from me so gradually I never noticed. But what, and who? And perhaps more importantly, how?*

The door crashed open, and Olga’s eyes narrowed. *And the magic enchantments defending my throne room are also gone! Have I... ah, that makes some sense.*

As she watched, two ogres strode in, dropping a large tree trunk to the ground as they entered, moving to either side. As they did, a dozen or more members of the mercenary unit the Black Dogs, the private army that her enemies had used more and more often against her in

the past ten years, followed them in, led by its leader, the barbarian Vult. A massive man, he stood as tall as an orc, wielding a blade as large as an ogre's leg, disdainful of armor to show off his massive muscles and hairy chest.

"So I was betrayed by a few Aberrants. Well, I suppose that one should never be too startled when a wild animal turns on you," Olga mused, gathering her magical power into her staff.

"Brave words from a cornered bitch with nowhere to go." Vult moved forward, grinning darkly at Olga, looking her up and down, licking his lips. "Mmm, but damn, stories do not do you justice do they? I'm going to enjoy seeing what's under those robes of yours."

"You think me cornered?" Olga laughed, the staff in her hand crackling with magical power. A spell lashed out from her, cutting both ogres into ribbons, but it should have slaughtered the whole front rank of the invaders. And after, Olga felt the strain of the spell **far** more than she should have. *If this battle goes on for too long, the enemy might well overcome me. I have to finish it quickly, then reconnect to the ley lines!*

"Hold witch, or else the girl gets it," Vult shouted from where he had ducked behind a shield he had grabbed from one of his men.

Olga paused in her assault, and four orcs, another race of Aberrants dragged her assistant and bodyguard Chloe into the room. "Chloe!"

Her aide was tossed down, her arms shackled behind her, her face already showing a large bruise. "My Lady, I'm sorry, they overwhelmed me! The trolls, they attacked..."

"That's right," one of the orcs said, larger and tougher looking than his fellows, smirking at the former Queen. "You're weak! You promised us women, the conquest of the south, and all you have been doing is simply letting us through your territory, never letting us take from your own, never letting us grow strong enough to truly win."

"Traitor!" Olga lashed out with another spell, but this one was blocked, and an instant later, it was all Olga could do not to reel in exhaustion. Wh, what the hell... they're draining my magic somehow. I, Chloe, I can't..."

As her next fireball dissipated barely a few inches from her staff, Vult came out from behind his shield, smirking. "So here's the deal Discordia. You surrender, and you and your companion here get locked up. If you don't, something nasty's going to happen to her. I can't kill you yet, I need you alive, breathing and able to answer questions if I want to make my united Cuntry a reality."

Olga narrowed his eyes and Vult smiled, his eyes alight like a zealot's. "Yes! A Cuntry, a nation for men, where women like you and those bitches in their high towers serve real men!"

He then shook his head, becoming a little more serious. "Like I said, I need you alive. But that leaves your little friend here to pay the price for any more of your lip."

"Don't listen to them, Olga-sama!" Chloe shouted, but then she screamed as one of the orcs tore off her chest armor, and began to roughly fondle one of her breasts.

Another two lifted Chloe up by her thighs, spreading them apart. "Why wait! I've been wanting to taste this one for..."

That was as far as the attackers got before Ranma, who had been clinging to the ceiling up to this point, decided to intervene. Young as he was, and naïve in the way of girls as he was, Ranma had seen something like this before, when Genma had stepped in to stop something just like this from happening. He didn't know what was going on precisely, but a lot of guys... or monsters, whatever, tearing a woman's clothing off her had to be bad, right?

First take out the leader guy, the human guy who's talking big, then the orcs. Now let's see if I can get into position right above him...

"Well, come on Discordia, you're running out of time here..." Vult smirked, wiggling his hips, his arousal visible as a tent in his pants, the idea of raping the dark elves prominent in his mind, among his plans for the future. *Soon, soon my Cunt-try will become a reality and...*

All thought suddenly left Vult as a battering ram of force crashed up into his dick from between his legs, lifting him a foot off his feet. The kick was as if someone had taken a warhammer to his balls, rupturing one, nearly breaking his dick and even breaking his hipbones.

"GAAAAaaaaaaaaah!!" Vult screamed in pure agony, dropping his sword and grabbing at himself, as the rest of the Black Dogs stared or shrieked in shock.

"Wh, what the hell!?"

"Vult-sama!"

"Oh my god, he's ruined boys, ruined!"

"Where the hell, what the fuck is a kid doing here!?"

"That ain't no kid, you moron, that's a halfling, like that little cunt Luu Luu! Get him!"

However Ranma, who had dropped from the ceiling right behind the big leader guy, didn't give them any opportunity to recover.

The two orcs holding the younger looking dark skinned elf found themselves choking, little fists having hammered up into their throats, and then Ranma tossed himself through the

air towards the back of the mob where he saw a few men with staffs and no swords or any other kind of weapon to speak of. He hadn't played many games, but Ranma had talked to a lot of people who did, and even been shown a few occasionally. Moreover, one thing had always been pointed out to him. When in a fight, kill the healer or the mage first.

This Ranma did now, downing two of the mages before the Black Dogs recovered, breaking bones and sending them screaming to the floor. But recover the group of attackers did, forcing Ranma to dodge as sword and spear blows came toward him.

Whatever surprise he might have had first, these men were veterans, survivors and they had just seen their leader go down. Several of them now began to drag Vult away, and the others turned on Ranma in an almost controlled movement, with one of them shouting orders, forgetting the two women for a moment. "Kill that little bastard!"

Ranma lashed out all around him, ducking and dodging, bouncing and weaving, using his small frame to his advantage as best he could. It wasn't working quite as well as he had hoped, way too many of the strikes were coming way too close for comfort considering they were real weapons and all. But his aerial style at least seems to be screwing with their heads, and Ranma kept in the air, thankful that there weren't any archers with this group. *If they could pin me in place and just fire arrows at me, I'd be screwed!* As fast and as strong as he was, Ranma wasn't immune to arrows or steel, something he was realizing now, as blows grazed or struck glancing blows, leaving behind rapidly spreading bruises and cuts.

Surveying the carnage, Olga watched in shock as Chloe used a sword that had been embedded in the ground next to her to undo the bonds on her hands and feet. Chloe then stood up, her sword in hand as she charged forwards, stabbing one of the orcs in the back.

She was nearly laid out by a blow from another orc as he turned and shouted, "The dark elf bitch is free!"

But Olga couldn't watch her aide's assault, instead, she was searching, having taken the time to cast a spell of mage-sight over her eyes, slumping back into her throne at the magical cost. *It has to be there it had to... there!* "Boy!" she shouted in Imperial, and then pointed her staff at one particular mage, a mage who had been by Vult's side earlier, practically hidden by the taller man's bulk rather than back by his fellows. "Him! He has something magical on him. Destroy it!!!"

While quite learned in the ways of magic, Kin, the chief mage of the Black Dogs, did not have any knowledge about languages. He had fallen back, preparing a spell to blast the strange human boy, who was attacking them so wildly that dust but he hadn't retreated with Vult just yet.

This proved to be a mistake.

Ranma was now dealing with several dozen bruises and even a few cuts, and was beginning to be a little panicky, thinking he might have just possibly, sort of bitten off more than he could chew. Yet he still heard Olga's command and he looked towards the mage in question, then, bouncing off one spear thrust and feeling the back of a blade scrape his shoulder, Ranma hurled himself through the air to crash into the mage.

The move lacked the grace most of his midair moves had, but worked, and a second later Ranma bore the spectacle-wearing man to the earth. The spell he'd been preparing flashed up over their heads, crashing up into the ceiling, causing stone and brick to fall. Ranma grunted at the impact of one to the back of his hip, but still grabbed the mage's head in both hands, slamming hi down into the ground, with enough force to crack his skull.

He then had a split second to rifle through his clothing, something his Pops had told him about, and grabbing up the most magical looking thing inside. It was a jewel, one as large as an adult man's hands pressed together black as night with a purple edge to the center.

The man who had been shouting orders with Vult out of action saw this and shouted, "NO!!" But too late.

Between one second and the next, Ranma smashed the crystal down onto the ground with all his might, and Hicks, one of the three main leaders of the Black Dogs, watched in dismay before he turned and ran, pushing through his fellow mercenaries and their new allies alike, just ahead of a dagger meant for his neck. He tried to hack at the halfling as he passed, but missed as the freak dodged, rolling on the ground.

Power flowed through Olga again, and she pushed to her feet as she began to send a low-powered lightning spell into the mass of Black Dogs. She chose lightning for a very good reason. As clumped together as they were, the lightning would travel from one bit of metal to another, shocking or disorienting those it didn't kill outright.

From his place within the mages, Ranma was generally secure from this assault, and watched as Olga dealt with the others. Soon they were in full retreat, shouting for reinforcements, and nearly trampling Ranma in their haste to get away from the vengeful Queen.

Gathering what remained of his strength, Ranma tried to leap upwards to try to grab onto the ceiling, but his muscles failed him. He would have fallen if not for Olga spotting his distress. Halting her attacks for a moment, she used a Levitate spell on Ranma, lifting him up and over the mass of Black Dogs even as a few of them tried to attack him.

The next moment, he was flying backward into the throne room, and as he landed, Olga shouted, "Chloe, the doors!"

Chloe made to obey, then paused, pointing one of her purloined swords towards where Ranma was only just now slowly pushing to his feet. "What about this one my Lady, should I kill him?"

Ranma growled, hurting and exhausted, but still game. "I just saved your ass, and I might not know your language, but pointing a sword at me has got to be some kind of threat, right?"

She glared up at him, but did nothing, waiting for her Queen's word.

A word that didn't come. Instead, she finished what she was doing and moved over towards them, coming up from behind Ranma. Before he knew what was happening two soft arms were lifting him off the floor and the back of his head was pressed into the softest thing he had ever felt. "Not at all Chloe. Not at all. Human he might be, but this young boy just saved us both from a horrible fate."

Ranma blushed in such a manner as to put all his previous blushes to shame, and his arms waved wildly, but he all his strength had left him, and it was all he could do not to pass out, a certain part of his body acting up as Olga hugged him all the tighter. Ranma turned his head to look up at her, but this proved to be a mistake, as it simply meant his face was now pressed into the side of her breasts, and his eyes widened in shock as Olga leaned down with a sensual smile as she kissing him lightly on the lips.

That was all it took. Ranma fainted dead away in Olga's arms, a blissful smile on his face.

Chloe glared, but even she, who prided herself on hating all things human, couldn't really bring forward much anger at how her Lady was treating the boy. It was true, his intervention had saved them after all. "My Lady, where did he come from, and what is he? He can't just be the human youth he looks like, not given how he fought."

"I don't know where he came from," Olga chortled, shaking her head as she moved over towards the tunnel, whose entrance she had opened a moment ago, carrying Ranma still nestled against her breasts. "A godsend I think, wherever he came from. But come. We still can't fight the Black Dogs. Even with their leaders taken out for now, there's too many of them, and then there are the orcs to consider too. Those orcs with them were just warriors, no chance they were doing this on their own. No, at least one of the larger clans is behind this betrayal."

As she entered the tunnel, Olga shook her head. "Besides, while my magic has returned, it's not going to be sufficient enough now that they are actually within the fortress and my connection to the ley lines below has been severed."

Chloe nodded, following her into the tunnel then lighting a torch before pressing on a stone as Olga directed her. "What should we do, Olga-sama?"

“Get away from here for now. Unseen, if we can.”

“And, and the boy?” Chloe asked, hesitating to close the entrance behind them as she glared at where Olga still carried the bloody, beaten youth. *He’s getting his dirty blood all over Olga-sama! Savior or not I won’t allow that!*

“What kind of woman would I be if I left our savior behind?” Olga chortled. She looked down at Ranma with interest, and not just because of the speed and strength he’d shown. *I have no idea where you came from, my young friend, but I mean to keep you by my side.*

{*}

As they moved down the tunnel, Olga was already making plans, conjuring up small magical birds in her hand. The little creatures looked like swallows but with larger eyes, and stood docilely when she placed them on Chloe’s head or shoulders for the moment as they moved, somewhat amused at the put-upon look the younger girl had as she found herself festooned with tiny magical birds. *I will take what humor I can*, Olga thought, her mind going down a grim path. *After this day’s business, I need all the help I can get to keep my spirits up.*

When she had six of them, she spoke in a loud firm tone, which seemed to wake Ranma up a little, before he fell back asleep. Olga estimated this time was simply because he was tired from his exertions rather than overload. Even for a youth who is as physically exceptional as Ranma was, the battle he had with the Black Dogs must’ve pushed him to his limits.

Even as her arms tightened around and under Ranma, Olga set her interest in the strange youth aside. There would be time later to speak to Ranma, to learn more about him and to think about her plans for him. Now she had to give out orders to her folk. “My people, we have been betrayed! The Black Dogs have somehow suborned the Aberrants and taken the Black Fortress. It is only a matter of time before the Aberrants swarm over our lands as well as the humans. All settlements are to abandon their territories and retreat to their prepared Holds. We cannot face the Aberrant in the open. Retreat for now and come back all the stronger later.”

