

MICKY CARRE



# GOBLIN BREEDER 1

A SLICE OF LIFE HAREM FANTASY

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# **Goblin Breeder 1**

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**A Slice of Life Harem Adventure**



Micky Carre

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About Author

The Apalachicola National Forest was not a magical place, nor was it special or even particularly nice, to be honest. It was just a dense bunch of pine trees and sand in the panhandle of Florida right around where I lived. Mostly rattlesnakes and mosquitos called it home.

It was a hot summer day, with the sweltering humidity making the air feel like a sauna. Squirrels barked from the tops of the tall pine trees, and a gnat buzzed in my ear. I slapped myself in the face trying to kill him. The little bastard was persistent.

With that knowledge that this was not a magical place held firmly in mind, that this was just regular ol' north Florida, I found myself staring in confusion at what definitely looked like magic right in front of me.

I'd seen air shimmer with heat before—this was Florida, after all. But this was completely different. A perfect circle of smoky, swirling air balanced on its edge right in front of me. It looked like—and I felt a bit like an idiot for even thinking this

—it looked like some kind of portal. A gateway to another world or dimension.

I wasn't an idiot, though. I was of sound mind and believed facts and the laws of physics, not fairy tales. I didn't follow astrology or horoscopes, I didn't give money to palm readers, and I most certainly didn't believe in magic of any kind.

A lot of weird things existed in Florida, from people throwing wildlife through drive-through windows to meth gators, but magical portals were not something I expected to see. A deadly fight over chicken nuggets? I've seen that one in the news, too. But there was no "Florida man" story that ever involved magic or portals of any kind. Mostly because they weren't real. At all. Nope, not real and definitely not something I would believe in.

And yet, right in front of me was a swirling vortex of smoke and air, and who knew what else. Faint tendrils of lightning crackled almost silently along the edge. It reminded me of a satellite view of a hurricane, but eight feet in diameter and with a hard border.

I slowly turned in a circle, studying the forest around me in every direction. Surely, someone was playing a joke on me.

"Hey!" I called out. "Cut it out, guys. This shit is getting weird!" It had to be one of my friends playing some sort of prank on me, although to be honest I had no clue what could cause something to look like this. Rick was an engineer though, so he could probably come up with something. Or maybe Greg. Greg was a douchebag.

I turned back to the portal thing and took a step toward it. It emitted a faint humming noise, and the bits of lightning around the edge crackled quietly, almost like one of those plasma balls I would always touch in the mall. Nothing about it seemed overly dangerous or ominous—other than the fact that it was a fucking portal in the woods in the panhandle of Florida.

I took another step towards it and reached out a hand. The air was slightly cooler in the immediate vicinity of the portal, in a rather pleasant manner. Something about it seemed almost inviting, to be honest, making me want to move closer.

Suddenly realizing what I was doing, I pulled my hand back. Was I an idiot or something? Touching some swirling mass in the middle of the woods? I took a few steps away and pulled myself together.

This was like one of those low-budget horror movies. After touching the portal, some guy in a poorly made costume would come out, wielding a knife or hatchet or some shit, and chase me around. I'd run away and he would catch up to me, even though he was just walking. Of course I'd trip over a branch, then just roll over and scream in horror as he approached, instead of fighting back.

“If anyone comes out of this thing, they're getting kicked straight in the nuts,” I muttered.

I reached down and grabbed a pine cone, then straightened up and bounced it on my palm a few times. “Good job on the special effects, guys, but you aren't fooling me,” I called out.

This *had* to be a prank from one of my friends. Those guys were fucking bozos, and this was the exact kind of thing they'd do. They were just trying to scare me. I threw the pine cone at the portal.

It struck the surface and froze in place for a moment, then disappeared with a puff of smoke.

“How much did those assholes spend on this thing?” I wondered aloud as I approached it again.

I examined it closely, trying to figure out what the hell was going on, or at least how it worked. A fog machine and some kind of fan, perhaps? I stepped to the side, aiming to check out what was behind the portal, but it moved with me, always facing me no matter where I stepped. I continued in a full circle around it, but it turned with me so that I only saw the one side. The front, I supposed. Did portals have a back side?

There was probably a good joke about the dangers of entering the backside, but I was too focused on this thing to care.

I decided to play things safe. Grabbing my helmet from the ground, I walked back to my dirtbike. I had leaned it against a tree when I stopped to examine this weird portal thing a few minutes ago. My phone and a few other things were stashed in a small bag I had bungee corded to the rear of the seat.

Being this far from civilization, I already knew I wasn't going to have any service. I pulled my phone out anyway and checked. Yep, no services. On a whim, I used my phone to take a few pictures of the portal. At least now I had some proof. I slipped my phone back in the bag.

Digging further through the bag, I pulled out a peanut butter and banana sandwich. Food in hand, I slowly walked back toward the portal.

I took a bite and chewed slowly while thinking. There had to be a logical explanation for this bit of weirdness. Of course magic and portals weren't real. That much was obvious.

But as much as I wanted to think this was a weird prank by some of my weird friends, how would they have known where I was?

I had spent the last hour riding trails through the forest, just killing time on my day off. I enjoyed being in nature, even though half of the wildlife in Florida seemed to be made up of gnats, mosquitos, and angry reptiles. I didn't even know where I would have wound up, so there was no way they could have known. And a lucky guess was just too far-fetched to be believable.

I liked to think that I was a reasonable man with reasonable beliefs. Being of sound mind, I didn't believe fairy tales were real. Neither was magic, or for that matter, glowing portals in the middle of nowhere.

"And yet here we are," I said aloud as I slowly approached that swirling disk of air and magic. There was always the possibility that this was some strange weather phenomenon or that I had a brain tumor and was hallucinating, but I decided to trust my eyes. I had a picture on my cell phone as well, which would help if I tried to show anyone later.

After taking another bite, I reached out again. When my hand was only a few inches from the surface of the portal, I held it there. I couldn't feel any static electricity or extreme temperatures. With a shake of my head I decided to take things one step further.

“What are you?” I whispered the question into the air, not expecting a reply.

I touched the surface of the portal, and the whole world turned white.

I wasn't entirely sure how it happened. One moment I was standing in the forest, then suddenly everything glowed like I was in the center of the sun. White noise rushed in my ears, and my heart pounded in my chest.

I opened my eyes and found myself standing in another forest, but quite different from the one I had come from. Thick-bodied trees towered over me, ten times the size of the pines I was used to. The soil was rich and dark, instead of the sand I had previously been on, and covered with a layer of soft grass and ivy. It was warm here, but not hot and humid like in Florida. The best thing was the complete lack of gnats buzzing around my face.

I turned back to the portal, but it was already fading. The swirling mist slowed and turned translucent.

“No, no!” I cried, reaching out for it. My hands sought the portal, but I passed through it as if it were merely the smoke and fog I had originally thought it was.

A noise behind me caught my ear, and I spun to look. I dropped my sandwich in shock.

Lying crumpled on the ground was a small man in voluminous robes of purple and blue. I caught a glimpse of an iron-gray beard as he stirred. A small table stood next to him, the top inscribed with odd symbols and shapes. Blood covered the table, as if it had been poured onto it in a steady stream.

I took a step toward the man but stopped when he suddenly moved.

Part of the robe lifted and a slender, green-skinned hand became visible as the man rubbed at his face. As he pushed more of his robe back, I could see that his face was green as well.

Green skin? I ran my fingers through my hair, wondering what the hell was going on.

The small man coughed weakly, and his arm fell. I took a few steps toward him, trying to get a better look. Was this some kind of weird sorcerer that was going to fry me with a lightning bolt? I had just walked through a portal, so nothing was outside the realm of possibilities here. I needed to identify all possible risks.

“Hey,” I said, gently nudging his foot. “Hey, are you okay?”

He grunted something in reply but I couldn’t understand him. Looking closer, I saw a small knife lying next to him with fresh blood on the blade. Moving quickly, I pushed his sleeve



up and saw a long slice up his small green arm. Well, that explained the blood on the table next to him.

Green skin or not, I wasn't going to let this guy die before I got some answers. I took the knife and cut a strip of purple cloth from his robe, then wrapped it around his arm to stop the bleeding. This close, I got a better look at him.

Other than the green skin, he was humanlike. He was small, probably less than five feet tall, with dark brown hair streaked heavily with gray. His eyes were larger than mine, and currently bloodshot as they stared at me with a mixture of curiosity and wonder. The rest of his features—nose, cheeks, lips—looked normal and humanlike other than the green color. His ears, on the other hand, were long and pointed, like something from a fantasy book. Didn't elves have ears like that? Was I really looking at an elf?

“Hey, man,” I said again, gently nudging him. “Are you okay? Can you understand me?”

He continued to stare at me with those big eyes of his. I saw no malice in them, no intent to do me harm. With as much blood as this little guy had lost, he needed immediate medical attention. Something told me I wouldn't find an emergency room around the corner from here.

“You came,” he said, his voice merely a whisper.

“That's what she said,” I replied. “Uh, yeah. I'm here.”

“The tall, pale man. I had given up hope after so many hours. I didn't think anyone was going to come through the gateway.”

“Look, you’ve lost a lot of blood. You need medical attention,” I told him. “Is there a doctor anywhere around here? Someone that can help you heal?”

“I only need food and rest,” he replied. “Please, get me something to eat, so that I might survive and see a better future for my people.”

Well, that sounded ominous. I got up and moved back to where I had dropped my sandwich. It had landed on some thick grass so it wasn’t really dirty, but I brushed it off as best as I could. I didn’t think this guy would mind too much.