With that, Olga said a single word of power to end the communication and send the six magical creatures on their way zooming forward of the much slower moving dark elves. Chloe watched them zip off her shoulders and arms, then looked over at her mistress, scowling at the sight of the little human that she was still holding in her arms, despite also holding her large staff in one hand. “Have you thought of where we should go, Mistress? And surely, I can take that whelp off your hands! You really shouldn’t sully yourself by touching a human like that.”

“Is he human?” Olga’s question brought Chloe up short in furrow-browed confusion, and Olga went on thoughtfully, wanting a second opinion. “How old would you estimate he is, Chloe?”

Chloe grimaced a bit, but leaned forward and examined the use face closer than she had been by the light of the torch she held in one hand. "Eleven, perhaps twelve mistress?" As embittered and angry as Chloe was against humans, she wasn't stupid, and understood the point her mistress was pointing out quickly. "B, but that's impossible. No human child so could move as he did! Not even after a lifetime of training or dwarfish blood, his muscles they wouldn't be able to..."

"To say nothing of his reaction time, which puts cats to shame," Olga agreed, shrugging her shoulders, which did impressive things to her bust. Since her chest currently encased Ranma's head, that caused the youth to shift again, and she looked down at him, a smile on her face that Chloe didn't really like.

"Mistress, surely I can carry him at least, if you don't want to wake him up and force him to walk on his own as he should." Chloe paused then as Olga shook her head, before asking, "But if he is not human what is he?"

"I don't know yet, but we will discover. For now, we need to turn our attention to other things." Olga looked around, then asked Chloe how many torch sconces they had passed. She hadn't been noticing that as she had been concentrating on creating her messenger birds, something that had taken more concentration than even high-end spells had taken from Olga, ever since she had bonded with the tangle of ley lines beneath the black fortress. *I think I am seeing the downside of doing that, I became too dependent on that source of magic. I needed it at the time to match the divine power that Celestine could wield thanks to the dead God within her. If not for that black crystal being destroyed, my magic might well have been drained out of me entirely, looping back into the lay lines. That human, what was his name? Kiln? Regardless, what a terrifyingly adept mage he was. Now dead thanks to my little savior here.*

She looked down at Ranma sleeping face, noticing that he was blushing in his sleep, yet still slightly nuzzling into her chest, a sight that caused her to bite back a giggle despite the horrible fucking day she'd had.

Luckily, Chloe answered her question at that point, bringing Olga's attention back to her before she could embarrass herself. "Good, we haven't passed it. Count out three more. We will stop there to gather supplies."

Although confused about where those supplies would come from, Chloe nodded, and asked what their long-term plans were again. "As you heard, I have ordered our folk to retreat. Luckily, betrayal by the Aberrant is not anything new. We dark elves have our hidden spaces, faraway groves and mountain holds that at need we can retreat to. The war against the humans taught us that at least."

Olga grimaced, remembered anger and fury rising into her, as it always did, as she thought of the humans predations mixing with the thought of what Vult and his cronies had wanted to do. Her fury had Olga clenching her hand around her staff, to the point the wood

began to creak, and pressing Ranma's face even deeper into her chest, to the point where he began to shift and move again. That brought her up short, and Olga stopped, calming herself. "The Aberrant were deliberately kept ignorant of those. I well understood the nature of the creatures we were allying ourselves with. Using one evil to defeat a greater evil is never a safe prospect."

Chloe agreed fervently, more with the idea that humans were the greater evil, but her recent brush with the Aberrants who had joined the Black Dogs had shown her that the difference between orc and human wasn't all that great. She said so now, with a pointed glance towards Ranma.

Olga ignored that, going on. "Luckily, using the Aberrants allowed us to build up our military strength somewhat over the past hundred years, although as you know, not by much." Elves were not fertile, light or dark, and although the last war, in which the dark elves had faced both humans and Aberrants at the same time had been over a hundred and fifty years ago, the dark elf population had yet to rise to where it had been. Both, because of their losses in that war and because of continuous raids and slave taking by the humans.

Chloe was one example of such a slave, but Olga had rescued her before she had been taking it deep into human lands. "We will at least be able to defend ourselves. But striking back against the Aberrant, against the Black Dogs, that will force me to..." Olga sighed, shaking her head. "To make peace with Celestine."

"Mistress!" Chloe gasped in shock. "How can you, Celestine is, she is the leader of the Seven Sacred Shields! She's been our enemy for..."

"For as long as you have been with me and then some, yes. Yet ask yourself this question, Chloe. Have any of the Sacred Shield Forces actually been involved in reading, enslaving and raping? No. They conduct this war as a war, rather than a genocidal campaign against us. Oh, some are insanely ignorant of what is going on, naïve to the point of stupidity. But I cannot call any of those women monsters in their own right, like Vult," Olga said, shaking her head. "I do not like it. Never think I do. But again, I must make a choice between one evil and another."

That was a bit of a slur on her old friend, and Olga actually found herself mentally apologizing to Celestine for it. Calling Celestine evil was a tremendous stretch. *Blind, certainly, just like the Seven Shields. Willfully ignorant of what humans have done to the dark elves and even some Elven communities over the centuries? Certainly. Far, far too trusting? My word yes. But evil, no.* Even when Olga had set herself against Celestine and the humanities Celestine wished to shield from her war, Olga knew that.

With a start, Chloe realized they'd just passed the third unlit torch, and looking down at the torch in her hand, decided to switch out. When she tried to pull the new torch out of its sconce whatsoever, it failed, and she blinked, then tugged harder.

“Rotate it dear, don’t pull,” Olga said smirking a little, feeling a little... out of sorts, riding both an adrenaline high and a need to giggle for some reason she could not fathom. *I should be a walking statue right now, or a bonfire of fury. Yet I am not. Strange. Is this my mind coping with the sudden changes, or something else?*

Chloe did so with a confused expression on her face, only to watch the entire scone shift around in a circle. There was a click then a small doorway opened. It was so enough that even Chloe would have trouble getting through on her knees.

“Black fortress was originally built by gnomes, and they were an extremely suspicious lot,” Olga explained, gesturing Chloe to enter the doorway. “Inside you will find two bags of supplies. Check to make certain they have everything you think we will need on the road. You should also find a spare change of clothing for me. I will not be traveling the road in my presence garb. There will also be weapons for yourself.”

Chloe eagerly ducked into the room, dropping the knife she’d grabbed from one of the Black Dogs as she did. As Chloe shimmied into the hidden storage room, Olga gently set Ranma down on the floor, and then leaned against the wall for a moment, placing both of her hands around her staff. Looking at the red globe on top of her staff, Olga began to concentrate on regulating her inner magic. With the crystal that had connected her to the mass of ley lines underneath the black fortress destroyed in the feedback of her savior destroying the black crystal the Black Dog mage was using, Olga would need to, in the first time in centuries, rely solely on her own power. For that, Olga needed to know if her reserves had been in any way damaged by her reliance on the crystal.

Her meditation on that score ended when Chloe came back out, having pushed several bags out the small door ahead of her, shimmying out like a lithe snake. “Mistress, how did you get supplies down here?” Even Chloe had trouble getting in and out of it after all, and her mistress was not only taller than Chloe but far shapelier.

“Magic of course. A shrinking spell on myself, as well as some invisibility charms when I took supplies from the fortresses supply rooms. Somewhat undignified, and I know it caused rumors to go about among the Aberrant and our own folk that there was a ghost going around the place. But it was necessary to keep this place and this passage secret.”

It was also somewhat fun, Olga reflected, something that had been in very short supply since her war with the humans began. *That and raising Chloe was about the only fun I’ve had in centuries. Perhaps that is why I feel so good now? Not being burdened any longer by the weight of leadership? It isn’t as if I could give out orders even to our own folk at present.*

She began to strip off, causing Chloe to squeak and turn around rapidly, then turn around again, staring at her mistress as she tossed her clothing aside for second, taking in her glorious curves before hissing, “Mistress! What if the human brat wakes up?! Surely you should go down the passage a little.”

“I’m already halfway undressed Chloe, and we have wasted enough time gathering supplies. There is a possibility that we will find the area the entrance of this tunnel comes out at under watch, and the longer we remain within these tunnels, the more possible it becomes,” Olga stated, shaking her head with a chuckle, which sent her chest bouncing a little. She then reached down, removed her boots and peeled off the footless thigh highs. Her high heels she had discarded the instant they entered the tunnels.

She noticed with some distaste that her feet were a little dirty now, but reflected that she would need to get used to it. Luckily, boots and stockings were within the room as well, and a good serviceable pair of short pants as well. *And even new panties, excellent. I couldn’t remember if I included them the last time I was down here.*

Tossing her leggings aside, Olga continued on to remove her panties, tossing them to join her leggings before leaning down and pulling out the new panties, working them up her legs.

This was the sight that Ranma came to. Blinking and holding back a groan with some difficulty as aches and pains made themselves known across his entire body, he looked up at what he thought would be the tent flap above him. “Pops, I had the weirdest dream last night I...”

He paused, staring instead at long, very long caramel colored legs, which went up all the part of the woman’s body he had never seen before, the bit that was different from man to woman. In this case, it, whatever it was, was covered in a tiny patch of black hair. Ranma didn’t really know what he was looking at, but it looked almost like a weird flower, almost, before Ranma found his eyes travelling further upward to a toned stomach above. The weird tattoo that Ranma had seen in his dreams on the caramel colored elf queen was there too, and, and...

Ranma couldn’t have stopped his eyes even if he had wanted to, and at the moment, he didn’t. Moreover, while he had no idea about what girls had below the belt, over the past few months, Ranma had found himself very interested in women’s chests. Now one lay bare to his gaze. Ranma’s eyes widened even further to the point he almost looked like an owl, a nosebleed beginning as he stared at them. Large, heaving, soft and supple, standing proudly like twin mountains topped with dark chocolate colored nipples. The swaying breast-mountains hypnotized him for a moment, before the Ranma operating system overheated, and his eyes rolled back up in his head and he slumped back into unconsciousness.

Olga looked down at him, having frozen as Ranma had moaned, but she quickly reached out and grabbed Chloe’s arm before she could go to her knees with a dagger raised to stab. “Well Chloe, it looks as if you were right, perhaps I should have moved further down the tunnel.” The fact that Olga was giggling as she said this did not make Chloe feel any better, nor did the sight of her mistress leaning down, running one hand down Ranma’s body, feeling his muscles there and gently touching his bruises. “Don’t look so put upon Chloe, he wouldn’t have done anything. The boy seems to be a true innocent.”

One with untapped potential I intend to mold into my willing servant, Olga thought firmly.

“Perhaps mistress, but that is the way all youths start. He’s a **human!** Whatever we might have been thinking of before, he looks enough like them anyway. And as such, he will surely try to take advantage of us like humans always do!”

“Perhaps, but perhaps not.” Olga laughed again, gesturing Chloe back so she could keep dressing. Soon, she was dressed in a pair of short shorts, hiking boots and thick socks, with a blouse up top that contained her chest in a way she felt vaguely uncomfortable with even with several of the buttons undone. Elves preferred to wear much less than this, even dark elves not liking how it seemed to close them off to the sensation of the world around her. But traveling like they would be would demand some cover. Over this, she had a cloak, rolled back over her shoulders currently, complete with a hood. “Was there a third cloak in there?”

“No mistress,” Chloe said, with some amount of smugness. When they ran into bad weather, the human brat would have to deal with it on his own, something Chloe was taking some delight in imagining at the moment.

“Very well.” She hefted a bag on her back despite Chloe’s protests, then ordered Chloe ahead of her. Chloe had armed herself with several pairs of knives, a seax, bow, arrow, a small shield along with a breastplate, which had apparently been fitted perfectly for her, something that caused her to smile and thank her mistress when she had initially found it. Seeing her mistress willing to change directly in front of the little human had thrown that out her mind for a moment.

When Chloe began to move ahead, Olga knelt down, and lifted Ranma again into her arms, this time holding her little savior to her in the princess carry so he wasn’t in danger of suffocating. For the moment, her staff was quickly strapped to the pack on her back.

The boy was quite heavy for his size, and Olga’s initial rush of adrenaline had worn off by this point, causing her to stop and cast a charm on the boy to lighten his weight after only a few feet. The feel of the magic going over his body seemed to cause the boy to frown a bit, something Olga was somewhat surprised by. *Hmm, could that mean he has some magical potential? Fascinating.*

Yet she continued to carry him, as Chloe led the way down the hallway, calling back over her shoulder whenever she came to an intersection. Since these passages were the way that Olga had been able to move around the fortress unseen, that and her spells there were several of them. But at each point, Olga led them unerringly forward, and soon they were deep into the ground beneath the Black Fortress, then heading upwards along a slight incline. They would come out a mile away from the fortress towards where the Blighted Lands began.

They were almost at the far end of that incline, where the tunnel would exit out into a forest, when Ranma once more began to stir. Olga instantly halted, kneeling down where she was and smiling as Ranma opened his eyes.

She found this strangely easy to do. Despite the fact she was running for her life and virtue, the memory of Ranma sucker kicking Vult so hard in the privates he was probably neutered and the fact the bastards wouldn't be able to use the ley lines themselves was enough to put a smile on Olga's face, regardless of her plans going forward for this youth.