“I hope you like peanut butter and banana,” I told him as I put it up to his mouth.

He gave me a quizzical look but took a bite. His bright eyes widened slightly upon tasting it, and he took another bite.

“Yeah, good, isn’t it? Probably my favorite. I eat these things almost every day.” I nearly took a bite myself, but stopped and gave the rest to him.

The small green man finally raised his non-cut arm and grabbed onto the sandwich. “This is incredible,” he said, taking another bite. “Please, help me sit up.”

I moved behind him and grabbed him beneath the armpits, then raised him up so that he was sitting. His body was light. I would be shocked if he weighed more than a hundred pounds. Probably closer to eighty.

“Thank you.” He took another bite and swallowed, barely taking the time to chew. “You must give me the recipe for this.

It has such a unique flavor.” He stuffed the last bit into his mouth.

“Uh, the cheapest bread from the convenience store across the street. Add some peanut butter to each slice of bread, then take half a banana—I just eat the other half—and slice it lengthwise into thirds. Add bananas to bread. Eat. Pretty simple stuff.”

He stared at me for a moment as if I had said something wise. “Your world is clearly different from ours. One moment, please.”

The small man reached into his robes and withdrew a small book, then began thumbing through the pages. He stopped halfway through and read silently, his finger running across the surface of the page. Seemingly satisfied, he began reading aloud.

His words were strange. They sounded familiar, like something I could almost understand, but ultimately it was gibberish to my ears. His arm glowed briefly beneath the bandage and he shoved the small book back into a pocket with a satisfied nod.

“That is much better,” he said as he removed the bandage from his arm, revealing smooth, unmarked skin. He frowned at the bloody cloth and tossed it to the side. “I must thank you. Had you not shown up, I would have kept adding my blood to the spell until I was drained. I would have died.”

“Yeah, about that,” I began. “Can you tell me what is going on here? Because I’m pretty sure I just stepped through a portal to

a different world.” I looked around the woods for a moment. “I’m guessing that sort of thing is somewhat normal here, but where I come from, magic doesn’t exist.”

“Please, sit down. I am still very weak,” the small man replied.

I sat down a few feet away from him and waited for an explanation. Instead, I got more questions.

“Please, tell me your name,” he asked.

“Andrew,” I told him. “Andrew Jones.”

“Andrew Jones,” the small man repeated. “You are tall, Andrew Jones. Tall and pale.”

“You can just call me Andrew, that’s fine. And I’m not really that tall, just average to be honest. Five foot eight. Although I guess I’m a good bit taller than you.” I looked down at my Irish skin. “Yeah, I guess I’m pretty pale, though. I can thank my mother for that one.”

“The tall, pale man,” he said quietly, as if to himself. “Tell me, Andrew, where do you come from? What is your world?”

I wasn’t quite sure how to answer that, but I did my best. “My world is called Earth. I come from a small piece of that planet known as Florida.”

“Florida,” the man said as if tasting the word. “Andrew Jones of Florida. Fascinating.”

“Okay, now that I’ve answered a few questions, can you tell me what’s going on here?”

“I promise to answer all of your questions in just a moment. You must tell me, though. Are you healthy?”

“I’d call myself pretty healthy,” I replied. “I like to jog on the weekends, and when I’m not feeling too lazy I hit the gym. I’m not the best at eating vegetables, but I eat plenty of fruit. Is that good enough?”

“That is wonderful,” the man said, smiling. “How old are you?”

“Twenty-six,” I replied.

He nodded. “And your seed? Is it strong?”

Uh, what?

Without pause, he asked me again. “Quickly, I must know! Are you virile? Does your seed take root when you sow a woman’s fields? Dammit man, this is important!”

“Dude, that is a weird fucking question. If you really must know, then yeah, my junk works. Had a pregnancy scare with my ex girlfriend a while back, but she terminated it super early. We argued about that for a while, actually. Is there any particular reason you’re asking about my dick?”

“Good,” the man said, sighing as if relieved. “There is still hope.”

“Okay, my turn,” I said. “Where am I and who are you? How did I come here?”

The small man stroked his beard with his green hands. “One at a time. I am Ulenor, a wizard of Gillamoor. This is....” He looked around as if unsure how to continue. “Well, this is my world. Brovania is the name of our kingdom, which is ruled by King Freg and Queen Cinnai from their thrones in the city of York.”

“So, are you an elf?” I asked. I had never seen a green-skinned elf before, but the ears made me think I was right. Besides, elves could be all sorts of different colors, right? They weren’t all blonde and pale like Orlando Bloom.

Ulenor’s face suddenly darkened in anger. I started to move back as his brows furrowed, but he closed his eyes and took a few deep, calming breaths. When he opened them again, he looked calm.

“I am sorry for my anger. I know you didn’t mean offense; your words come from a place of ignorance. No, I am not an elf.” He spat the word, making it sound vile, a curse. “I am a goblin, and proud.”

A goblin?

I sighed and shook my head. This was just too fucking weird for me. A goblin! And apparently elves existed as well, but in this world they were the bad guys. Maybe they were like assholes that double parked their Jeeps and talked loudly on their phones on the subway. Who knew. Elves always seemed a bit haughty to me in stories, so that made perfect sense.

“So, why am I here?” I asked. “That’s the big question. I was just minding my own business tearing up some trails on my dirtbike when I saw your portal—gateway, you called it—in the middle of the woods, so I stopped to check it out. Then poof, I’m here talking to a goblin.”

“Help me up, please?” Ulenor asked in a voice that was polite but clearly expected to be obeyed.

I went over to him and offered him my hand, then pulled him to his feet. With his low body weight, it was easy.

Ulenor was indeed short, not quite up to my shoulder. His robes covered him from shoulder to ankle, with a deep hood that hung down his back. He took a moment to steady himself, holding onto my arm for support. With a nod, he took a few slow steps forward and I walked next to him, letting him hold onto me.

“As for why you’re here, that’s a question with a long answer. I’ll try to be brief,” he replied.

I did my best to hold Ulenor steady as we slowly walked through the short grass.

“You see, Andrew, we’ve been having problems in Brovania. All of the goblins, all of our towns and cities. Even the small villages have been affected.”

“What sort of problems?” I asked, dreading his answer. This whole situation felt like I was walking into a trap.

“Problems of the reproductive sort. Our birth rates are very, very low; only a handful of children have been born in the last five years among the entire goblin nation.”

Now it made sense. “So that’s why you asked me about my junk earlier,” I said. At his look of confusion, I clarified my statement. “My seed.”

“Yes,” he said with a nod. “Our women need strong seed, or we will all die out.”

I stopped, forcing him to stop with me. “Hold on. Are you telling me you brought me to your world just to impregnate your women?” That certainly wasn’t the worst premise I could think of, but I wasn’t too excited about banging a bunch of green monsters with fangs and bulging eyes and who knew what else. Hairy foreheads, maybe. I mean, Ulenor looked perfectly normal, but who knew how ugly these goblin women were? For all I knew, they could have beards and warts.



The worst part was, I seemed to be trapped in an alien world, so I wasn't sure how much choice I had. There was a realistic possibility that I could find myself in a situation where I *had* to bang these goblin women just to get home. And that would be odd; how would I feel being a deadbeat dad, just abandoning my half-goblin kids? It was a strange situation, indeed.

"I need to start from the beginning," Ulenor said with a deep sigh. "I must choose my words carefully, as I am still very weak."

"Yeah, careful there, dude," I told him. "Conserve your strength."

"More than a hundred years ago, we were slaves. All of us—all goblins in the known world. We were slaves to the elves, and had been for a thousand years. It was said they had conquered and enslaved us, then erased every mention of us in history. They tried to destroy our culture, our pride. We built things for them and cleaned up after them, and they beat us if we didn't move fast enough. Many goblins simply took their own lives, as they could not endure working for the elves."

"Sorry I asked if you were an elf, earlier," I said, suddenly feeling guilty.

"It is alright," he said, glancing up at me. "You did not know, but now you do. Among our people, being called an elf is perhaps the greatest insult."

"Noted," I said.

“My father organized an uprising. Word spread through underground channels, and goblins built weapons in secret. They trained at night, and taught each other how to use them. They made armor out of scrap materials, and explosives from leftover chemicals. When the time was ripe, goblins rose up against their elven masters and slayed them, then fled their cities.

“Explosions rocked the elven cities, giving us opportunities to escape. The goblins that weren’t able to escape were slaughtered by the elves, even the women and children. They gathered their forces to hunt us down, but we had sabotaged their armies. Being without slaves was appalling to the elves, and they chased us into the forests and across the plains, eager to have their way of life back.

“After years of wandering, we found ourselves here, in these forests. We built the first goblin villages, which turned into towns, then cities. Eventually, we managed to build a strong, peaceful kingdom.”

I whistled appreciatively, but something Ulenor had said just clicked in my mind. “Wait, you said your father organized that more than a hundred years ago. How old are you?”

“I am ninety-six as of this past spring,” he replied. “I look forward to many more years.”

“Holy shit, ninety-six? How long do goblins live?”

He looked up at me. “In our cities? A hundred fifty is common. I need to remember to exercise more. I’ve spent all

my years with books, so my body has grown weak. How long do your people last?”

“Humans,” I replied. “I’m a human, that’s my race. And we live around seventy or eighty years or so. Some make it a bit further, but it’s rare to hit a hundred. That was always my goal, personally.”

“Hmm,” Ulenor said, tugging at his beard with a green hand. “I just hope you can help us, Andrew.”

“Yeah, so back to that. Exactly what’s going on and why do you need me?” Something told me that whatever he said, I wasn’t going to like it.

We continued walking through the forest and crested a small hill. The trees ended there, giving me an incredible view of the land before me. Gently rolling hills spread out before me, covered in lush grass and wildflowers.

A small town stood on the land half a mile in front of us, with tall buildings of stone and brick peeking over the top of a thick, crenelated wall that wrapped around the entire city. The evening sun reflected off of blue roof tiles.

“Gillamoor,” Ulenor said. “Home. Come, we will find rest there and I will help prepare you.”

From our vantage point, I saw that a dirt road was just to our right, and went all the way to a tall gate in the town wall. I helped Ulenor move toward the road, for that would certainly be easier than walking through trees and thick grass. Plus, I didn’t want to trample the flowers.

Once we got to the road, he stopped and raised his spindly arm, pointing toward the horizon.

I followed his finger to a low mountain in the distance. This far, all I could see was the white-capped peak, as clouds obscured the rest.

“That is the source of our problem, Andrew. On the peak of that mountain lives a sorcerer named Vogrim. His stronghold is there, and it is from that stronghold he rules the area.”

“Ah, an evil sorcerer,” I said. “The plot thickens.” I knew I wasn’t going to like this.

Ulenor gave me an annoyed look. “He is not to be taken lightly. Magic is rare among the minotaur people, but he is strong, perhaps the strongest ever born. We are far enough away that he has not sent his soldiers to decimate us yet, or perhaps he simply feels we aren’t worth his trouble. So he deals with us in other ways.”

I noticed a single cloud above the city below me. It was impossible to miss; it was a clear day, but that one cloud sat, unmoving, above the town. The wind blew, but it did not affect that cloud.

“He poisons our men,” Ulenor growled. His fingers tightened on my arm. “Curses them. He creates magical storms that hover over our town for days at a time, leaking poisoned rain. The poison makes its way into everything; there is no avoiding it. He sends these storm clouds to every goblin town and city, even to the smallest villages. That poison is a creation of Vogrim’s, and it targets our men. It makes them sterile, and

often weak. Sometimes it affects their minds as well, and drives them mad. Or perhaps it's just the loss of agency that does that to them."

"Woah," I said, taking a step back. "So if you take me there then I'll be sterile as well. Won't that make this whole thing pointless? And dude, getting laid sounds great but I don't want to go crazy."

Ulenor shook his head. "It only affects goblin males. Well, mostly. We get travelers and merchants from other races at times, and they have never been affected."

This story was getting crazier by the minute. I tried my best to just go along with it; I felt like if I resisted, my mind would break. I just had to be like water, just like Bruce Lee said. Adaptability was the key to survival here. I reminded myself that eventually, I would find my way home.

"So, if I go along with this and impregnate some of your women, can you send me back to my home?" I asked.

He nodded without hesitation. "Yes, of course, Andrew. It was never my intention to destroy your life, or to steal you indefinitely. We only need you for a short time." He looked up at me. "My belief is that mixing your blood with goblin will create offspring that are resistant to his magic. That will help our shrinking population grow, and then perhaps then we can organize a way to fight back, or at the worst, flee to safety. We goblins are a proud folk, though, and reluctant to leave our home. Fleeing isn't something many will do."

“Yeah, I don’t blame you,” I said, looking behind me. “It’s beautiful out here. Unspoiled wilderness.”

We walked in silence for a moment, slowly approaching the town. A thought occurred to me.

“So, why me? You said you get travelers from other races. Why not use one of them to help fix your fertility issue?”

“If only it were that simple, Andrew,” Ulenor said. “We have tried in the past, with mixed results. The races that surround us are often not friendly; the minotaurs to the north are far too large and violent, the elves to the east are our sworn enemies, and to the south are the drowned lands. A great swamp, very difficult to pass. Only a few have made it through, and they brought back stories that you would find hard to believe. Also, not all races are compatible with goblin blood. In short, we have no other options.”

“I dunno,” I replied. “Two hours ago I would have found all of this hard to believe.”

“My point is that our choices are rather slim. Goblin women do not breed well with our neighbors, so when I cast my gateway spell I searched for a being better suited for that. You are, perhaps, a tad large, but otherwise I think you’ll do fine.

“There is another factor as well; something my father spoke of the day that he died. Always concerned with the welfare of our people, he gave the last of his blood to a spell to catch a glimpse of our future, to see what lay ahead. He received nightmarish visions, stories that made strong men weep. Our destiny was to be destroyed.”

He stopped and looked up at me. The walk seemed to have returned some of his strength, but he still looked exhausted. Dark circles lined his eyes, and his voice had the hoarseness of one that had overexerted himself.

“He did give us one glimmer of hope, however. In these horrific visions he saw that we had a chance at surviving. It all depended on one thing: a tall, pale man. He saw him, in his vision. He saw you, Andrew. You are destined to save us.”

“Ah, shit,” I said. I couldn’t help it; the words just slipped out. “These sorts of things are never easy, are they?”

“I hope beyond hope that you are indeed the one prophesied,” Ulenor said. “The man from a distant land that can lead us to glory and prosperity. If you are not, I fear we are doomed, for even successful breeding won’t be able to save us in the end. The children that are immune to his poison rain will be slaughtered by his beasts.”

“Yeah, no pressure or anything,” I said. “Come on, let’s get to this city so you can show me around. And so you can get some sleep.” I started walking again, and he followed.

“I fear I am placing a great burden on you, Andrew,” Ulenor said. “But I had no choice.”

“You are,” I told him. “But it’s not like I can do much about it. I mean, I’m in a different world right now, and I have no way to go back unless I help you. The way I see it, my best bet is to help you out so I can go back to my world.” And believe me, I planned to leave the moment I could.

“I am glad you have that outlook on things,” Ulenor said. “I feared I would have to trick you into this. Your ability to adapt to new situations might save us all.”

*You’ve already basically tricked me into banging goblin women so I can get home,* I thought, but I kept the words to myself. I figured I’d just have a few drinks first, sire a couple kids, then be on my way. In no time I’d be back to my dull life in the panhandle, going nowhere.

As we slowly approached the walled town, I began to grow a new sense of appreciation for the goblins. In fairy tales and similar stories they were horrible little monsters, but what stood in front of me was a beautifully-built city, something that would have looked right at home in medieval France.

We stopped before the large gates, even though they were open. More goblins milled about within the town, all of them green-skinned and near Ulenor’s height.

“I just need to catch my breath for a moment,” the wizard told me as he stood there and panted for several minutes. “Once I’m able to get some sleep, I’ll be okay,” he assured me. “Magic is very tiring to use. You’ll see.”

I turned back to the gates and studied the town within. It was a beautiful town, though everything seemed slightly small to me on account of them being shorter. The streets were smooth cobblestone, and every building and house I saw was in a good state of repair.

Looking up, I saw several guards atop the city wall, flanking the gatehouse. Even through the bars of their helmets I could



feel their gaze on me, curious at the tall, pale newcomer. Initially I thought the goblins to be helpless after what Ulenor had told me, but one look at the guards in mail armor wielding thick crossbows told me otherwise. They looked perfectly capable of defending themselves. But I supposed that depended on if they had the right mentality to use those weapons.

A goblin woman walked by and my mouth fell open in shock. I reached out and grabbed Ulenor by his robe, then yanked him near me, bringing a sharp cry from the wizard.

“You didn’t tell me they looked like that!” I said.

I realized I had probably scared the old wizard half to death and quickly released him.

“Sorry about that, but Ulenor, you could have at least described your women for me. Here I thought I was going to be clapping monster cheeks.”

“I dislike that word,” Ulenor said, pulling his robe out of my hands and brushing it off. “Yes, some of our women have been affected by the poison, and as you can see, the effect was quite different. They are more beautiful and more fertile than before. It entices our men, who are unable to do anything about it. Vogrim mocks us with this. Without the ability to mate with goblin males, it is as if Vogrim’s plan is to breed us out, one generation at a time, until there is no goblin blood left. I must confess that is one of our fears; that he will send men here to take our women by force, bringing a generation of half-breeds that would be further bred with other races, until there is no goblin blood left.”

“Wait, won’t they be half-breeds if I mate with them?”

Ulenor pursed his lips. “Yes, but of our choosing. And your children can mate with pure goblins, with the idea that future generations will hopefully retain your immunity to the poison. The added size and strength will help them survive as well. Of course, the best solution would be to also topple Vogrim from his throne.” He looked at me suddenly with hints of expectation and hope budding in his gaze.

I held both hands up. “Hold on, buddy. You just brought me here to breed with your women, not to fight some minotaur sorcerer that lives on top of a mountain.”

“My hope is that you will come to see the threat he poses to us, and that you will care enough to act,” Ulenor said, his voice sounding heavy and sad. “We are a fierce people, but it is no secret the goblin kingdom is the smallest and weakest in the land. When Vogrim finishes with us, he’ll move onto the next race, and the next, until he has enslaved the world. Goblins are simply his first step toward global domination. I hope when you see this, you’ll take action and save us all.”

“Jeeze, you’re really laying on the high expectations,” I said, turning to look back through the gates. The goblin woman I had seen a few seconds ago had stopped to watch me, curious about the pale-skinned newcomer in her town.

She was of a similar height as Ulenor, so just short of my shoulder, with a slender build. Well, slender limbs, at least. Her hips and ass had a certain thick roundness I had not expected to see anywhere other than my dreams, and she wore a short skirt made of soft brown leather that didn’t leave much

to the imagination. Her top was made of the same leather, with white cloth lining it, and exposed her large, round breasts rather deliciously. Other than being made of thin leather, her clothes looked like something suitable for the beach. Taking into consideration the warm weather here, it made sense.