As he woke, Ranma instantly began to wiggle, his eyes opening. Ranma's first view though was into Olga's cleavage, a sight that caused his whole body to freeze. The cleavage was mostly covered now, and yet several of the buttons on her blouse were open to let Olga breathe. After seconds of gawking, Ranma pulled away quickly pushing out of Olga's arms entirely to look wildly around before gazing back up at Olga's face. "I, I wha..."

Seeing the boy blushing bright red in the light of her staff, all red cheeked and wide-eyed, it was all Olga could do not to guffaw as Ranma cursed. "Holy hell, it wasn't a dream! I... I have **so many** questions. Why did you, why did they why am I, what did I just see..."

Olga laughed, leaning down causing Ranma to back away even more out of her arms entirely, until his back hit the wall. However, he didn't try to move side-by-side, staring back at her mesmerized. "To answer your last question first, why did you see what you did a little while ago, well, I neglected to think that you would be waking up anytime soon. Why, was the view so horrible?"

If anything, Ranma's blush deepened, but he widely shook his head, staring up at her in awe. That look, coupled with the compliment that Ranma had given her back in her throne room caused Olga to smile. This boy wasn't just young, he was a true innocent, just realizing that the opposite sex was interesting without any idea why. *Excellent. All the better to mold him. Whatever this boy is, he is too unusual, too powerful for me to want to let loose. Especially given our current dire straits.*

"Why are you? I assume you mean why was I carrying you? Well, I wasn't about to let you back in my front room when we had to retreat from the Black Dogs."

"Those humans and other creatures. Okay, that that makes sense," Ranma mumbled, trying and failing to pull his eyes away from Olga's, because the moment he did, they would go somewhere else on her body. And while Ranma **definitely** enjoyed the view, he was also equally certain that he shouldn't. It made him feel funny, both in his head and in body and he wasn't certain he liked it. "I have even more questions about that, but why did you... why did you..."

"Why did I kiss you? That was just a little present to my savior. After all, without you, those creatures and men would have captured both myself and my companion, Cloe. Why, did

you not like it?" Although it had been many centuries since she'd last had to use her feminine wiles to get her way, Olga found that it was coming back to her remarkably easily, and the pout she gave was masterful. "Why, did you not like it?"

"No I, I really I mean..." Ranma stammered. "I've, I've seen people kiss before, but I've never, I've never had one."

His voice was so loud that ahead of them, Chloe heard it, although not the actual words, rather the mumble of conversation. The blonde dark elf frowned, and turned back towards her mistress, a dagger already in her free hand.

"Oh then it pleases me that I was the first. Would you like another?" Olga asked, leaning down so that her forehead rested against Ranma's, her arms still around the boy as she knelt in front of him.

Ranma nodded before he could think about it, and instantly Olga turned her head leaning forward. Once more, her lips connected to Ranma's and not in a peck this time. Instead, they pressed there, moving against Ranma's own lips, subtly pressing in, creating an incredibly pleasant sensation. Ranma's eyes first widened, then slowly closed. He felt Olga's arms around his body, and hesitantly raised his own, putting them around Olga, hugging her to him, pressing her chest into his despite the difference in their heights.

If Olga had been wearing what she had been wearing before, the overload of sensation might well have knocked Ranma back out. But as it was, the kiss and a hug were things Ranma never experienced before. And he was able to stay conscious, feeling and enjoying the sensations.

Olga's eyes widened in surprise when Ranma's arms went around her, but then she smiled, and closed her eyes, enjoying the kiss as Ranma began to kiss her back. The boy was clumsy at first, but certainly a quick learner, and as she knew there would be, there was quite a **lot** of strength in that grip. *He may be a boy, but a boy is a father to the man, and I can mold this boy, oh yes!* She thought once more, smirking a little at having her own superstrong bodyguard boy toy. *I would never set Chloe aside, but it would certainly free her up to do other tasks for me.*

She was about to deepen the kiss when a shriek of, "Let my mistress go you dirty human!" came from the side. Something flew through the air an instant later, a dagger hurled with unerring accuracy through the tunnel towards Ranma's head.

Ranma moved as fast as a cat. Grabbing Olga even tighter, he avoided thinking about her boobies pressing into him, twisting around so that the two of them rolled on the ground.

So quickly did they roll that Olga didn't even feel the stone underneath them.

Ranma set Olga aside and then bounced up and over another throne dagger, pushing off of the ceiling of the tunnel and down into Chloe's face. "I don't know what your problem is lady, or what you were just shouting! But throwing's daggers and stuff at me, that's just asking for trouble!"

"Die humaERRK!" Chloe quickly grabbed at the seax at her side, but before she could draw it, Ranma stomped down on her hand on the hilt, shoving it back into the scabbard.

He even waggled a finger in front of her face before his other leg came up in a kick, which Chloe barely blocked with the arm that held the shield. Ranma used that kick to flip himself back up into the air again, and bounced once more off of the roof until he was behind her.

Chloe twisted around, once more trying to pull out her sword, but again Ranma slammed it back into its sheath with a palm strike, rising up into another punch to her chin that the blonde elf girl barely evaded. "I ain't stupid lady, you ain't gonna pull that sword on me.

She was able to kick out though, causing Ranma to block the blow with his hands, pushing off the kick and rolling away to come to his feet nearby.

Ranma smirked, crouching down his arms out to either side as he continued the anything goes taunting attack. Says he didn't know anything about his opponent, he had to fall back on a few all-encompassing taunts rather than specifics, but the general gist of the anything goes taunting technique didn't change: make 'em mad, make 'em stupid. "But hey, if you wanna fight, I'm all for it. You're so slow it won't be much of a match anyway, and your strikes look like yer trying ta master Drunken Fist!"

Chloe didn't respond, simply coming in once more, now not so confident, her dagger in one hand, her other held up defensively. This caused Ranma to pout, but he moved forward to engage her still, despite some of his bruises now bothering him. *Damn, this might be tougher than I thought.*

Luckily for Ranma, the fight ended at that point.

"Enough!" Olga barked, shaking her head as she got between the two of them. "Chloe, I was the one who initiated contact with Ranma. Ranma, this is my bodyguard, Chloe. She is unused to seeing me being so... friendly.... with someone."

Ranma frowned at that, a portion of himself not really liking that phrase, but not certain why he didn't like it. Still, he held up his hands, then put them back in his pockets, something that Olga noted with interest. She had not seen things like that. Small pouches sown into pants large enough for your hands? Ingenious.

“Fine, I won’t start anything unless she does. But how come she can’t understand me like you can? Isn’t there a magic spell for that.” Ranma paused, looking at Olga quizzically and for the first time without blushing in any way. ‘I’m right about that right, I didn’t dream that ya could use magic or somethin’?”

“Aww, already wondering if meeting me was a mix between dream and reality?” Olga teased, only to blush faintly as Ranma nodded firmly.

“Yep. I’ve seen elves and people like you and games and stuff from where I am from, but there’s never been anyone as good-looking as you and any of them. So, meeting a girl as pretty as you in a dream made a lot more sense to me than anything else. And even with that part being real, the idea that magic is real to kind of seems like a little too much, I suppose.”

The way he said this, the compliment coming out so forthright and honest got past Olga’s normal defenses against flowery words and everyday compliments. For a moment, Olga forgot that she was going to use this boy regardless of his personality and the fact that he might be human despite earlier words to Chloe, and simply smiled at him. “Well, thank you for your words, Ranma. But yes, magic is real here.”

Ranma tried hard not to look at Olga’s lips, or really her entire face at that point. The elf woman’s face had transformed as she smiled, becoming even prettier for a moment than it had been right before she kissed him. This was something that again confused Ranma, but he put that aside to ask a much more important question. “Well if magic’s real here, can’t you like, magic me the local language or something? Or better, magic me home? I mean, I don’t want to leave you in the lurch or anything, but it would be nice to know that once help you get your fortress back or whatever I can go home.”

Olga became serious then, before turning aside and ordering Chloe to pick up her daggers, and start to lead the way again. “First, the simplest answer. There is no such thing as translation spells. You can learn magic spells that will help you learn a language through reading or train information you read better. But there are no spells that will simply transcribe an entire language into someone’s mind. The human mind, and how it stores language, is far too complex for such a spell to truly work. I studied Imperial to learn your language, that is why I can speak it, not magic.”

“Mistress, what did he say?” Chloe asked, just as frustrated as Ranma or perhaps even more at the language barrier. “Both during our fight, I know he insulted me, and after...”

“Yes, he did insult you, but do not take it personally Chloe. After all, you attacked him. In addition, are people not always insulting one another in combat? I would’ve thought that you would have built up some immunity to that kind of thing,” Olga said, looking over at Chloe.

Ranma looked blankly between them, clearly not understanding the language Olga was speaking to Chloe, as he had not Chloe's words earlier. "And he was asking about a translation spell. I told him there isn't one."

Chloe nodded at that, knowing that for simple fact. She sent one glare Ranma's way, then turned and walked away further down the corridor or, looking for the first thrown daggers she'd tried to hit Ranma with.

With her bodyguard and retainer gone, Olga turned back to Ranma, leaning on her staff for a moment. It was then that Ranma noted the pack on her back, and moved over, indicating it. With a raised eyebrow, Olga shucked it off, then watched as Ranma put it on his own back, not seeming to notice the weight of it at all. Which, given the fact that he had lifted her up a moment ago to roll both of them out of the way of Chloe's daggers, did not surprise her. It was just another sign of that Ranma was very unusual for such a young boy.

"As for sending you home Ranma, that I cannot do either. For one thing, I don't know where your home is. I know I am speaking Imperial, but I do not know the precise location of that island in relation to the mainland. It is a secret that the Imperial colony here on the mainland keep, hidden behind both oaths of secrecy and the magic of your people."

Ranma's eyes widened at that, then narrowed. "Ya know, I'm almost certain I would've heard about elves, orcs and other creatures existin' on the mainland. I might not've been the best student, but even so. Heh, if that kind of thing was part of my history lessons, I sure would've paid more attention," he chuckled, shaking his head.

"Quite probably. In fact, I am wondering if Imperial here is not quite the same as what you are speaking. Some of your words and phrases are off slightly from what I learned. But tell me, what can you remember of how you appeared in my throne room?"

Ranma hopped in place for a bit, getting used to the weight of the pack on his back, as Chloe returned. He grinned at her cheekily, causing Chloe to growl at him, but Ranma simply smirked back, thinking she was acting pretty much like some of the martial arts students he had met in his travels. The ones who had already established themselves as either heirs to the school or somewhere high up in the hierarchy of the dojo or temple. That kind of people didn't really like it when Ranma came by, because it really messed up their view of the world. *That, or she's just jealous about the fact that I got a kiss from Olga and she didn't.* Either way, Ranma knew how to deal with jealousy. Make the jealous person angrier and thus easier to beat.

A cough and a gentle wrap on the shoulder from her staff caused Ranma's attention turned back to Olga. When she spoke, she first did so in the native tongue, then in Imperial. "Chloe, please don't aggravate our little savior here. As human as he looks, he still saved us. We need to remain aware of that. Ranma, please don't go out of your way to anger Chloe. She has been my loyal retainer and friend for centuries."

Ranma nodded, noting that elves really did live a long time, just like in the games he remembered. "Fine, I won't anger her so long as she doesn't attack me again."

"That sounds perfectly reasonable to me. Now, answer my questions. Tell me how you arrived where you did."

Ranma hesitated, knowing how bad it would look if he told the full story, but realizing that only by telling the full story could he maybe get some help to return home. As he told Olga, he wasn't going to just rush away and leave even if that was on offer. Olga, and Chloe, yes, looked as if they needed help. Ranma also knew that helping other people was part of the martial artist's Code. While his father had never been big about teaching him that kind of thing, almost all of the Masters Ranma had interacted with beyond him had, and he had absorbed it like a sponge, much like everything else to do with the Art.

But that didn't mean he wasn't concerned about the only people he had met turning their backs on him if they learned he was here, because a goddess got angry with him and his Old Man trying to steal from the temple. "Will you, will you promise not to not to hate me when you hear?"

"I promise I will listen with an open mind to whatever you say," Olga said, hiding a pensive frown at Ranma's words. *Now, is this just a young boy's overreaction or a hint of something worse?*

Ranma hesitantly told the story as the two of them walked slowly along, with Olga deliberately dragging her steps so that she could get the full story out of Ranma before they reached the exit. It worked, and the story he told her was just as strange and unusual as Olga had feared.

For one thing, the goddess he described sounded something like the twin goddess Janus, but not quite. For another, Ranma was even willing to share the fact that he had heard of a voice. A voice that told him he was going where he would be useful. Which made all that even more certain that having this boy on her side was a very good idea. Everything else was easily understood. Ranma was apparently the son of a wandering martial artist, something that she knew from reading about the Imperial colonies was indeed a thing there.

The actual sect however, she did not know. She also could easily tell that Ranma was a little discomforted and quite guilty about not being able to stop his father, something Olga put a stop to. Chloe was in the distance once more, stopped by the entrance to the tunnel when Olga pulled Ranma to a stop, an arm around his shoulders. "Do not fear, Ranma. I do not judge you by your father's character. He was your family, and family will always influence you, good or ill. I am simply happy that this goddess sent you to me when and where she did."

That had implications too, both in terms of what the goddess thought was important, and who. *Me obviously, but also the Black Dogs. That... that could be very bad.*

While Ranma smiled up at her, Olga gently pushed him towards Chloe, turning to stare back the way they'd come thoughtfully for a moment, so that neither of them could see the ferocious frown on her face, or the way her hand clenched around her staff. *How did the Aberrants and the Black Dogs' open communication? How did Kiln or whatever his name was know how to somehow subsume my connection to the ley lines, slowly cutting me off from it over time? Where did he get the power to do so, and to fog my own senses at the same time? This all smacks of some greater conspiracy. Of powers moving in the dark of the Seven Kingdoms? Or... or something worse? Something this goddess Janus is worried about?*

Shaking that thought off, Olga straightened her shoulders, and turned back to her two companions. Whatever the case, her course for the moment was set. Get away from the Black Fortress, use the Blighted Lands, pass through them and secretly make her way through the human nations to see Celestine. *Easier said than done but a decent overall plan.*

She moved over to them, gently tapping both of them on the forehead one after the other with her staff. Both of them were instantly covered by a purple aura that then seeped into their skin. Olga could see Ranma's confusion but quickly explained.

"When the tunnel opens, we will be close to the Blighted Lands. It is an area of noxious fumes and gases that are deadly to all animal life. The spell I just cast on you will allow you to breathe normally. However, I will need to renew it every twelve hours." Olga frowned then, shaking her head. "Which probably means I will need to create another spell to keep track of time."

"Don't worry about that. My stomach will tell me whenever it's been that long, heck, it'll sound out every three hours precisely to tell me it's hungry again," Ranma joked.

Olga snorted at that, reflecting as she translated for Chloe that human or not, Ranma definitely was young. The thought occurred to her then, and before she moved to the entryway to open it, she decided to ask. "By the way Ranma, you mentioned your father, you didn't mention your mother at all."

"I don't know if I ever had one of those. A lot of the kids I sparred with, they said that maybe my old man 'got me on a prostitute,' whatever that means. I always thought a prostitute was a kind of rock or tree given what they were saying, and that I grew from it or something," Ranma said innocently, causing Olga to snicker, and for Chloe to snort when she translated once more.

When Olga spoke again, she spoke in her own language first then translated for Ranma as she gestured to the entryway behind her. "When I open this, it is possible that we might run into patrols from the Aberrants and Black Dogs. We have not covered all that much distance away from the Black Fortress just yet. But as I said before, we should be within sight of the Blighted Lands. They will appear to our left as a copes of trees different from the trees we will exit out into, thinner, taller, gray of oak, with a miasma of green around them.

If there are too many enemies for us to fight, when we leave this tunnel, we will retreat in that direction. The spell I just put on you will protect us, whereas the fog will kill them.”

Ranma felt a little sick at the mention of killing, his question about what ‘miasma’ meant dying in his throat as he remembered that he might well have killed a few people in the fight in the throne room and the hallway leading into it. That disturbed him, although he had always known that it was possible to use the Art in such a way. Sometimes to protect one life, you had to take someone else’s.

His father had been very clear on that, almost philosophical, a state of mind Ranma had rarely seen him in. His words of, “Sometimes boy, it comes down to you or them. Make sure it’s them. Make sure that it’s you and the people you’re trying to defend,” helped Ranma now in a way that most of his father’s words or phrases really didn’t. After a second he centered himself, nodding firmly as Olga chanted another spell, a series of passwords that opened the way forward, the stone flowing almost as if it was alive out of their way.

On the other side, the trio did indeed come out into a forest, one made of oak and further trees, visible now in the light of dawn. The first thing Ranma said when you looked at the trees was to breathe a sigh of relief, saying aloud that “It’s nice to see that wherever I am, at least the trees are the same as back home.”

On the heels of his words, several arrows flashed towards them from around the woods, followed by a series of high-pitched shrieking noises. Ranma dodged one arrow, while Olga used a shield to protect herself and Chloe. “Although being shot at by arrows is new. I mean I’ve been shot at by arrows before, part of this training thing I did once, but still.”

Olga gestured, and a sheet of flame corrupted from the end of her staff, racing towards a portion of the attacking goblins, as she ordered, “Ranma, enough talking. It’s time to fight again.”

With a grimace Ranma charged in the opposite direction of the fire that Olga had begun, hearing the screaming from those she had just burned alive. This world was a lot more violent and raw than the one he was used to. Ranma reflected that if that goddess had sent him here for a reason, maybe it was for good cause he could hope anyway, which meant saving these two women.

Chloe also raced alongside him, jutting her head to one side and then gesturing with one hand to the other and Ranma nodded, understanding what she was saying even if language was still a barrier. He went right as she went left, moving around a large boulder in the pathway of the attacking goblins over which they had been shooting blindly, hitting them as more goblins, armed with rusted swords and daggers, charged around the boulder in turn.

Faced with someone their own size, the goblins shrieked and laughed, trying to overwhelm him quickly and go on for the real prizes. "Tiny human, tiny human, die, die, easy kill. Kill him, fuck girls, yes, yes!"

This thought lasted until one of them tried to hack his head off with a sword only to see Ranma dodge easily. The goblin was still gaping when Ranma grabbed his hand and hurled the goblin up into the air as if he weighed nothing at all. Which to Ranma, they pretty much did. Goblins were wiry and quite strong for their size, yet had little to no weight to them. It was like fighting another child Ranma's age or younger.

Ranma hadn't fought anyone younger than eighteen for the last two years. He was strong for a normal sized human, even if the package was goblin-sized. "I can't tell what you punks're saying but I don't think I need ta."

A punch caved in the head of another goblin, and then Ranma leapt up into the air, dodging spears and swords alike, lashing out every few seconds and killing a goblin when he did, but mainly concentrating on dodging. These were real weapons, and while Ranma knew he was kind of durable against punches and kicks, cutting weapons was a different story. *And I'm already battered by the last fight. Can't afford to take too many hits.*

As he did, Ranma found himself taunting his enemies as he normally would, forgetting for the moment that they couldn't understand his language. "Is that it, you couldn't hit the broad side of your mom!"

Punch, a goblin sent flying into the archers behind them and the ones Chloe was cutting down methodically.

"You're green, you're ugly, come on, you gotta have something going for you don't you? Oh wait, no you don't. My bad."

Another goblin hurled onto the archers. This way Ranma kept them from firing into the melee. He even saw a few of them dying from the strikes.

"If at first you don't succeed try, try again, and what will you do, fail the third time!" A third goblin tossed onto the archers, and the last of them raced forward, pulling out small daggers to attack the small bouncing human.

"Remind me never to go to the dentists you guys do, damn your teeth are ugly. Well, all of you is ugly really, everything, top to bottom just pure ugly."

The body tossing and the sneers on his face as he did were seemingly enough on their own without even understanding the words to get the goblins riled up. Several actually pulled away from Chloe, fury at Ranma's attitude somehow overcoming their lust for her body.

Some of his insults were almost enough to cause Olga, who was still near enough to hear them, to double over in laughter. She didn't though, concentrating on retaining a shield around herself, and occasionally casting one on Chloe when she needed it. Beyond that, she remained on the sidelines. The first fireball spell she had used had wiped out her reserves than she had hoped. It would take a while for her to naturally build up her reserves, now that she had become so used to not really relying on them at all.

For her part, Chloe went about the business of cutting down the goblins with a smile of glee on her face, shrieking out challenges and imprecations along the lines of, "Is this all you have!" "Away weakling!" and so forth. It was somewhat cathartic for her, after having been completely blindsided by the troll's betrayal during the Black Dog's attack on the fortress. Nevertheless, she noticed it didn't have the same impact as Ranma's words, becoming somewhat incensed as more of the goblins turned to fight him. At first, she thought it was because he was the easier option but that did not appear to be the case.

Soon enough, all one hundred goblins were wiped out, the last six of them suddenly realizing that they couldn't hear any of their fellows around them and still embroiled in trying to slay the small jumping leaping creature.

Ranma killed two, and Chloe was on the other four even as they try to run. Daggers stabbed, blood splashed and the last one fell to a throne dagger hitting his back.

When he saw that, Ranma whistled a bit, nodding his head in approval even though he was a little leery of Chloe, given the blood splattering her right now. "Nice throw. I've never been able to get into throwing daggers, can't quite get 'em to turn fast enough or at the right angle to hit point-on. I still toss 'em hard enough to leave bruises even so, but getting a throwin' dagger point first is really hard."

"Indeed, well done Chloe. We didn't want any report of our location to get out. And well done, Ranma." Olga made her way towards them, while Chloe looked at Ranma in confused annoyance. "And before you ask Chloe, he was simply complementing you on your throwing prowess. He didn't say anything rude."

Chloe blushed at that and the praise as Olga patted her companionably on the head, causing Ranma to quip, "What, no head pats for me?"

In response, Olga reached down, gently ruffled Ranma's head, then, when her head was at the back of his skull, leaned down and gave him a full on kiss again.

He froze, his eyes widening and going to Chloe, then he tried to pull away, but Olga simply gave him a few more pecks on the cheek and face. "For you, my little savior, I will give out kisses, and perhaps more for such things," she whispered into his ear.

This caused Ranma's face to explode as he tried to figure out what more than kisses meant. But while he had heard a lot of terminology about that kind of thing from other boys, Ranma didn't really understand what they meant so his imagination just sort of turned in place for a bit even as Olga stood up and chortled, leading the way towards the Blighted Lands.

Ranma watched her go for a second, along with Chloe, then hurried to catch up, noting absently that he had fought that entire fight even with the backpack on him. *Is that how I killed that one goblin? I turned around he was already flattened.* Shaking that off, he muttered, "Why do I feel as if you're treating me more like a toy than a person?"

Olga turned at that. Smirking a little, she pressed her breasts together as she leaned down towards him, giving him a view down her cleavage. "Are you complaining, my little savior?"

Ranma gulped, unable to control where his eyes went, and simply staring, slowly shaking his head. At that, Olga straightened and moved off, chortling to herself. "I thought not." *Heh, while a part of this is necessity, I have to admit, this seems like it is going to be quite fun.*

She was about to put an extra swing to her hips to see if she could make Ranma fall over, when she felt something, a flicker of sensation across her magical senses that indicated that someone was trying to scribe their location. With a wave of her staff and a brief flair of power, she blocked the attempt, but she was grim as she moved on, heading into the miasma. "Come, I want to put at least ten miles between the edge of the Blighted Lands and where we choose to rest tonight. If we can, the Blighted Lands themselves will protect us from anyone coming after us again."

OOOOOOO

"Well, that didn't last very long, although it did tell me at least a few things." The tone was almost whimsical, and a smile lurked underneath her was as Celestine Lucullus turned to her close friend, Claudia.

Celestine was a light elf, another race of elves, who had, instead of delving into the ground as Olga's ancestors had, learned to work with trees and forests, to harness the magic of air and light, rather than darkness and earth in the ancient past. Her skin was the color of fresh milk, her eyes a deep blue, her ears a little longer than those of a dark elf. Cascading down her back and shoulders, Celestine's hair was a gold colored river.

As they were inside her castle, Celestine's raiment was a simple white, almost see through shift at present. It was so see-through; her companion could see where her skin changed color around her nipple. Beyond a small bracelet, the only other thing Celestine wore was a light blue sash around the middle that was keeping her shift closed, a task that was pushing its capabilities to the limits given the size of Celestine's bust, which was among the largest in the known world. Indeed, she was a bit larger than even Olga, her ancient friend.

And although she was also the leader of the Seven Shields and the nations they represented in their war against the dark elves and the Aberrants, it was that ancient friendship, which made Celestine smile now. "Whatever is going on that I sensed in the Black Fortress, Olga has escaped from it. I don't know where she is going to, nor will I discover now that she knows I can scry her away from the Black Fortress. But that at least I was able to see."

"You say that as if it's a good thing Celestine-sama. I don't have to remind you that we haven't had any communication from the Black Dogs since they entered the Blighted Lands. If Olga has left the Black Fortress, then it stands to reason that she beat off the secret attack and could be mounting an offensive. An offensive, which with the Black Dogs having assigned most of their forces to the assault through the Blighted Lands, we might be ill-prepared to face."

The speaker was a female Knight in heavy armor named Claudia Levantine, who wore her armor even here at a tea table in the center of Celestine's gardens. That armor was not like any armor Ranma would call such, since it had far more armor on the shoulders and lower legs than anywhere else, barely covering her chest, which was quite large. Not on the scale of Olga let alone Celestine's but large for a human even of her height, which was formidable at six feet five. Below that, a short skirt barely covered her equally bare panties. Her hair was currently up in a tight bun, but despite that and her formal tones, there was something soft and kind about her face as she looked over the table at her friend and leader.

Near to middle age for a human woman, Claudia took her duties as one of the Seven Shields extremely seriously, and was the overall commander of their united forces a duty that she had taken over from her father-in-law, Grave. A Redoubtable general, Grave had led the armies alongside the Seven Shields for years, before first adopted and then training Claudia to take his place. He had even going so far as to have his son marry her.