Her face surprised me the most. There was nothing monstrous at all about her high cheekbones, full lips, and slender nose. Her eyes were large, like Ulenor's, and dark brown. Hair color seemed to vary among the goblins, and hers was a vivid shade of violet and hung in waves to her waist. She was, in a word, gorgeous. Her skin being green somehow didn't affect her beauty at all; in fact it merely served to make her seem more exotic.

Seeing her really put into perspective just how foul this curse was. Breathtakingly beautiful women were everywhere and eager for sex, but the goblin men were unable to perform. And, like Ulenor said, the rare times they could perform, no children arrived from the union.

Man, that Vogrim was a serious asshole. I watched the goblin woman walk away, her perfectly round ass cheeks undulating beneath that short skirt. To be surrounded by beauty like that and be unable to do anything with it was a special kind of hell.

And here I stood. All I had to do was have sex with them all.

I pulled back my hand and slapped myself across the face. It hurt, but nothing changed.

“What was that for?” Ulenor asked.

“Just making sure I wasn’t dreaming. Ulenor, your women are beautiful!”

“Yes, yes they are,” he said, nodding in agreement. “And eager for men, but the men cannot perform. And when they do perform, no children are made.”

“Yeah, you said that. Man, that’s harsh,” I said. “I can definitely understand why Vogrim is such a problem.” Ulenor looked at me suddenly. “Easy, buddy. Let’s take this one step at a time.”

“Yes, yes, of course. Come, let’s move on.”

Ulenor grabbed onto my arm again to hold himself up as he limped down the smooth street. I let him lead me and filled my time staring in wonder at the sights surrounding me. It wasn’t just the women that were beautiful.

The goblins were skilled architects. Houses and shops of pale stone lined the streets, each looking to be made by a master craftsman. Most had planter boxes in the windows, filled with flowers or herbs, and every intersection had an elaborate stone circle with a large tree in the center of it, surrounded by more flowers. Communal gardens filled many of these areas as well.

“This city is beautiful,” I told Ulenor.

“Thank you,” he said. “We take pride in these things, even in a small city like Gillamoor. Life is something to be celebrated. That is the goblin way of thought.”

“Sounds like you guys have a pretty good thing going on here,” I told him. “At least, before Vogrim fucked things up.”

“That is an accurate way of describing it,” he replied. “Here,” he said, pointing to a building down the street.

It was a relatively small house, built from smooth stone like the rest, but this one had a tower three stories tall at one corner. The top floor of the tower was filled with windows. Brown roof tiles gave it an almost Spanish feel, as did the terrace out front.

“Is that your place?” I asked him, approaching it. “Wow, this is nice.”

“Thank you, Andrew,” Ulenor replied. “I spent many years building this.”

“Hold on, you built this yourself?”

Ulenor nodded. “It is a tradition among our men to build their own houses. When a young man takes a woman for his wife, he brings her into the house and offers it to her as a wedding gift.”

“So, what woman did you build this for?” I asked, meaning it as a joke.

“That...is a long story,” Ulenor said with a sigh. “One day, I’ll give her more than just a house.” He looked around and gestured to the houses across the street. “We are all very proud of what we build. That is the goblin way.”

“I’m starting to dig you goblins more and more,” I said, watching a busty little goblin woman with blue hair walk by. She caught me looking at her and eyed me curiously for a

moment, but with clear interest. Man, these goblin women were like something out of a wet dream.

“Hey, Ulenor. Not to be pushy or anything, but can we go ahead and start this whole breeding thing?”

Ulenor let out a creaking laugh that set him to a coughing fit. “Oh, I need to lie down. I see the beauty of our women has made an impression upon you. Good. We will start later, Andrew. There are some things we need to take care of, first.”

I turned and watched her bubble butt sway side to side as she walked away. “Yeah, whatever we need to do, let’s get right on it.”

Ulenor chuckled. “Ah, the enthusiasm of youth. I remember those days. I would have done anything for the woman I loved.” He pushed on the front door to his house and it swung open. “Come in.”

I followed him into his house. Being made of stone, it had a medieval feel to it, but in some ways it was surprisingly modern. The wooden floors were smooth and polished, and the furniture looked plush and comfortable. I peered through an archway into the kitchen and saw some kind of mechanical pump handle above a sink. Household plumbing! Everything was sized for goblins, so it was a little small for me. But even taking that into account, it was probably nicer than my apartment back on Earth. I certainly didn’t have a terrace. Or a three-story tower, for that matter.

Ulenor led me through his house. We passed through his living room, which looked quite cozy with a small fireplace and

several chairs arranged perfectly for conversation with friends, and went into an adjacent room that I guessed was his study, or whatever wizards called it.

“This is my study,” Ulenor said, and I mentally high-fived myself.

Shelves filled with scrolls and books lined the walls. Glass vials and containers rested in wire stands on top of a table, along with endless jars of different-colored substances. Ingredients for potions, I supposed. That fit right along with the whole wizard thing, at least.

“Sit here for a moment,” Ulenor said as he pointed to a stool. He sighed heavily and rubbed his hand across his face. He looked like he was about to collapse.

The stool was slightly low, but I plopped down on it. Like everything else around, it was simple but well made.

Ulenor rummaged through a chest until he finally produced a tube the length of my forearm and a small glass lens. He came back to me, still looking as if he might fall over any minute.

“Shouldn’t you be sleeping?” I asked.

“I’ll rest soon enough,” he replied. “More important things must take precedent.”

He leaned forward and stared at me so hard I shifted uncomfortably on the stool. His gaze took all of me in, from my hairline to the angle my feet were at. With a slender, green hand he took the lens and held it in front of his eye, then leaned closer to me.



“Open your eyes as wide as you can,” he instructed.

I opened my eyes and he stared in them for a moment. Apparently satisfied with what he saw, he placed the lens on the table next to him and grabbed the tube. After shuffling closer to me, he placed one end of the tube against my chest, right over my heart, and pressed his ear against the other end.

“Good, good,” he said quietly. “Now, take a deep breath.” He listened as I breathed in and out several times.

“Did I pass the test, doc?” I asked him.

He looked oddly at me for a moment, like I was speaking nonsense, then shook his head and straightened up with a grunt.

“And you mentioned earlier that your seed is strong. You are able to breed,” he said as if he were going down a checklist.

“Yep, the ol’ babymaker still works great,” I replied. “So, uh.... Is there any way we can make this less awkward? Because this entire situation is just fucking weird to me.”

He looked down his nose at me. “Explain.”

“Well,” I said, scratching my head. “You used a portal to zap me into your world and one of the first things you asked was if my dick worked. Then you tell me your plan is to have me impregnate as many goblin women as possible—and I must say, after finally seeing them I’m quite excited. And you casually slip in that I might be some prophesied hero and you want me to kill a minotaur that’s also a sorcerer. Does that sum it all up?”

He pursed his lips for a moment, then nodded. “Yes, there is more detail and nuance of course, but that is the gist of it.” His expression was neutral, like nothing was out of the ordinary.

“Okay, so as I said, it’s kinda weird. I still feel like this is a hallucination or something.”

“I can assure you that the fate of my people is quite real,” he replied. “No matter how strange this situation may come off, I can assure you it is as serious as something can be. Now, I need you to stand up for me.”

I hopped off the stool and stood up straight. I was solidly average in height, but here I felt like that guy Hafthor from Iceland.

“I need you to squat ten times, then touch your toes.”

“Oh, come on, Ulenor. What are you even doing here?” I threw my hands up.

His brows lowered. “I’m making sure you’re of sound mind and body, that’s what. After all, I only suspect you’re our prophesied hero. You could be someone else; some poor sod that stumbled into my gateway that’ll die of a heart attack the moment he sees a goblin woman naked.”

I held up both hands. “Easy, Ulenor, easy. I’m pretty sure I come from a place with more advanced medical technology than you could dream of, and *those* doctors say I’m in excellent shape.”

Ulenor’s eyes narrowed as he stared at me. “Impress me.”

I thought for a moment. “I’m not really sure what to say; most of the information I could give you is stuff you wouldn’t understand. My cholesterol is just about perfect. So is my blood pressure. I can still run a mile in just under seven minutes.”

He grunted at that last bit. “You say it like it’s a reasonable amount of time, however I find myself wondering if my mile and your mile are the same distance.”

“Five thousand, two hundred and eighty feet.”

Ulenor scratched his head for a moment. “Your feet are probably different as well. No matter. Your heart is strong, and I know you are eager to fulfill your destiny, so I won’t hinder you unnecessarily.”

I stood up. “So, does that mean I’m gonna....”

Ulenor shook his head. “I’m going to take a quick nap, and you’re going to stay here in my home. I don’t want you getting into trouble without me to guide you.”

That sounded fair. I was in a new world, after all. The goblin women were indeed beautiful, but it was time to stop thinking with my dick and start thinking with my head. The other head.

I helped Ulenor stand and walked him to his bed. He pulled off his robe and hung it on a hook next to his bed. Beneath that he just wore a simple tunic and breeches over his slender form. Really, the guy needed to eat a cheeseburger or something. I was half afraid I was going to snap his arm in half as I lowered him to the bed.

Only a few seconds after his head touched the pillow, his eyes closed and his breathing fell to the slow, steady breaths of deep sleep.

Without much else to do, I wandered into the living room and sat down on a chair. The chair might have been slightly undersized for me, but it was still plenty comfortable. A book sat on a small table nearby, so I grabbed it and started reading.

It was a book on the history of magical spells; both their use and their discovery. After the first paragraph I thought it was going to be a dull, boring read, but after a couple pages I found myself enjoying it. Granted, I barely understood a thing it said, but it was well-written and time flew by.

Ulenor stepped into the living room, stifling a yawn behind his small, green hand and hitching his robe up onto his narrow shoulders. He looked down at me, reclining on his chair with a book about magic in my hands, and frowned thoughtfully.

“Thinking of becoming a wizard?” he asked.

“To be honest, it sounds pretty awesome,” I told him. “There’s just one big problem: magic doesn’t exist where I come from. I don’t think I could learn it.”

He nodded slowly as I spoke. “Yes, you bring up a good point. We’ll deal with that later.” He stretched his hands over his head until one of his shoulders popped. “I feel much better after some sleep. I cast a spell on myself earlier that helped my body regrow all the blood I lost, but I needed the sleep to recuperate from casting the spell. If you’re interested in magic, remember that much; magic can be very tiring, and sometimes you need to let your body and mind rest before you will be able to cast any spells.”

“Noted,” I said, closing the book and setting it back on the table. “So, what’s our plan for the rest of the day?”

“I need to show you around the city, and then introduce you to our mayor. Then, we will have several candidates for you to meet.”

“Candidates?” I said. “I’m going to assume these candidates are women?”

“Your assumption is correct,” he replied. “These particular women are special. It is their job to judge whether or not you are an appropriate mate. So, I would advise you to be charming, if you know how.” His tone suggested he didn’t think I was capable of it.

“Of course I can be charming,” I replied. “You just wait and see. I’ll charm their socks off.” Wait, did goblins wear socks? No matter. I stood up. “I guess I’m ready when you are.”

“Come,” Ulenor said, walking out of his house. I followed close behind and we walked into the town.

It reminded me of pictures and videos I had seen of old European towns, with all the stone houses close together, like rowhomes flanking narrow stone streets. Except it was all seven-eighths scale due to their size.

The bustle of daily activity filled the city; men and women hurrying about on chores or errands, the occasional goblin riding a small horse or pulling a cart filled with produce, hawkers selling their wares. With the warm weather, tank tops and similar style clothing was popular; a few men were even

bare-chested as they worked. I was glad to see the goblin people weren't too prudish. I heard the unmistakable clang of a hammer on an anvil and stopped for a moment to watch.

Having never before seen a blacksmith in action, I wasn't quite sure what I expected. Horseshoes or swords, I guess. Instead, I saw the goblin blacksmith hammering out incredibly intricate components that looked like they belonged in a machine of some sorts.

The blacksmith himself was the same height as the other goblins, but was covered in solid layers of muscle. For a goblin, he was probably huge.

I wondered briefly how my own DNA would change their species, if I was even compatible. Ulenor seemed to think so. With all the craziness going on, I was just looking forward to doing my part. Since my ex and I had broken up, it had been a bit since I'd gotten laid.

“And up here is the mayor's house,” Ulenor said, turning towards a two-story house that was slightly larger than most. I followed him to the elaborately carved wooden front door and stood there patiently while Ulenor knocked.

After a moment, the door opened and a goblin with wispy gray hair stood there. His clothes were made from fine materials and were perfectly tailored to his small body. Both breeches and jacket were of a dark blue, with a snowy white shirt beneath. His face broke into a broad smile when he saw us.

“Ulenor! Come in, my old friend. Who is this strange creature you bring to me?”

Strange creature? That was a bit rude.

Ulenor gestured toward me. “This is Andrew Jones, from Florida. He is here to help us.”

“Florida, eh?” the Mayor said, rubbing his chin thoughtfully. “I have not heard of this place. What are your industries in Florida?”

“Pretty sure it’s meth and beaches,” I replied, meaning it as a joke.

The mayor looked at Ulenor, slightly confused. “What is this meth? Does he have any for us?”

I held out my hand, ending that line of conversation. “It’s good to meet you, mayor.”

He blinked, then took my hand with another broad smile. “Please, forgive me. I am Mayor Beezle. Welcome to Gillamoor, Andrew Jones.”

“Just Andrew is fine,” I told him.

“Well, it’s great to meet you, Andrew. Wonderful, just wonderful.” Mayor Beezle pumped my hand up and down enthusiastically for a moment. He certainly seemed excited.

“I assume you’re eager to begin your task,” Mayor Beezle said, finally releasing my hand.

I shrugged. “You know me, I’m just here to help however I can.” That was a better answer than the truth, that I was indeed eager like a kid in a candy store.



“Splendid, just splendid,” the mayor said. “Have you given any thought to defeating Vogrim?”

Man, these guys really wanted me to fight that damn minotaur. I wasn't particularly excited about the thought of being killed by some horned monster, so I planned to avoid that like the plague for as long as possible. Hopefully forever.

“I'm just a regular guy, mayor. I don't think I'd stand a chance against a minotaur sorcerer.” It was an honest answer.

“Yes, I suppose,” he replied, although I could hear disappointment in his voice. “Well, shall we show him around, Ulenor?”

“I've been doing my best, but I'm sure you can help with some things that slipped my mind,” the wizard said.

The mayor rubbed his hands together briskly. “Wonderful, just wonderful. Let me see Colonel Chuleel out and we'll get started.”

Ulenor grumbled something under his breath, then turned to me as the mayor went back inside his house. “Watch your step around Colonel Chuleel. He's good at his job, but he's like a rose bush that's all thorns and no flowers.”

“Lovely,” I replied. I had known some people like that back when I had served in the Army, and they were never good company.

Moments later, Mayor Beezle returned with another goblin in tow. Colonel Chuleel was several inches taller than any other

goblin I had seen so far, although still much shorter than me. I could tell it irked him that he had to look up at me.

His uniform consisted of a dark green jacket and breeches, with golden bands around the bottom of his sleeves that I assumed designated his rank. His hair, a shade of green so dark it initially looked black, was trimmed short, and he was clean-shaven. His eyes were also dark, and they examined me with suspicion. His mouth twisted into a sour frown.

“Who’s the pale-skin?” he asked, clearly meaning offense.

My knee jerk reaction was to punch him in the mouth, but the last thing I wanted to do was ruin my chances here. I offered him my hand and introduced myself.

“I’m Andrew Jones, from Florida. Ulenor brought me here through a portal.”

Ignoring my hand, he looked me up and down and grunted, then turned to the wizard. “A portal, Ulenor? Haven’t we talked about this before? You said Vogrim could detect gateways within a hundred miles. He will surely try to figure out what’s going on, and retaliate against any action we take.”

Ulenor frowned thoughtfully. “He might try something, yes, but we are out of options, Chuleel.”

Chuleel’s face wrinkled into a hard glare. “We are not out of options, wizard. You won’t even consider the military option; that is your problem. As I have been trying to tell the both of you, properly funded, our armies could march on Vogrim and

crush him.” He slammed a green fist into his other palm to punctuate the statement.

The mayor gave him a tired smile. “If only it were that easy, Colonel. If only.”

Colonel Chuleel turned his hard gaze to me. “Instead, you cast spells and bring *this* to our town. This sorry sack of dung is supposed to be the savior of goblinkind? And violate our women? Excuse me. While you men are wasting everyone’s time, I’ll be preparing my army.” He roughly pushed through the other two goblins and past me.

I stood my ground, so his shove sent him moving more than it did me. He eyed me briefly, his hand flexing near the hilt of his short sword, but he finally sneered at me and hurried away.

“Wow,” I said, watching him walk away. “What an asshole.”

“Please, forgive Colonel Chuleel,” Mayor Beezle said apologetically. “He’s an excellent military leader and has helped train our soldiers here in our town, but he can be lacking in charisma at times.”

“Yeah, I can tell,” I said.

“He is a hammer,” Ulenor said. “And so he sees everything as a nail. He really thinks that we can march our armies up to Vogrim and defeat him.” Ulenor scoffed, showing what he thought of that idea. “I think the only survivor of that battle would be Vogrim himself. The vast majority of goblins are pacifists. Colonel Chuleel is an outlier, but he still thinks we can destroy Vogrim ourselves if enough goblins fight.”

I turned back to my green companions. “Enough about him. I’d love to see more of your town, and then I’m ready to do my duty.”

Mayor Beezle turned to Ulenor. “He *is* eager, isn’t he?”

“Can’t say I blame him,” Ulenor replied with a shrug.

Together, they walked me through the large town. They took turns pointing out buildings and places of interest, including the market district, the military barracks, and the local schools. Goblins put a lot of worth into the schools. The buildings were large and elaborate, with fluted columns and high-peaked roofs. They were busy, too, with goblins of all ages coming in and out.

“Education is a big thing here, I take it,” I said.

“Yes, indeed,” Ulenor replied. “Goblins are seekers of knowledge of all kinds.”

“I put much of our tax revenue into our school system,” Mayor Beezle explained. “An educated society is a strong society, after all. Colonel Chuleel has been trying to get me to agree to reduce the education budget and pump more money into the military, but that is not our way. The king doesn’t do it, and I won’t do it. Colonel Chuleel says the only way to counter Vogrim is through military might.” The mayor scoffed. “As if we could march up there and defeat him ourselves. If that were possible, it would have been done ages ago, but he refuses to listen to reason.”

“His army would be flattened in a matter of hours,” Ulenor agreed. “We are peaceful people, not fighters.”

It sounded like these goblins had built quite a nice society here. The town of Gillamoor—they often called it a town, but it was really a small city—was clean and well-maintained, with fountains or trees at many intersections and parks interspersed throughout the place. Flowers grew in every park, kept alive year-round by magic. I stopped by one of the parks and picked a few of the brightly-colored flowers.