This was because his son, Klaus, was not a warrior. In fact, he wasn't very physically capable at all. Born sickly, with an ailment of the body that had him age far faster than he should, Klaus looked almost as old as his father did despite being only twenty-nine to his father's sixty, and was far less energetic. He was a scholar, a reader and analyst, his work important throughout the Seven Kingdoms. However, that hardly mattered to his father, who only saw the marshal pride of his family in danger of dying out with every year that Klaus wasn't able to get a child upon Claudia.

Shaking that observation off, Celestine turned her thoughts to what her best friend had said. "True. And yet, I do not think that Olga is in any position of power at present, regardless of whatever happened during the assault on the Black Fortress. She was being attacked by goblins, her and her two companions. At this distance, and still so close to the Black Fortress, I wasn't able to make out much detail of the battle but I did see who the combatants were at least."

And I don't know what that short black haired individual was. A halfling of some kind is Olga's employee? He fought in a style that is entirely different from anything I've ever seen before, from what I could see anyway. But Luu Luu could perhaps pull it off. The other one must

be Chloe. I've had reports about her from various officers who have fought in the front lines but I've seen no reports about the strange halfling youth.

Celestine smiled as a bird alighted on the table in front of her, warbling at her, and she responded, her throat making the same noise as the bird for a moment. She and Claudia had removed themselves from her castle and throne room out into the gardens where Celestine preferred to spend most of her time earlier. While the ruler of the Seven Shields and a religious figure, she was that reluctantly, and much preferred to leave the day-to-day running of things to the church and the bureaucracy.

Claudia watched this with a faint smile, lifting her hand to her cheek as she watched her friend talk excitedly to the bird, wondering what the two are saying for a moment, always amused by how Celestine was, well, a bit of an airhead. She was often easily distracted by cute things, children most of all. There was many a time that as her chief bodyguard, leader of the Dawn Knights, Claudia had become frantic with worry about where her charge had gone. Only to find her out in the streets of the city, sitting and watching a play with children, or in a park, playing around with them, talking merrily with their mothers and parents, utterly ignoring the awed looks the crowd gave her. It made Celestine beloved by the civilians for her own right above and beyond her station as the center of the Larentia Religion, but it made Claudia's job quite hard occasionally.

And it doesn't help matters that nearly all of the servants, male or female, have crushes on her, and can refuse her little to nothing. Celestine's innocence, her general positivity and good humor along with her frankly otherworldly attractiveness had a lot to do with why Celestine was the object of personal worship as well as religious.

Not that Celestine seemed to notice most of the time. Mostly, anyway. She did occasionally play small, dirty little pranks on her closest maids and Claudia. Coming out of a bath naked, or taking overlong to get dressed, letting the maid in question, or Claudia, see far more than was appropriate. Not that any of them complained. Not even Claudia, a married woman could bring herself to do so. Celestine was so beautiful she could make a straight woman think twice.

The bird eventually flew away, and Celestine turned back to the object of hand without even needing to be prompted for once. "I think we can assume that, while the Black Dogs might not have succeeded entirely, they have at least taken the fortress. Why they have yet to contact us I do not know, but without that fortress, Olga will not have the magical power to keep the Aberrants in check. But without the dark elves, the Aberrants will not fight like a unified force..."

Celestine paused, frowning and looking over at her friend thoughtfully. "If the Aberrants begin to attack again, with the Black Dogs not on the front lines, Alicia and Prim's countries are the ones most in danger. Meet with Grave later today. The two of you will split the Army of Ken and Geofu in two and reinforce Alicia and Prim's nations."

Ken and Geofu were two of the seven human nations. Ken was Celestine's nation, and was almost equally populated by humans and elves. Geofu had started as a colony of Ken, and, while essentially a separate city state, the two nations had never really separated their militaries, church or nobility. Geofu had a separate merchant class and bureaucracy, but that was all.

"Grave will go to Prim, and you to Alicia. While Alicia respects Grave, I am afraid that she does not respect him as much as she respects you, her teacher. You might need to sit on her a bit. That girl is far too quick to toss her duties as a princess aside to help Prim. I love the sentiment and their familial connection. But it can get in the way of her other duties."

"True enough," Claudia agreed reluctantly, knowing that was a fair assessment of her protégé. "I also approve of how close they are, but Alicia's overprotectiveness has gotten her into trouble in the past. And I also note that you're not sending Maia to help either."

"Alicia and Maia get along like oil and water, and while their spats are somewhat amusing to watch, I don't think this is the time for it," Celestine giggled, before slowly her giggles faded away and she frowned, tapping the desk thoughtfully. "I think however, that Maia is going to have problems of her own. The Black Dogs had brought quite a lot of the other mercenary bands into their own banner over the past few years, and a lot of that manpower was taken into the Blighted Lands on this assault, leaving Rad nearly defenseless. As we still don't know what exactly happened, we need to prepare for the worst."

"And the worst when it comes to Maia is that she will not have enough manpower to protect even the small slice of Rad, which abuts the border zone," Claudia said with a nod. Really, the worst would be that Maia, faced with the death of her old lover, not so secret at all crush, Vult would collapse. If Maia did so near Alicia, well, Alicia had never really liked the Black Dogs or their leader. She also looked down on Maia quite a bit for her own lowborn background. *Oil and water indeed.*

"You cannot tell anything about what has happened in the Black Fortress? I thought that its defense against scrying was a thing that Olga had created," Claudia questioned aloud, even as a portion of her mind began to organize the coming campaign.

"I thought so as well. But it seems that was not the case. The Black Fortress itself blinds my senses." *That, or some other power is taken over the Black Fortress, another dark elf commander perhaps? One who took the opportunity to finish ousting Olga after she had been weakened by the Black Dogs' attack?* "We just don't know enough about what has happened there to really speculate. But I would rather prepare for the worst and be proven wrong."

She then bit into a cookie, her face lighting up with a smile and a loud, "**MMM,**" which completely dispelled the seriousness of the moment. Seeing that, Claudia sighed with fond exasperation, before she stood up bowed and left the garden, intent on her new task.

Terror, Celestine chewed thoughtfully on the biscuit, thinking about what else her goddess type senses were telling her. None of it had anything to do with Olga, or the black fortress as far as she could tell. However, there was something different about the world. Something different on a fundamental level now, on the level of death and rebirth, as fundamental as the very rules of the world itself. As the Goddess Reborn, she could feel such changes, but because Lucullus had decided to subsume her own personality into Celestine's, she lacked the understanding to figure out what was changing. Yet she could tell there was something there that had not been, a new addition maybe? She couldn't quite figure it out.

OOOOOO

The goddess who had sent Ranma to Eos had done so with malice aforethought. Eos was a world that was constantly teetering on the brink between sensuality and raw bestial lust. It had always been a planet that was far more open about sexuality than Ranma's birth world ever was in any of its iterations. Well, save in one where Gilgamesh actually married Ishtar when she came to him and together, they created a hedonistic empire that lasted for thousands of years.

There was a vast difference between enjoying the female form, enjoying looking at the female form, being open to sex as a libertine would, to wanting it all the time as ravening beasts like the Aberrants did. Of course, there were other fundamental forces, chaos, order, nature and so forth, but they were small change in comparison. Therefore, it was mainly these two types of power that ruled, that influenced how people thought and acted.

Yet there was also a creature on Eos. A creature left over from the age of the gods, who, although chained, was able to send its feelings and impressions abroad into willing minds, who had created the Aberrants in the dawn of time, then hidden them away to let them grow in number until it was right to let them flee.

In addition, without any gods or goddesses around to actively combat the creature's influence, it was only a matter of time before that influence began to spread, even if its chosen creatures couldn't. Vult might have thought that he had been the one to come up with the idea of a Cuntry, might have thought that he was the one who had enough charisma to gather the allies he did. He was wrong. All of them were being influenced in turn by this being,

But now, to combat this influence, which was so subtle that even Celestine, with her goddess given powers of observation couldn't discover it, another force came. Chaos. For Ranma was what was called a Chaotic Font, a human who was aligned so much with one of the natural powers of the universe that he actually created it around himself. And indeed even the method in which he arrived added more chaos, allowed the goddess to enhance that aspect, so much so that his arrival began to create ripples, and those ripples became even more chaotic seeming events.

These ripples began around where Ranma had arrived. But they would spread as he travelled, eventually even reaching Celestine's position of power in Ken.

OOOOOO

At the same time the trek into the blighted lands began, the dark elves began to react to the news sent to them by Olga's magical messengers. Most of the time the reaction was shock, horror and then instant obedience. However, humans did not have a monopoly on individuals who liked to try to place blame first and foremost when a crisis began. And if someone had an ax to grind already, that was only exasperated. Olga had made enemies among her own people with some of the decision she had made over the centuries, after all.

One dark elf who took serious exception to the news was a large, powerfully built woman. She was so tall that even Olga would have seemed short in comparison, her muscles bulging almost as if she had control blood. She wore full metal plate, the kind that European knights would wear barring a helmet. Her face was striking, good-looking in a way, she did have some curves to her, as shown by the gentle changes made to her armor. But one could not call her any great beauty.

"I knew it!" she thundered, bringing down one fist on the table in front of her so violently that it cracked under her fist, causing all the other dark elves around the table to flinch backward. "I knew that Olga's plans with the Aberrants would come back to bite us in the ass!"

"N, now Trillo, that's not really the case, now is it? It is in these Black Dog Mercenaries that..."

"And that's another thing!" Trillo shouted, beginning to pace, interrupting the four older looking dark elf somewhat rudely in his opinion. "How in the hell did some misbegotten human band of mercenaries take the Black Fortress! Is it just because Olga was betrayed by her own creatures or is it because she's incompetent? I knew I should have been made the leader of our people!"

"At the time, we had learned that we could not match the humans in open warfare," another dark elf said, his voice more tired than anything else. "You know that Olga's plans and her magic were the only things that staved off our outright conquest by them. Nor can you say that she lacked for courage. She did after all except any requests to challenge her position at the time. You cannot let your past grievances with Olga from when you are children get in the way of seeing she did do magnificently as our leader for many centuries."

"Bah, she only beat me in that contest because she cheated using magic!" Trillo growled back, shaking her head. "An honorable warrior would know when not to use such tricks!"

The dark elves around the table glanced at one another, then glanced at the towering mass of muscles and metal that was Trillo, as one thinking, *You have got to be kidding me.*

“But now? Now that she’s led our people into this disaster? When we have Aberrant forces throughout our own territory? Now she can’t remain our leader. Now I get to challenge her! I’ll show you! Also everyone. Strength! Discipline! The rule of steel! That is what true power is. Just you wait Olga, I will have my revenge!”

OOOOOOO

Walking through the Blighted Lands was kind of boring for Ranma, appalled by how slowly the two dark elves were moving. Even battered how he was, Ranma could easily have made Olga’s ten miles before lunch, according to his stomach anyway.

Chloe at least had an excuse. She had a backpack on, and it was very clear that she was holding her pace to that of Olga. But Olga, despite having the right equipment for it, and having stayed in shape over the centuries, hadn’t actually been hiking or walking for long periods of time in many a decade. Her feet were simply not used to the punishment, and even with soft socks, there is only so much that the boots she wore could do.

Only about 5 miles had gone by before she started to develop her first blister. A mile after that, she nearly twisted an ankle putting her foot down wrong between a few tree roots. By the time the sun began to set, Ranma felt they’d come around six of the ten miles, but it was very clear that Olga couldn’t keep up even this slow pace.

At first, Ranma hadn’t been bothered by the slow pace, really. It allowed him to question Olga about the world in general and everything else. She was forthright about being in war with other humans, before adding that none of the humans in this world could do what Ranma had done or at least not at such a young age. “While you are not a match for one of the Seven Shields except perhaps Prim, the youngest, you are just as obviously far above a normal fighter. You could not, say, take on Vult, the large man who led the Black Dogs that you emasculated, in a straight fight. But, I think you could fight almost everyone below that level of power and skill. And you’re so young! No child human or otherwise on this world could be that strong.”

Ranma wasn’t certain about that, but what he became very certain of was that whatever this place was, it wasn’t Earth. There was no way that a place that relied on swords and sorcery could have existed on earth without being discovered. Or leaving some evidence behind, in case Ranma had somehow been sent back in time. He had seen that used in a few games that the youngsters who introduced him to called isekai. No, this was another type of isekai, the alternate dimension type.

When he again broached the subject of how he could get home, Olga told him bluntly that it was probably impossible. “You were brought here by the grace of a goddess, which implies both distance and power. Were I still in control of the Black Fortress, I perhaps might have had the power to send you somewhere, but the specific where you came from?”

Seeing Ranma's confused face, Olga tried to explain using an analogy that the youth would understand. "Imagine each dimension is a bubble. Inside one dimension, you might be able to see another for certain. But being able to reach out and connect your bubble to another is incredibly difficult. Hence power."

Ranma nodded indicating he understood, and she went on. "But discovering, which bubble to send you to, is impossible. There are far too many bubbles, and you cannot figure out what each one is until you interact with it. We could try for millions of years and still not find the specific bubble you were from."