“Flowers?” Mayor Beezle asked me with a raised eyebrow.

“Hey, just trying to be charming,” I replied with a shrug.

A few big-eyed children stopped their playing to point at me, the tall, pale-skinned dude, as I walked by. I couldn’t help but notice that I didn’t see any children below a certain age. Based on what Ulenor had said, there were probably little to no children under the age five or six. This Vogrim guy was set on destroying their way of life.

Why, though? Was he just a textbook villain, eager to crush and conquer the world, or was there something deeper here? For the first time, I began to wonder.

It wasn’t like it would ever be a concern of mine, though. I planned on sleeping with as many goblin beauties as they would allow, then going back to my world. I’d just treat it as a vacation.

“And here is our temple,” Ulenor said, waving his hand toward a tall, columned building to our right.

The marble walls of the temple were carved all over with scenes showing Zozella, the Goddess of Light and Knowledge, looking after her flock, as they were called. Zozella was depicted as a beautiful goblin woman with four arms, though far taller than average. She probably stood six or seven feet tall. She gave her people—the goblins—the gift of writing, and taught them to record things in books. Her blessing extended to all seekers of knowledge, according to Ulenor.

“She sounds like a nice, uh, goddess,” I said. I wasn’t a particularly religious person, but then again this seemed very different than how things were on Earth.

“She is perfect in every way. Come,” Ulenor said matter-of-factly, then motioned for me to follow him and the mayor up the stairs. “Let us introduce you to the first candidates. The Mothers of a New Age.”

I followed them up the wide marble stairs of the temple. The front doors stood open—they were always open, according to Ulenor. It signified Zozella’s openness to all.

As we entered the temple, we strode down a broad center aisle flanked with carved wooden pews. Several worshippers sat on them, uttering quiet prayers to their goddess. At the end of the aisle stood a statue of the goddess herself. It was the most detailed statue I had ever seen.

“Your stonemasons are truly talented,” I said as we approached the statue.

Mayor Beezle chuckled. “Yes, she is,” he said. He saw that I didn’t understand his little joke, and explained further. “This statue was not made by goblin hands, Andrew Jones. Sorry, Andrew. This temple was one of the first things we built when Ulenor’s father founded this town. Zozella shaped the statue herself, in her likeness. That she did it so readily showed us her pleasure with our actions.”

I looked up at the statue.

As I had seen before in the carvings, Zozella was tall, easily six feet. She looked like a goblin woman, with the same slender features and large eyes and pointed ears. Her face was flawless, even in stone she was the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. Her figure was something out of a wet dream; lithe and toned, strong and curvaceous. What I wasn't expecting was that she had four arms. It somehow didn't look out of place, and fit her perfectly.

That made sense, though. She was a goddess, after all.

We stopped in front of the beautiful statue, and my two goblin companions bowed their heads reverently. I copied their motions, though perhaps not quite as deeply.

“With your blessing, this will work and our people will be saved,” Mayor Beezle said to the statue.

I leaped back a step and bit off a curse as the statue moved. Zozella's face smiled as she looked down at the mayor and one of her hands dipped down and lay on his head for a brief moment. She looked over at Ulenor and her smile deepened. I watched in amazement as the statue of Zozella moved back into her previous standing position, though still with the smile upon her stone face.

“What the shit, man,” I exclaimed. “The statue moved!”

Mayor Beezle and Ulenor turned to face me, both of them looking confused. They looked at each other, and it was Ulenor that spoke.



“Of course she did. How else would she let Beezle know that she approved of his efforts?”

I shook my head, trying to take it all in. “Sorry, guys. I meant no disrespect or anything. This type of thing just doesn’t happen where I come from.” I looked up at the goddess. “Uh, sorry ma’am.”

Her smile deepened a tiny fraction.

Sexy goblins? Moving statues? Minotaur sorcerers? What the hell was I getting myself into? What was this strange world?

Ulenor, seeing the shock on my face, took me by the hand and led me away.

“Come, Andrew. You must meet the first three candidates.” He and Mayor Beezle led me to the side of the sanctuary, where they opened a door. I didn’t quite have to duck to enter the room, but it was close.

The room we entered was large, though not nearly as expansive as the main sanctuary. The walls were paneled with dark wood, intricately carved with wild animals and flowers, and the ceiling was similar but made from a much lighter-colored wood. A massive bed had been set in the corner, larger than a king-size, covered with pristine pale blue sheets. Standing in the opposite corner was a large copper bathtub and matching sink, with a stack of fresh towels next to it.

What caught my eye the most were the three women standing obediently in the center of the room. I kept my hand behind my back, so they couldn’t see the flowers I held.

They were each different, but so beautiful my mouth went dry upon seeing them. They were all roughly the same height, just short of my shoulder, with slender builds. Probably around the age of twenty, early twenties at the latest, although with the goblins it was hard to tell sometimes. Even the grandmas looked great.

The woman on the left had long hair in a shade of bluish-green. Her big brown eyes stared at me with an odd mixture of fear and determination. Her breasts were surprisingly large for such a small, slender woman, and barely contained by the top she wore, which looked like the medieval version of a lace bra.

Like the other two women, her clothing was minimal; aside from the bra, they only wore a thin belt around their toned waists with a narrow strip of silk cloth covering the front and back, leaving their hips bare. The silk was blue for the woman on the left, red for the woman in the center, and purple for the woman on the right.

The woman in the center stood an inch taller than the other two, and her green skin a touch paler. Her eyes were a stunning shade of violet and watched me, unblinking. Her hair was jet black and fell to her waist in waves. Like her companions, she had full hips, a toned midsection, and large, heavy breasts. This woman had visible abdominal muscles.

The woman on the right was the shortest, but only by a couple inches. Her hair was a beautiful light purple, and she was the curviest of the three. Each of her breasts was a double handful, and her hips and thighs were deliciously thick.

I'll admit, I struggled not to get an erection the moment I saw them. That was a struggle I lost within seconds.

"I hope they are to your liking," Mayor Beezle said as he and Ulenor took a step back.

I looked at both of them and realized they wanted me to, well, inspect the women.

I took a few steps forward and approached them. Three sets of eyes watched me, all of them carefully hiding fear. Why were they so afraid of me? I didn't have any weapons, I wasn't particularly imposing, and we were in a temple. They were as safe as could be. Out on the streets, several women had eyed me openly, with no fear at all.

And then it struck me.

These women had volunteered to let an alien from a different world sleep with them in order to help save their race. They made that promise not knowing what I would look like or how I would act. I could have been a violent monster, but they were willing to sacrifice themselves. They were willing to bear my children to save their people.

I couldn't even imagine the bravery that took.

The woman in the center moved first. She took a small step forward and bowed her head to me, then spoke.

"I know we are different, but I hope you find us adequate," she said, her voice firm and strong. I could see the fear in her eyes, but it was tightly reined in. "We do not know the mating rituals of your world, or how you choose your mates. But if

you need to...examine us in any way, please let us know and we shall comply.”

Wow. I reminded myself they were trying to save their people. How could I approach this in the proper manner? They were all gorgeous beyond words, but the notion of a woman sleeping with me because the fate of her race depended on it suddenly killed the mood. I would prefer it if they were actually interested in me. Call me old fashioned, I guess. Had I walked into a room filled with naked women I would have jumped on them, but the fear I saw in their eyes, the hesitance in their motions, that really made things different.

I stood there for a moment, tapping my lips as I thought. I studied their faces and they watched me in return. The flowers stayed behind my back.

“I guess I didn’t quite realize how serious this was,” I said, and the women looked at each other, confused.

“Is everything alright?” the mayor said, moving up to my side. He seemed concerned.

“Oh, everything is great,” I told him. “In fact, I don’t think things could be any better. Would you mind if I spent some time alone with them?”

The mayor nodded, happiness clear on his face. “Take as long as you need,” he said, and he and Ulenor shuffled from the room. He probably thought I was ready to leap into bed with them. I turned back to the women and one of them flinched as I took a step closer.

“Hey, easy,” I said, walking around them and to the bed. I sat down, then patted the blanket next to me. “Come over here, all of you. Let’s just talk for a minute. Is that okay?”

“Whatever you wish,” said the short, thick one. Her voice was high pitched and musical.

As they approached the bed their thin silk garments swished around their thighs, giving me a peek at their nether regions. They were completely hairless. I felt blood rushing to my crotch and cleared my throat as I adjusted myself. To help hide my boner, I handed each of them a flower as they came to the bed and sat next to me. One of them began undoing her bra.

They accepted the flowers stiffly and formally, but I saw one of them smile. The taller one, with the black hair.

“Okay, first things first. What are your names?” I decided to start from the beginning.

They looked at each other briefly. The woman undoing her bra stopped. Her breasts had already spilled out of the top and she suddenly covered them with her hands, then slowly pulled her hands away.

“Our names?” the short one asked.

“Yeah, your names. Look, I know you’re probably nervous right now. Just relax, okay? I promise I’m not going to mistreat you in any way.”

It was the tall woman that spoke next. “We thought—we thought you called us to the bed to mate with us. Do you not find us adequate?”

“On the contrary,” I replied. “You’re all very beautiful, and I’m still having trouble believing I was somehow chosen to be with women like you. I also wanted to say that I understand you’re all probably frightened. Your bravery is admirable. Now, your names, please.”

The short woman with the thick thighs introduced herself as Lossia. The tallest woman was named Thilli, and the woman with the blue-green hair was named Cirro. I told them my name was Andrew.

“I’m not going to force myself on you,” I told them. They seemed to relax a bit at that.

“Please understand, Andrew, that we do this for the future of our people. If we fail to breed with you, all goblins will eventually die out.” Lossia seemed to have broken through some of her fear, at least for the moment.

I looked at the three of them. “They expect the three of you to birth an entire generation?” I asked.

“No,” Thilli explained. “We volunteered to go first, to ensure this would work. We are willing to risk our lives to see if you are a worthy mate. If we deem you adequate, you will be taken to York, to meet with King Freg. He will assign you many partners so that you may sire the next generation with as many women as possible.”

I ran my fingers through my hair. Initially, this had sounded like a fun romp in the sheets, but now the gravity of the situation was really starting to weigh on me. It was a serious responsibility.

“What about the three of you? If we, uh, mate, what happens to the three of you?” Perhaps talking about this would ease all of our nerves.

Lossia spoke again. She held her chin high with pride. “We are the Mothers of a New Age. We will be heralded as the progenitors of an age of goblin prosperity. Our children will be a sign to the people that our future is bright and secure.”

I shook my head. “No, I mean like... Us. What about *us*? Am I supposed to sleep with you all and then leave you? That seems kinda impersonal.”

Cirro finally spoke. “That depends on you, Andrew. When you have done your duty, you may choose to leave us and return to your world. If for some reason you wished to stay here, you would have the option of taking us as wives. You could, in fact, choose any of the women you mate with as wives. A reward for your duties, if you will.”

Wives? Looking at them, that didn't seem like such a bad idea. Not at all. But holy shit, this was not what I had been expecting.

I hadn't given a ton of thought yet to whether or not I would return to my world. Most people would want to go home, but my situation was a bit different.

I had no family; my father was an abusive drunk and I hadn't spoken to him in years. My mother had struggled with serious depression and had taken her own life a decade ago. I had a sister, but her life had ended in a school shooting. I didn't care for the small town I lived in, and while my job was something

I generally enjoyed, it had no room for advancement. No future. I kept telling myself it was only temporary and that I would move on one day, but I had been there for two years and counting.

Sure, I had my circle of friends, but overall my life felt like I was running on a treadmill; putting in all that effort and going nowhere.

Lossia let her bra fall to the bed and moved in front of me. She fixed her big eyes on mine and pulled on a small cord attached to her belt. It fell to the floor, leaving her completely naked.

I was at a loss for words. Lossia was breathtaking, with her full breasts and thick thighs. Her skin was pale green, with her nipples being a shade darker. Her breasts were firm and held their shape, even without the support of a bra.

She looked down at me for a moment, then spoke.

“We talked prior to this and agreed that I would go first. Please, just tell me how you want me.” Her voice was small, and quivered slightly. She was afraid.

Part of me wanted to tell her to sit on my face. In the end, though, if I was going to be with these women, I wanted them to want it as well. Besides, their fear was a deal-breaker for me.

“Come here,” I said, standing up. I adjusted my raging hard-on, shifting it to the side.

She took a small step forward so that she was standing right in front of me. I towered over her.



I looked down into Lossia's beautiful eyes, at her full lips, at her impossibly beautiful body. If I played my cards right, she could be my wife one day. All three of them could. Or a dozen. A hundred.

I took her face gently in my hands, and bent down and kissed her. Her lips were soft and her breath was sweet. Her big eyes looked into mine, the fear shrinking but still present.

Could I really sleep with a goblin? Could I marry one? She was no different than a human woman, at least in ways that mattered. Sure, she was a bit shorter and had green skin, but she was gorgeous beyond words. I leaned down and kissed her again. If my body pumped any more blood into my crotch, I think my dick might have exploded.

I pulled away from Lossia and sat back on the bed. She watched me, expectantly. So did Cirro and Thilli. Perhaps it was because my body was so busy pumping blood into my dick instead of my head that I spoke the next question.

“So let me get this straight. If I successfully impregnate you all, I can take the three of you as wives?”

They nodded as one, but the look on their faces said they weren't eager for it. That was a bit of a mood-killer as well. In a matter of minutes I had gone from being ready to impregnate an entire race, to wanting to win these women over. Strange how that works, sometimes.

Lossia spoke again. “That is, if you choose to remain in our world. I imagine you would want to return to your family.” She stepped closer to me, still eager to do her duty, still afraid.

It was clear she saw it as her duty, though; she didn't actually desire me. I put a hand up, stalling her.

“What would it take for you to be happy with a husband?” I turned, taking in Cirro and Thilli. “That goes for all of you.”

The question caught them all off-guard. Cirro pursed her lips in thought, while Thilli looked to her companions, perhaps seeking guidance. Lossia placed her hands on her round hips and looked down at me.

“Look,” I explained. “I want you all—believe me, I do—but for right now how about we all just relax and get to know each other?” If I had a chance at spending my life with these women, I also wanted to ensure I wasn't going to marry a psycho. Besides, if what everyone was saying was true, I would be sleeping with hundreds of women over the next few weeks. Putting it off for a day or two—and for a good reason—wasn't going to kill me.

Thilli looked concerned at my words. “If we are not to your liking, please just send us away and more suitable mates will be found for you.”

I laughed. I couldn't help it. Something about the situation was just funny. Here I was, surrounded by three of the most gorgeous women in existence—green skin and pointy ears notwithstanding—and I was telling them to slow down while they were eager to fuck my brains out.

“Thilli,” I said, turning to the taller goblin woman. “I don't think there's a more perfectly beautiful woman in this world than you. Believe me, I want you. All of you.”

“Then why do you not take us?” she demanded. Color stained her cheeks at my compliment.

“Because you’re more than just a hole to fuck,” I said, a bit of irritation leaking out into my voice. “You’re women, you have feelings and lives and desires and I actually give a damn about that. Call me crazy, but I’m not too keen on the thought of having sex with a woman when she feels she’s forced to. I’d rather you truly want me; it’s more enjoyable for both parties that way. And since I apparently have the option to marry the lot of you, I’d really like to start this the right way.”

Thilli looked down at the flower I had given her and smelled it. “How did you know these were my favorite?” she asked.

I sighed. “Perhaps Zozella helped me a bit and guided my hand,” I told her.

Lossia laughed. Her laugh was high and musical, and refreshing to hear after the tension of the last few minutes.

“So, you actually want to get to know us?” Thilli asked. Her stress seemed to be melting away.

“I do. I really do,” I told her. Lossia was still standing next to me, naked, so I reached out and picked her up. She yelped, and I settled her on my lap. She gave me an odd look for a moment, then wiggled her round bottom and got comfortable.

“Is this what women from your world do?” she asked, wiggling again on my lap for emphasis.

“Sometimes,” I told her. “Look, I know this is awkward for you ladies as well. I’m just....” I thought for a moment,

looking each of them in the eye in turn.

I wrapped an arm around Lossia's hips and laid my hand along her thigh. She looked down at me suddenly, clearly feeling how rock-hard I was. With a straight face, she moved on my lap again, gyrating just slightly. Her face broke into the slightest smile as she put a slender arm around my shoulders, which put her large breasts right in my face. I think being near me, touching me, had helped ease her tension.

"What would make you want me?" I asked Lossia.

"I already want you," she replied, still gyrating on my lap.

"No, you want to do your duty, even though it terrifies you. What would make you want me as a person, as a partner? If you weren't trying to save all goblins. If we were two regular people that had just met, what would make you want to be with me?"

She stopped moving her bottom and thought for a moment. "I'm not sure. I don't get that luxury. My father would have to choose you for me."

Note to self, win over Lossia's father. Hopefully, he wasn't too much of an asshole.

I turned to Thilli. "What about you, Thilli? What would make you interested in me? To want me as a person, not to just see me as your duty."

She leaned her head to one side, her face suddenly serious. "You would have to catch my attention somehow, and hold it. Be strong, honorable, and brave. And you would have to treat

me like the most important thing in your entire universe. Most importantly, you would have to take this seriously and mate with as many goblin women as possible. You would have to save our people. I don't think I could love a stranger from a different world, but I could absolutely love the man that saved goblinkind."

So, Thilli wanted me to bang every goblin woman in sight before she would let me have her. Nice. "And you?" I asked, turning to Cirro.

She tossed her blue-green hair over her shoulder and answered without hesitation. "I could only give my heart to a man that truly cared about me and my people. A man with the honor and courage to see the situation we faced, and help out. You may have my body if you wish, Andrew, but if you want my heart you must kill Vogrim."

Well, shit.

I swallowed heavily. That damn sorcerer. I had only been in this world half a day and I already hated that bastard.

Cirro watched me and crossed her arms beneath her full breasts. I turned and saw that Thilli was watching me in a similar manner. For that matter, so was Lossia.

“You want us to love you, Andrew?” Lossia asked. “Now you know what you have to do to win us over. Save our people, and we will marry you.” She moved off of my lap and stood in front of me, looking at me with her hands on her hips and a serious expression on her face.

“Well, I guess that’s fair,” I said with a shrug. “I can’t expect you to like a guy that doesn’t care about your people.”

I reached down and picked up Lossia’s clothes from the floor, then handed them to her. She looked a question at me, confused by my actions.

“What are you doing?” she asked.

I tried to think of the best way to explain it to her. To all of them. “I’ve been in a relationship before where we grew tired of each other,” I said. “But neither of us broke things off for a while. Complacency, I guess. It wasn’t very fun and I don’t want to relive a situation where I’m with someone that doesn’t want me. I’m stuck in your world until I do my duty, so I might as well do it right.”

“Which means....” Thilli began.