That made some sense to Ranma, and honestly, after getting over the initial shock, Ranma decided he was okay with it. Not fine exactly, but willing to drop the matter of going home it was that impossible. The only person he had back there was his father, and Ranma had recently begun wondering if he could eventually leave his father due to the man's dishonorable deeds over the years. Leaving him behind like this was a little more permanent than Ranma had anticipated, but he could roll with that.

Two other things were bothering him though, or really, one thing was bothering him, while the other he was having trouble figuring out. In this case, it was not the same thing.

The thing that was bothering him was how easily he had taken to killing in this world. The goblins and other Aberrant creatures he could almost ignore, they weren't human, and barely seemed above the level of beasts, except that they were able to use swords and stuff. But killing humans that bothered him a lot more. At least two, maybe as many as four of the Black Dogs had died to his hands during the battle in the throne room and the hall. *That wizard, for certain.* And more than once, during the first few hours of walking through the Blighted Lands, Ranma's mind went back to that fight and his body started to shiver.

Yet Ranma knew it had been him against them, and every time he thought about that fight, his father's words on that score came back to Ranma, helping him push through. He couldn't say he was fine with it, and Ranma dreaded what he would see when he closed his eyes tonight but he could keep going.

The other thing that Ranma was having trouble figuring out was Olga, and her constant touchiness. He liked it, he liked it a **lot**. Not just the kissing and stuff, but the touches, the smiles. His father had never gone into hugs or anything like that, and getting that kind of stuff from a woman who was as amazing looking as Olga was way better than even being told he did a good job learning a kata.

Ranma didn't really understand what was going on. Was this that romance thing that he'd occasionally heard other men and women talk about back home? Was his body supposed to respond the way it was to her kisses, her touches, looking at her? Ranma didn't like feeling weird or out of sorts, but that was what he was feeling when around Olga. It was amazing, fun,

and Ranma really liked Olga's kisses, liked her smell, liked being around her. But he didn't really understand what was going on well enough to be all together comfortable with it.

Unfortunately for Ranma, that uncomfortable sensation was going to continue. As the sun began to set in the North from his current position, Ranma looked over at Olga and back over his shoulder at Chloe. "I'm going to find a tree to climb, I think we need to find a place to make camp for the night. Unless you think you can push through your feet and that ankle bothering you, Olga?"

"I don't think I can, but thank you for thinking about it." Olga smiled, ruffling the youth's hair and making to lean down and kiss him. He blushed, stammered and shifted away, heading towards a nearby tree with a mutter of 'I'll be back under her breath.'

Olga frowned a bit. She had decided to come clean about the issues between her people and the humans. Knowing that once they snuck through to meet with Celestine, it would only be a matter of time, and not very much time and that, before Ranma learned about the state of war that existed between the Seven Shields Nations and her own dark elves. Better to come from her than from the humans after all. But since, Ranma had attempted occasionally to put some distance between them. It was evident that he was a little thrown off on that score, despite her firm opinion that he wasn't human as the locals understood the term.

That, and Olga could see questions about her own dealings with the Aberrant's building up behind his eyes. But it was also very clear that Ranma could not control his own responses to her touches and kisses. It would take longer to be sure, but being open about her own situation and everything else would enable Ranma to trust her more, giving her a second string of control on the boy.

For her part though, Olga was quite pleased with their discussions. Ranma had an incredibly sharp mind for one so young. He lacked knowledge to be certain, and she felt he would lack knowledge even of his own world to a certain degree. But he seemed to understand things when they were placed in a frame of reference he could grasp. He knew what war was, and mentioned something called the world wars, which startled her, and a few other things of that nature that showed a very discerning mind. He also asked a lot of questions about magic, showing both intense interest and delight in the subject, which Olga supposed was another sign of his age.

Soon Ranma was back, pointing to their left a bit. "There's a small incline there, like an old pond that dried up. I think it's the best place were going to find as a hiding place tonight."

When he Olga explained the campsite Ranma had found, Cloe instantly shook her head. "Olga-sama, that won't do at all! That kind of thing, it's got no defenses we can use, and if it rains in the night, a former pond bed like that is going to be the first place to get muddy! I'll scout around and find us a place mistress."

When Olga translated back to Ranma this, he rolled his eyes. "If you can, cool. But nights coming on fast."

"I do believe he's challenging you my dear. Prove him wrong by finding a suitable place, would you? Even if it's further away than you think I can walk, a good hiding place with overhead cover would be best. I do not know if that Kiln character was the only mage that Vult has access to, but with the Aberrant chieftains on his side, he might be able to get the orc shamans to figure out a way to cancel the miasma over the Blighted Lands. If he does, they might come after us in force." *Or worse. I saw trolls, orcs and goblins. What if there are other Aberrant groups, which have joined Vult?*

Chloe nodded, proud and happy that her mistress was willing to trust her like that, sending a mocking sneer Ranma's way, who understood the look if nothing else. He stuck his tongue out at her, and the older girl growled, her fingers twitching, before she turned with a huff and raced off as fast as she could go while carrying her backpack.

"Are you tired yet, Ranma?" Olga said, looking at Ranma's backpack, the sight of Chloe's having reminded her that the boy had been carrying a load on his back for what amounted to more than half the day.

Ranma snorted, shaking his head. I'm fine. My Pops made me run up and down mountainsides with fifty pound backpacks on my back full of rocks. This is only what, fifteen? Easy."

"And again I see a sign that you are not human as the locals would put it," Olga quipped, shaking her head.

Ranma flinched a bit at that, then asked hesitantly, "Can I, can I ask why... I mean you told me you were at war with the humans, that the orcs and others were your allies and everything but you didn't say..."

"Chloe is a prime example of why I was at war with the humans. Before I united my people, we were a disparate group of tribes. However, those tribes were all being preyed on by the humans as their populations rose. First, they wanted our land, our mines and forests, our mountains and rivers. Then, they wanted us." She paused, then turned to Ranma, kneeling down in front of him, staring him in the eyes a faint but not altogether happy smile on her face.

For his part, Ranma couldn't stop himself from looking down her blouse for a moment, before looking back up into Olga's eyes as she spoke. "Do you like what I am doing with you? The kissing, the touching, the hugging?"

Ranma nodded frantically. "Yes! I've never.... I mean I've never been around women a lot, or ever been you know hugged a lot either, and kissing is just **wow** but..." Ranma frowned

then, his brows furling and acute expression of confusion. "But what does that have to do with the question I asked?"

"Would you like it if I was ugly? Fat, with warts on my face, maybe? Or if these were sagging to my knees?" Olga was using extreme examples here, but they certainly got across the point, and Ranma's horrified look amused her a little more despite the seriousness of the conversation. "What if you didn't have a choice? What if I took your choice away? If you rejected my advances but I tied you up and forced my kisses on you?"

At that, Ranma had to fight with some of his father's training, which told him that he should never admit weakness. That he should block it out and say that would never happen. But he understood why Olga was saying it, and after a few seconds he got the implications at once. "You mean, you mean human men, they did that kind of thing to Chloe and others?"

"Men and women both, to men and women among my people. We were not strong enough to face the humans in outright battle, and so they prayed upon us, they took members of this tribe from here, that tribe from there, enslaved them, and used my people by the thousands. I will not say that my people were entirely blameless even back then. We retaliated monstrously at times. But it was the humans who began the raiding, and was the humans who began the first war. I merely won that war, and then, the next few... Well my people are not as fertile as yours are and..."

"What's that mean?" Ranma interrupted, following the conversation as best he could but he had never heard that word before.

"Humans have far more babies than we do and far faster too," Olga stated bluntly, causing Ranma to look at her blankly for a moment, and Olga blinked, then snickered a little. *He doesn't even know that! I knew he was innocent on romance and girls in general, but not even know where babies came from?* "Babies occur when a boy and a girl really love one another Ranma," she went on dryly, inwardly snickering still. "Or sometimes even when they don't."

"Wait, you mean from kissing?" Ranma's eyes widened in horror. "Does that mean we could have!"

"No!" Olga laughed, kissing him on the nose, causing Ranma's sputtering to come to a halt in surprise. "No, no, hehehe, that, you don't have to worry about anything like that." *For at least a little while anyway.* "No, babies come from something that should be far, far more pleasant, especially if the people doing it care about one another," Olga said, leaning her forehead against Ranma's, nuzzling her nose against his as she watched the blush suffuse his features as his eyes darted down towards her cleavage again then back up to her face. "Something you and I might discover in the future."

Ranma frowned, his thoughts derailed as a part of why this was bothering him suddenly came together into actual words in his mind and he gently pulled away from Olga. "Are you, are

you just kissing me and stuff because I saved you? Or are you doing that because you're actually interested in me? Or is it just to keep me off balance?"

"That's an interesting question," Olga said, cocking her head to one side.

Ranma scoffed. "In a martial arts match, the opponents can do a lot of things to one another to try and keep one another off balance, so I gotta wonder if you're doing that to me. And I don't know why, but it feels a little wrong to let you keep on kissing me if you're just doing it because I saved you. That's part of the Code, saving people in need you know?"

Olga simply nodded her head, reflecting that in a way it was a little annoying that Ranma seemed to be such a good innocent boy. She would have had a far easier time controlling someone who was completely controlled in turn by his own lusts. But Ranma wasn't like that, and Olga found she was more than happy about that. "I can see why that would be. But no, I am actually quite interested in you, Ranma. You're intelligent, you're quite handsome and I can tell that you will grow up to be even more handsome. Why not get involved now? After all, humans and elves age at a **very** different rate. I will still look like this when you are ancient and gray."

Ranma thought about it for a moment, then slowly nodded, then more rapidly, setting aside his misgivings about what they were doing as that actually made a lot of sense to him. Olga had also been straight with him so far, even about things that put her in a bad light. Therefore, he trusted her on this score.

Not realizing that while what she had said was completely the truth, it wasn't the entire truth. That she knew that in forging a physical and emotional connection with Ranma, she would make certain that Ranma would not turn on her and would be loyal bodyguard.

Nevertheless, for right now, Ranma returned to the other conversation, asking more questions about why Olga had made an agreement with the orcs and everything else. Olga spoke of how the orcs and other Aberrants had appeared from the north and had caught her people in a vice between themselves and the humans. How in many ways the Aberrants were worse than the humans, in that their entire society seemed to exist to simply plague others. But they were simple creatures, only the brightest orcs ever truly gaining a grasp of tactical understanding, and none of them could use magic on the scale the dark elf sorcerers could.

"I slowly led my people on that front in a defensive war to close down all of the other passages through the mountains, making it impossible for even trolls to pass through. And then I claimed the Dark Fortress, which sits astride the easiest way to move north from south from the dark gnomes who controlled it, slaving and trading with everyone. With that, and my magical powers, I was able to force an agreement on the Aberrants, and used them as troops against the humans who had continued to plague my people."

Ranma frowned at that, but felt that Olga was still telling the truth. "So you were in a bad position, and tried to make the best of it? Like a martial artist caught between one gang and another, you force them to fight one another by seeming to join one side."

"Exactly," Olga enthused, smiling and ruffling Ranma's hair, using positive reinforcement again. Ranma aided up, leaning into her hand, and letting his eyes rove over her body again. "You know, you're very bright boy. That is indeed the core of the matter."

"Do you hate humans then? I would if I were you," Ranma said, appalled at the picture that Olga's simple explanation had painted in his head. To be tied down, to be forced to do something he didn't want to do, that was horrible. To have his freedom taken from him like that, to be used? Ranma couldn't even contemplate it.

"I do. I hate what they have done to my people, I hate that humans allowed their greed to blind them to, the raw evil of what humans have done to my people. I hate the depths I had to sink in order to fight them," Olga answered grimly before reaching out to touch Ranma's face forcing her own back into a gentle expression with difficulty. "But that is a general thing Ranma. I do not hate any single individual. Except Vult, now. I am... Not happy to set aside my long cherished hatreds, but I'm willing to do so, and I never hated the Seven Shields or Celestine."

Ranma released a breath he didn't even know he had been holding, and he looked so relieved that Olga chuckled, although she did not mention once more her belief that Ranma was anything but human in local terms. Instead, she simply pulled him into a hug, deliberately pressing his head into her chest, feeling a little thrill go through or at the contact. *My word, I am getting more into this than I expected.* "Do not worry little warrior, while I might have looked on you with hatred at first, even if you do turn out to be as human in the local since, I could never hate you."

Ranma hugged her back for a few moments, before wrote very reluctantly pushing away, making Olga pout again and this time not at all theatrically.

"And, the leader of the elves helping the humans, this Celestine person, you're friends with her?" Ranma asked, trying hard to concentrate on something more than Olga's curves or her lips or anything else. *And what the heck is up with my willy getting all stiff!?*

"We were once friends. Indeed, we were friends for several thousand years. But she began to befriend humans, who then began in turn to actually build a religion around her, because a goddess, like the one who sent you here, decided to be reborn within her."

Olga waited, watching Ranma, but the mention of the goddess Larentia went over his head as well as the implications of Celestine's religion. It was evident that the idea this other goddess could send him back home didn't occur to him, or he really had simply decided not to try to get home. *I hope it is the latter.* "I think that I can prevail upon her to know that it is the Aberrants that are the true threat, especially when coupled with the threat of the Black Dogs."

Seeing Ranma become confused again, she explained further. "The Black Dogs were used as a major mercenary force for a while. They will have influence and contact throughout the Seven Kingdoms, and perhaps allies. You did not understand what Vult was saying in my throne room. He was saying that he wanted to create a single nation, one that he would lead. That means that he will eventually attack the human nations."

Olga did not use the name for the country that Vult had used, thinking it too vulgar to even give lip service to. Further, she knew that Vult would have to attack. The orcs would demand no less, and he would have to give it to him them, lest he seem weak. *Especially coupled with the injuries he took from Ranma.*

That Ranma understood. He thought about it for a few moments, then nodded. "Sounds like a plan anyway. Er, do you think you can teach me magic? Because that sounds amazing! Or at least the local language? I think I'd like ta speak to other people without needing a translator."

Olga nodded. "It will be fascinating to see what kind of magic you have most aptitude towards. That is, if you have any ability to use it in the first place. Not everyone does, I will warn you. As for the local language, perhaps. I'm not exactly a good teacher with that kind of thing. We will see."

Ranma nodded enthusiastically at the idea of learning magic, and then frowned, looking around them. Darkness had fully fallen as they were talking, the only light coming from the dull red of the crystal on Olga's staff. "Should I light a torch?"

"Dark elves have much better night vision than humans. But Chloe will be able to come back and find us so long as we remain where we are," Olga demured, shaking her head.

She frowned then as she stared up into the sky, her ears caulking and a finger to her lips. Ranma instantly understood, tensing, shifting his backpack off of his shoulders to the ground quietly as he moved back towards her, whispering "What?"

"Sounds from above. I cannot discern from wh--"

Suddenly, Ranma could hear it too, screeching from above, screeching that was getting louder all the time. The objects of the screeching quickly closed, diving down towards the two individuals on the ground. Olga instantly flung up a spell that created a small solar flare above her, catching two of the diving creatures burning them to a crisp. This also illuminated the previously dark area, nearly blinding Ranma for a moment, but he was already moving, rolling around on the ground to dodge claws that would have either plucked him up or torn him asunder, Ranma wasn't certain which.

Staring at the individuals attacking them, Ranma blanched, shaking his head. "Damn, they ugly!"

“Harpies! And yes, they are ugly. They can also breathe this morass! But I had stationed all the harpies under my control on the front lines save for a group of guards on the Blighted Lands. I suppose we are seeing the reason why they never gave me warning of the invasion. They had already been suborned,” Olga said, mostly to herself as she grimaced a little with effort. Once more a shield rose around her, gleaming with enough light to let Ranma see by even as the solar flare faded. “Don’t let them grab you and drag you into the air.”

Ranma didn’t need to be told twice, and when a harpy came towards him again out of the dark beyond the light show that Olga was putting on, Ranma jumped to meet them. Smashing the two talons out of the way, flipping himself up and giving the harpy, a mix between ugly woman and uglier bird, a mule kick to the face. The creature’s neck snapped, and she flopped, all aerodynamics gone. But Ranma was already also gone, using the momentum of that double kick to flip down back to the ground where he rolled, dodged another attack, then leaped up, kicking out.

Ranma’s ability to just jump around like this seemed to flummox the harpies for a few seconds but they responded faster than most opponents, now aiming to attack him, while in midair.

This proved to be mistake, as Ranma was as at home in the air as they were. He used each failed strike or near miss to grab, twist, and leap around, kicking out, punching hard, he sent three more harpies to the ground, followed by a fourth in rapid succession, although he took a cut along one arm as he did. “I might not be as good at this as my old man, but you all are too dang fragile to hang with me! And too ugly! I mean seriously! Any of you lot look into a freaking mirror it’d crack for fear of yer face.”

“You do know they can’t understand you?” Olga asked, trying to aim at one of the harpies, not willing to use a large spell to target the crowd among them. She was honestly grateful that Ranma couldn’t understand the harpies. Their comments on him were both ribald and disturbing even to her. *I knew they were as discontent with some of my orders as the orcs, but this much!?*

“Meh, then I just need to—” Ranma grimaced as a claw cut through his shirt into his back. “Need to use more body language.”

With that, Ranma began to make faces at the harpies, but he quickly became to pressed to do more. The harpies were fragile sure, but they were quick in the air, and there were a lot of them. While he was used to fighting multiple opponents, even in midair, his father was very clear on that, and had trained him in the Anything Goes Aerial Style, since before Ranma could walk in a straight line, he wasn’t used to facing so many enemies with claws. He was beginning to be cut up around the edges, not to the point of really being debilitating, but it was adding up quickly. Soon dozens of oozing cuts covered his body, but he had kept any from tagging his face or neck just yet.

As Ranma fell silent, Olga started to launch spells, aiming at single harpies now. Though, Olga was beginning to get worried. *I can only hope these harpies didn't report our location yet.*

A blow sent one harpy reeling, and Ranma wasn't quite fast enough to use the momentum from that punch to twist around into another attack. Instead of his next attack landing, he found it missing, and his leg being snatched by a harpy's claws. The harpy flipped around, and began to wing upwards with him in her claws screeching victoriously.

"Oh hell no ugly, you ain't feeding me to yer cannibal kids or whatever!" Desperately Ranma pulled out a small knife that he had taken from the supplies during a stop, and tossed it upwards. It didn't hit point first, but the hit also took the harpy woman in the face, right to the side of her nose and under one eye.

The harpy screeched, and one leg released, allowing Ranma to kick out at the other one, his other foot coming up and catching her right above the claw.

Then he was plummeting downwards, and several other harpies were coming up in his direction. "Yeah, that, that's right, come up to me, I need ya to help my fall..." Ranma said, beating down his sudden concern at seeing the shiny silhouette of Olga's shield so far below him.

As he was thinking that, four of them fell to arrows from the side as Chloe, having seen the spellcasting, returned.

That seemed to do it for the harpies, who quickly began to beat a hasty retreat.

This in no way was a good thing for Ranma, who was still high in the air, and he yelped as he began to fall through with no enemy coming up to him to help Ranma slow his fall. "OH my fucking AGGHH!!!"

A bubble of air formed around Ranma, slowing his dissent and pulling him towards Olga.

"Olga-sama, are you all right!? Those dirty harpies didn't touch you did they! All of them down and..." Chloe asked racing forward. Two more Harpies died as she ran to her bow.

"They didn't touch me Chloe, thank you. Ranma once again stood as my shield while you were away. I hope that you are able to find a place for us to stay?" Olga questioned, the shield around her fading. She didn't notice how Chloe seemed to puff herself up in jealousy for a moment, which went away as Olga reached out a hand and absentmindedly touched her shoulder in thanks. "Your return was well-timed. Any longer, and my magical reserves might well have begun to fade. Is going to have to be something I am aware of going forward."

Chloe nodded, then shifted away, hurrying back to where she had left her backpack upon getting near the fight. As she did, Olga finished bringing Ranma towards her, sitting him down on the ground, the bubble of air around him popping. "Are you alright, Ranma?"

"A lot of scratches, a few bruises to go with the collection from earlier. Nothing major," Ranma bluffed, although the totality of the injuries he had taken since arriving in this world were now beginning to really bother him. *Nothing deep or any broken bones, but lots of bruises and now a lot of cuts.* "And thanks for the save. If not for your spell, I would've gone splat."

Olga smirked at that, shaking her head. Seeing the youngster standing there, blood oozing from enough cuts to make a warrior cringe and yet still trying to bluff it out was oddly cute. "You're very welcome. And how do you thank your savior, hmm~~?"

That line was too much for even Ranma, socially ignorant though he might be, to ignore. With a faint flush on his peak features, he stepped closer to the far taller Olga, and when she leaned down, gave her a kiss on the lips.

Olga, however, was not going to allow this to be a simple peck, and her arms moved around Ranma, as she knelt down once more in front of him, opening her mouth slightly to let her tongue slide out and touch his lips. Ranma gasped, his eyes going wide in the darkness, but then Olga's tongue was in his mouth, snaking around his own. The sensations Ranma was feeling now were like nothing he had ever felt before, even the other kisses he'd had with Olga throughout the day hadn't prepared him for this.

The young boy found himself overwhelmed, but fought against the feeling, knowing that this was some kind of new battlefield. He couldn't just let Olga's tongue do whatever it wanted. He had to do something too. Hesitantly at first, then with more force, Ranma's tongue began to slide along Olga's, then back into her mouth, causing Olga to hum appreciatively,

My word, he is a fast learner! Yes, I truly think I will be enjoying this just as much for his own sake, above using it as a way to control Ranma. Yes indeed, mmm... Olga enthused. That it had been a long few centuries since she'd had a lover was something she didn't want to contemplate right now.

This emboldened Ranma more. His arms went around her, one arm over around her shoulders, the other further down, very close to her rear. Ignoring the pain from his body at his various wounds being touched, Ranma leaned into the kiss even more, concentrating on his tongue, moving it this way and that against Olga's like two sword fencers he had seen once in a movie.

The sound of boots nearby caused Olga to pull away, licking Ranma's tongue as it came out of his mouth questing after her own. "There are **many** ways to kiss little hero, and I look forward to showing you them all," she whispered, licking her lips before her tongue, which she

noted Ranma was now staring at, was pulled back into her mouth. "But come, let us find the hiding place that Chloe has discovered for us."

She then looked his body up and down, thick lips pursed in a scowl. "And when we get there, I will need to put salve on those scratches from the harpies. They are very, very dirty birds indeed, and often their scratches carry disease."

It took Ranma a moment to collect himself, but when he did, he scoffed, pushing through his blush and the weird issues he was having with his willy. "Bah! I haven't been sick in my entire life, not even after being bitten by a few rats once. But if you think so, that's fine."

"Oh? Does that mean you don't want my hands on your body?" Olga teased, wondering how Ranma would react.

Rather than the idea going over his head as she had thought it might, Ranma seemed to think about it, then, greatly daring, looked Olga up and down again. "I, um, I think I'd enjoy it more if I was the one doing it to ya instead. I gotta imagine you'd feel a lot better than I would."

Although simply said, this line drew a faint blush and a laugh from Olga even as Chloe rejoined them.

However, they ran into a problem then. Having had to move around several times in the fight as her shield faded, Olga had exacerbated her ankle. Her feet were also incredibly sore. She could only hobble along, her previous slow progress slowed to a crawl now. Chloe was instantly at her side, taking her staff and letting Olga lean on her shoulder, but even so, their progress was very slow.

Ranma took one look at this, then looked at Chloe, gesturing to his bag. "Do ya think ya can come back and get this if I drop it here?"

Confused, Olga translated these words for Chloe, who shrugged but nodded, then looked on in surprise and annoyance when Ranma placed his bag on the ground, then, with a heave of effort, lifted Olga onto his back. "I, I won't be able to do more than a few miles like this," Ranma grunted, even as he began to blush hotly at the feel of Olga's breasts pressing into the back of his head and either side. *Mistakes have been made! How the hell am I supposed to concentrate on my footwork with that!* "But we'll go faster this way."

"My little hero, I really am beginning to fall for you," Olga murmured as she leaned forward, pressing her breasts even more around Ranma's head as her arms snaked around his chest, kissing his cheek lightly.

Chloe simmered a little, but knew that she couldn't carry her mistress for very far, and was astonished anew at how strong this youth was. It quickly became apparent though that Ranma was bluffing a little. His previous speed dropped to slightly below Olga when she had

been fully healthy. Still faster than the crawl she had been doing, and it kept Olga from aggravating her injuries more, which Olga reflected, was good.

She would be able to heal herself when they stopped for the night, but would need to see the actual injuries to do so. Worse, healing magic did not come easily to Olga, thus doing so would also take out more from her reserves than even the attack spells she had been using previously.

Still, they were able to find the area Chloe had discovered as a possible campsite, and it did have overhead cover. Two trees had fallen recently, creating a canopy of their branches and leaves that it was hard to see through even when right in front of it.

“Wow, okay, yeah, you’re in charge of finding us campsites from now on. I could never have picked this place out,” Ranma shook his head as he quickly set Olga down, his face so red he was certain that his blush was permanent now.

This proved to be wrong several moments later, when Olga, true to her word, ordered Ranma to stand in front of her as she pulled out a salve from his pack. “Off with the shirt,” she ordered crisply.

“Wh, what!?” Ranma asked, confused.

“I need to get at all of your cuts with this salve, Ranma, and your shirt is shredded anyway,” Olga snorted. “It’s more rags than anything now.”

Ranma blinked, then looked down at himself, realizing that was the case even in the light of Olga’s staff. “Dang. It’s my only one too.”

“I’ll get you a new one. Now, off! You can keep your pants on, they aren’t nearly as slashed.” *Which is a bit of a pity. Given what I felt when we kissed earlier.*

Shrugging, Ranma pulled his shirt off, tossing it aside, not noticing Olga stare a bit. *Good grief! He looks almost was well-muscled as a dwarf.*

Shaking her head, Olga began to work the salve into Ranma’s wounds. She couldn’t heal them all like her own injuries, unfortunately. “If I healed you back to perfect health and then myself, I wouldn’t be able to renew the spell we all need to survive here, let alone anything else. I might be able to tomorrow, but tonight you will have to deal with this salve. Do not fear, it will dull your body to the point you won’t feel the pain.”

“I ain’t afraid of nothin’!” Ranma answered automatically, then shivered as Olga snickered into his ear, her breath wafting over his skin.

"I can believe that, my little savior," Olga whispered, giving him a kiss behind his ear before turning her attention to her work. *Oh yes, I will enjoy this quite a bit. So short, but so muscled, mmm. I can all too easily imagine him as a man. Yummy.*

Soon however, far too soon for either of her tastes, Olga really was beginning to enjoy this, Ranma really was exceptionally well muscled for such a small frame, something else grabbed Ranma's attention. His stomach growling loud enough to cause both Olga and Chloe to flinch. "Aheh, um, sorry," Ranma flushed now for an entirely different reason as he patted his stomach. "Er the master must be fed."

"Ahaha," Olga chortled, while Chloe snorted in disdain, but pulled her backpack off her shoulder, putting together a quick meal of cured meat sticks and hardtack bread from the pouches. It wasn't good food, for certain, but before either dark elf could touch their share, Ranma gulped everything put in front of him down and then looked for more. His fingers twitched, but Ranma decided not to try to take any of their food. He'd seen Chloe divvy it up, and she had shared the supplies evenly.

After the meal, Olga healed her foot and ankle, then went back to putting salves on Ranma's scratches despite his protests. Meanwhile, Chloe went back out for the second pack.

Once she returned, both women, exhausted from the day, decided to turn in for the night. Olga instantly crawled into her bedroll, shifting around there for a few moments before offering to share her sleeping roll with Ranma.

Ranma was too exhausted to even think up a reason to protest, and didn't even try to put his shirt back on, the thing having been shredded during the battle. He wasn't so tired though as to miss something very important the moment he felt the moment he slid into the bedroll, their bodies sliding against one another. "W, Hy are you naked?" he stammered, his voice and strangled yell.

Chloe turned from where she was preparing a few traps around the entryway to the bower, her eyes narrowed in annoyance. "Mistress, is everything all right?"

"Quite fine, Chloe," Olga said, smirking wickedly at a frozen Ranma. "As to your question, Ranma, I remembered a very old healing spell that essentially lets me transfer some of my own vitality to you in order to help your healing along. The spell doesn't take much magic, so I can use it to heal you up tonight. You'll be back to fighting fit tomorrow. And I thought you said you'd like to touch me?"

"Erk." Caught in his own words, Ranma groaned a bit, but didn't protest when Olga pulled him into her. Unfortunately, as amazing as feeling Olga's skin, like satin against his own, her curves, so bit and soft and enticing, Ranma was just too tired to do anything. Instead of making his body feel weird, after a few minutes, the feel of Olga's body against his at that point was more soothing and welcoming than anything.

True to her words, Olga cast the healing spell, grimacing a bit at the sensation of her life force leaving her body, the intention of HEAL stamped into it as her life force entered Ranma's body. For a moment, she thought she felt some movement from one of the large bruises on Ranma's side, but touching it again, there wasn't any bump there, making her wonder if she had just imagined things.

Shrugging that thought off, Olga let her hands move down Ranma's body, pulling him into her. "The more skin contact, the better this spell works," she whispered, a wicked smirk on her full lips. A smirk that widened into a smile as one hand moved up Ranma's thigh toward his stomach, passing over his crotch. *My word, I was right. He is going to be something very nice when he's older, nice now, better later.*

She was about to tease Ranma again, when she realized the youth had fallen asleep, leaning his head forward against her chest. Oh well, more fun for later, then. Olga mused, her mind going over the day. The look in Vult's eyes, in his men as they looked at Olga came over her then, how close she had come to being captured, made a toy for men as all too many of her people had been over the centuries a living nightmare that would never end until she was used up and discarded. *And then this little curiosity, who had previously been a strange mystery, returns to save Chloe and me from that. To save us, and through us our people, who would not have known of the Aberrant's betrayal until too late otherwise.*

"Yes," Olga whispered, realizing a truth that she had previously been covering over with her need to tie Ranma to her for safety's sake. "I really am in danger of falling for you for real, my little savior."

A final peck on Ranma's forehead followed, and then Olga nestled her cheek into Ranma's hair, slowly falling into a dreamless sleep.

OOOOOO

As Ranma and his new companions were falling asleep, elsewhere, events were in motion.

"So it is true then?" a male dark elf mused, staring out over the forest below him. He stood, somewhat dramatically it had to be said, on a wall surrounding a mountain fortress set near the Black Fortress, the entrance to the nearest of the dark elf holdfasts. The man himself was extremely handsome, taller and broader than most dark elves, with a haughty, but noble face, and eyes that were pools of yellow light.

The woman behind him blushed as she took him in, nodding her head quickly. The women behind her also all flushed a bit looking at him, the thought, *Kyaaa so hot!* Going through them. "It, it is, Lord Kuvistano. We, we were saved by your scouts and the fact the Black Dogs had to try and hurry to the queen's throne room lest she become aware of the Aberrant's betrayal.

“And we know that the most beautiful Discordia-sama was able to escape, hence the warning that had my troops in the area. As well as why I ordered the execution of the Aberrants near us,” Kuvistano murmured. “Hmm... but where did Discordia-sama go, if not here, so that I, that is, this fortress, would give her succor?”

“We did see a few harpies trying to make a straight flight over our position a few hours ago, my lord. The group that was in the Blighted Lands,” another dark elf stated. “There were only a few of them left.”

“AH, yes. The harpies that must have been in on this grand betrayal. I take it you killed them.” The question came out as a statement, yet Kuvistano’s servant still nodded. “Still, that tells us where Discordia-sama might be. For some reason she was attempting to pull the Black Dog cretins back out into the Blighted Lands. She must have some plan to force the humans, Black Dogs and Aberrants to fight one another. Still, this Black Star of Fang Mountain will not allow our magnificent Queen to go into danger alone. Prepare my horse, and a company of our best. We will be after her with the sunup.”

Although Kuvistano kept the firm, commanding glare on his face, so much so that many of the women there began to nearly swoon, inside was a different story. *And if I can but save her, perhaps the queen will grace me with her favor, as I know her heart doth wish for her to do!*

OOOOOOO

“... So we were able to save your manhood my Lord, but you won’t be able to well perform for at least four months while the healing grafts take hold,” a healer explained hesitantly to Vult, backing away from his recalcitrant and incredibly angry patient quickly. “It would be shorter normally, but given the nature of the injuries, even that will be pushing it. I’m afraid that any movements of your hips would also aggravate things. We’ve given you as much painkiller as we can but...”

“Get out! Get out, and send a message to our merchants in Rad!” Vult snarled, reaching to grab his sword, which lay on the bed next to him, the mercenary leader cum conqueror having refused to be parted with the blade. “They’ve got the best drug dealers. If I’m to deal with this pain, I’ll take some milk of the poppy over your swill any day. And with the Aberrants on our side, it should be easy for a single man traveling light to get here in a few weeks. Or better yet, find an actual fucking healer, one who can use magic, not your foul-tasting muck!”

There were only a few mages who knew healing magic that were available for mercenary work. Almost all of them worked directly for the Church of Larentia, feeding the sick, caring for the disfigured. And because of that, they loathed those who committed violence for a living like mercenaries, leaving even the Black Dogs to use potion-based healers, which made for much slower recovery time and a shorter range of ailments they could deal with.

They were also each assigned a Paladin to defend them so even Vult's attempts to suborn or just kidnap one over the years hadn't gone anywhere.

The potion type healer scurried out, grateful to be away from the furious man-mountain. One did not want to stay near a person, as large as Vult, was when he was angry. Especially when you weren't entirely certain your work would actually allow his bits to, well, work again. Even if his hips healed and the ruptured ball sack came together again, that didn't mean that anything would flow properly...

Growling, Vult looked up at the ceiling for a moment, then twisted around to look at the only other individual in the room. "Well, Hicks? What's going on? And don't give me that shit that guy was saying as he was operating on me. I know there's trouble brewing."

"The orc chieftains are already making noises about competing against one another to try and see who will take your place. I sent the dangerous out to round up two of the troll clans that have yet to send representatives here with orders to march them toward Ur. Unless the Seven Shields have reacted a lot faster than normal they'll make some headway and have some fun before they're smashed," Hicks, the Black Dogs' second-in-command stated, shrugging his shoulders. "But that's only taken the top off of the fucking brew of troubles were facing. With Kin dead, we lack any kind of magical means to connect to the ley lines below the fortress without using the orc shamans."

"Bah, we couldn't trust the orc shamans anyway. Speaking of the fucking orcs, did any of our new comrades mention Olga having a halfling warrior around? Where did that little freak come from?" Vult growled, his hand clenching around his sword hilt again. However, he didn't make to draw it, or stand up. No, the healer had been very, very explicit. Vult had to stay in bed, not moving any part of his lower body, letting the surgery and limited potions the healer had applied to work or else... Vult shudder to think of it. *What is a man without his manhood!? I swear the first thing that I'm going to do when I am able to move is hunt down Olga and that little freak, and break her in front of him! I swear I will have my revenge!*

"Nope. None of the trolls' orcs had ever seen him before. Where he came from no one knows. But he's the one that did in Kin too," Hicks grumbled. "He was able to bounce around the fight so fast, he could get close to Kin before he could retreat. And worse than killing Kin, he shattered the black crystal."

Vult grimaced at that. Without that crystal, which had somehow been imbued with some kind of alchemical creation, to allow their mage to circumvent Olga's control of the Ley lines, they really were in a kind of precarious position when it came to magical power. Vult couldn't say he understood it all, but that black crystal had really been the key to starting Vult's conquest. With it Kin would have become almost as strong a magic user as Olga, the Aberrant and their contacts to weaken the Seven Shields Alliance from within, all of Eos would have fallen before Vult.

“We’ll have to step up our plans, give the fucking Aberrants a target rather than let them here to try and take over from us. I want you to take some of our men, the most ready for action. Circumvent the front, head straight to Rad,” Vult ordered, ignoring the fact that a messenger might already be heading that way. “Get in contact with our factors there. We need some more mage help, and that’s the only place where you’ll be able to do it openly. None of our allies have access to that type of learning either.”

Vult suddenly grinned, a rictus sneer more than anything, but showing some real good humor for the first time since he’d been injured. “See if you can get in touch with Kin’s old perverted master, the one who gave him the black crystal. I know that he said the old man didn’t want any part of the country, but maybe he’ll want revenge on the one who killed his apprentice. If lust doesn’t make the old man’s wrinkled shift, maybe vengeance will.”

“And what about the other orc chiefs? I might have been able to foist the most troublesome one off on other tasks but...”

“Gather all but the strongest remaining orc chieftain. Tell them we’re going to march on Ur, then start to let them head in that direction as clans. We’ll be able to catch them up on the way. You know they aren’t going to march fast.”

Kin was dubious. “Is splitting our forces like that a good idea? And why don’t you want me to include the strongest remaining orc chief?”

“No. We’re going to get reamed somewhere, but so long as that somewhere isn’t where we, the Black Dogs are in command, it’s all for the good really. If we can’t use Olga’s magic to cow them into submission, we’ll have to show that we’re tougher, stronger and smarter,” Vult said added, tapping his forehead. “Which is why, you can invite the most recalcitrant chiefs, the ones who have been making the loudest noises about not wanting to follow us anymore to a meeting with me tonight. And remember to bring out the special goblets. The ones with poison rims.”

Hicks smirked at that, nodding his head and left to do his master’s bidding.

Ripples, more ripples spread and the gods laughed above, watching as a sexually filled tragic play shifted into a sex-filled comedy act, all for their amusement. And perhaps the betterment of the players involved, despite whatever headaches they might face in the future...

End Chapter

Historically speaking, it wasn’t all that unusual for boys or girls to be married at eleven or less. In Wild Wolf (merry wasn’t that young), the romance aspect was more in the forefront than the sexy stuff, and both were very minor factors in comparison to here. Let’s face it, to make the world of Kuroinu even merely ecchi would take a lot.

So I can definitely say that Ranma's age is a factor in this fic, so I will be very interested in seeing my reader's response.

Now, what I might do is go back, and make Ranma his arriving at Nerima age. But if I do change Ranma to being older, I will have to make the first fight a lot more impressive. He'll be able to deal with a lot more in terms of enemies, which itself could bring in some of the other non-canon characters, but eh...? Doesn't feel as fun. Olga would also be much leerier at first, then would have issues reconciling her desire to have Ranma around with her hatred of humans. Here, Ranma gets a pass because of his youth. But an older Ranma wouldn't. And Chloe would be even more of an issue.

I am also REALLY leery of having Ranma being a girl in this crossover. Like there are a lot of things wrong with that, not all of them obvious. But I didn't want to do the whole adoption concept like I did in Wild Wolf. I could have, but then it would all have been child Ranma having combat type fun in this chapter as I would build, and it didn't interest me much.

So I hope you enjoyed this, even if parts of it are a bit... Yeah. At least a lot of the humor is spot on anyway, and you can see the chaos in terms of other characters I mean to bring into the fic. Only the two dark elf characters for now, but there will be others on the way, as the feel of the fic changes even further away from the Kuroinu slant.