“Which means I’m not sleeping with any of you today. I understand you have a duty to your people, but this just doesn’t feel right to me. If this is going to be something someday,” my gesture took in all four of us, “then I want it to be real. I want our desires for each other to be mutual.”

Cirro studied me for a moment. “What are you saying, Andrew? Be straight with us.”

“If I have a chance at spending my years with you three, then I want to do things right,” I explained. “Which means I’m not going to sleep with any of you until you want me for who I am, not just because I’m here as breeding stock. I’ll do my job and mate with the rest, but I want to win you three over.”

Cirro put her hands on her hips. “We’re the Mothers of a New Age, Andrew. I don’t think you understand how important this is to us.”

“I do understand,” I replied. “I’m sure you have to report to someone.” Her slight nod confirmed my suspicion. “Tell them you think I’m a suitable candidate so I can help your race out.

But I'd like to treat the three of you as something more than just my duty."

Lossia sat on the bed and pulled her bra on. "I feel like I should be angry with you for this, but I'm not." She looked over at the other two women. "Relief is all I feel. I wasn't looking forward to this. I was terrified that you were going to be some type of horrible monster, and that I would have to sleep with you to save my people." She looked back at me. "At least you're somewhat handsome."

"Will there be any repercussions if someone else gets pregnant before you three?" I asked. "You're the Mothers of a New Age, after all."

"No," Thilli said, shaking her head. "Our duty is to bear your children, yes, but also to ensure you're safe for others. We are the first ones to be with you, the buffer in case you turned out to be a monster, or if you weren't actually able to perform."

"And you understand that regardless of how much you want to win us over, you will still be required to mate with many women," Lossia said.

"I guess I hadn't given it much serious thought," I said. "I mean, I never considered how they would actually do it."

Lossia chuckled low in her throat. "Oh, you just wait until they send you to York to meet the king. You won't sleep for a week."

"But how do we know you're fit?" Cirro asked. "How do we know you're even able to mate with us?"



“Because I’ve had an erection hard enough to stab through a brick wall since the moment Lossia took off her clothes,” I said with a shrug.

“It’s true,” Lossia said, suddenly blushing. “I felt it when I sat on his lap.”

“That’s only part of it,” Cirro said, still not impressed. “Remember, with Vogrim’s curse, no man in our nation can finish. Can you? I mean, can you....”

“One way to find out,” Thilli broke in. She took a step toward me and grabbed onto my belt.

Within seconds, Lossia was there at her side, undoing my pants. After only a few seconds my belt was on the floor and my pants around my ankles. They stared at me for a moment, eyes wide.

“Well, he *is* a lot bigger than us,” Thilli said, her stern expression fading into a seductive smile as she focused on my crotch.

Lossia pushed me back and I fell onto the bed. They were on me in seconds, hands grabbing and lips kissing.

“Not that I want you to stop, but I said—”

“Hush,” Cirro said. “We have to make sure everything works.” With that, she opened her mouth and wrapped her lips around the head of my dick.

There was nothing else for me to do but lie back and enjoy it. I closed my eyes and smiled, enjoying Cirro’s warm, wet mouth. She sucked on the tip, then took as much of me in her

mouth as she could with her slender hand wrapped tightly around the base of my shaft.

“I want some too,” Thilli said next to her.

Cirro let go and Thilli immediately replaced her, sucking more aggressively than the shorter woman. She pumped her hand up and down while sucking on the tip of my cock, driving me wild.

I looked up and noticed all three of them had somehow shed their clothes without me even seeing it. Their perfect bodies writhed on the bed around my thighs, toned stomachs, curvaceous hips, strong legs, full breasts. Each of them was built differently, and each of them was perfect in her own way.

Lossia crawled up next to them, eager for her turn, just as Cirro shuffled around to my side. My eyes went to that perky behind of hers as she crawled across the bed and I couldn't help myself.

I reached out and grabbed her by the thigh and pulled, bringing a yelp from her. Her tiny figure couldn't have weighed more than eighty pounds, so I hefted her above me and sat her down right on my face.

“What are you doing, Andrew? I don't—ohhhh,” she said as I started licking at her clitoris.

The skin of her labia was soft green like the rest of her, but inside she was deliciously pink. I licked and lapped at her and sucked at her love button to the best of my ability while squeezing on her magnificent ass with both hands. From the

noises she made, I don't think she had ever experienced anything of this nature.

"That looks like fun," Lossia said.

Thilli replied with an "mmhmm" but her mouth was full of my cock so not much came out.

I felt Lossia's heavy breasts rubbing against my thigh as she leaned down, eager for her turn. Thilli was determined to get me off and wasn't willing to step aside, so Lossia licked along the underside of my shaft and gently sucked on my balls while Thilli kept sucking on the tip.

"By the gods," Cirro said. "My whole body is tingling." Her moans kept building and I latched onto her clitoris like a lamprey, almost relentless in my efforts to please her. Soon quivers ran through her body, and I gripped her slender hips tightly to hold her in place. Her moans reached a crescendo and she suddenly called out while riding my face.

She rolled off of me, breathing hard, trying to say something but letting out little more than whimpers. I looked down and saw Lossia watching with interest. She probably wanted to be next. I was fine with that.

Thilli's aggressive sucking did its job and soon I felt a familiar pressure building up deep inside me. I hit that point and knew there was no turning back.

I finally reached my climax and roared like a wild animal. My muscles clenched and I erupted into Thilli's mouth like a

geyser, filling her with thick squirts. Her eyes widened at the size of my load.

“Me too,” Cirro said, pushing her way in. She grabbed my cock and pulled it from Thilli’s mouth, then quickly began sucking on it, draining the last drops of cum from my balls.

Thilli knelt there for a moment, her mouth still filled with my cum. I don’t think she was expecting so much, and found herself unsure of what to do. She swallowed audibly and smiled at me.

Feeling the moment, Cirro removed her mouth from my cock after sucking the last bits of cum from me and reached up and grabbed Lossia’s face and pulled it to her own. She kissed the thicker woman passionately, her tongue pressing into her mouth. Lossia looked startled at first, but then went with it and wrapped her arms around Cirro’s neck. They kissed for several moments, until they had both swallowed my cum.

Thilli leaned down and sucked on me during that time, squeezing my cock firmly, trying to get every last drop of cum from me. I twitched and shook as she did so, which brought a laugh from her.

“It’s sensitive after you finish, right?” she asked, giving me another long, hard suck.

“Uhhhh,” I said, laughing. “Yeah, very.”

“Well, at least now we know that everything works,” Thilli said, delicately wiping her lip with a slender finger. “I like how you taste.”

“Yes, now we know,” Lossia said, finally breaking her kiss with Cirro. She looked back at the woman again for a moment and smiled, then kissed her again.

They had rolled around a bit, giving me a perfect view of Lossia’s ass. It was, to be honest, the most incredible thing I’d ever seen. It was like a work of art.

I placed my hands behind my head and stayed there for a moment, catching my breath. A smile crept onto my face.

“So, now you can work on winning us over,” Cirro said, finally pulling away from Lossia. She gave Lossia a shy smile, but crawled closer to me.

“I said I would and I meant it,” I told her.

“And you’re a man of your word, Andrew?” Lossia asked. She turned and crawled off the bed, shaking her hips side to side as she did so.

She stood in front of me, her hands on her hips and her feet spread, giving me a view of her nether regions as if silently asking me what I was willing to do to have her. Thilli stood next to her with her side facing me, showing off her strong, curvy body. Lust and white-hot desire burned through my veins, seeing them.

“I always keep my word,” I told her. “Do you? Did you three speak the truth earlier? If I help you out and defeat Vogrim, I get to take all three of you as my wives?”

Cirro slid off the bed and stood next to the other two. One of her hands went to Lossia’s stomach and she lay it there, with

her other hand on the thick woman's lower back. She gave me a weighing look.

"We told the truth," Cirro said.

Confronted by their stunning beauty, my dick continued to do the thinking for me.

"Then I swear, with Zozella as my witness, that I will kill Vogrim and save our people." The moment the words left my mouth I felt a rush of heat, then a sharp chill. I didn't know if that was something Zozella did or my own nerves cursing me for being an idiot.

"*Our* people?" Thilli asked with a slender eyebrow raised.

"Yes," I replied, looking at all of them. "Because I plan on keeping all of you. Your people will become my people."

Thilli took a step forward and laid a hand on my shoulder. I looked into her violet eyes, shining with hope. She leaned forward and kissed me softly.

"Then you have our support," Thilli said, pulling away from my lips.

"What are you going to tell the, uh, whoever you report to?" I asked.

"That you are a suitable mate," Lossia said. "That you are eager to serve our people." Her tone held the barest hint of a question.

"Good," I said with a nod. I stood and pulled my pants up, then fastened my belt. "I guess it's time for me to get to work."

I moved forward and pulled each of the beautiful women into a tight hug. They hugged back, a bit awkwardly but I could tell they were warming up to me. I initially found it funny that there would be any hesitation considering they had just gone down on me, but then again they were doing that to save their people. They would give me their bodies, but I had to earn their hearts.

“Thank you for listening to me,” I said as I kissed each one of them. “Thank you for understanding. I know this is very important to you.”

“It *is* very important,” Lossia said. “And we have a lot of planning to do.” She stood on her toes and kissed me. “My father will expect me to dedicate my every moment to this,” she added quietly, almost as an afterthought.

“So, about that,” I said. “Who are you? You’ve mentioned your father twice now, and in rather strange ways.”

Lossia pursed her lips. Thilli was the one who answered. “We are the Mothers of a New Age. Who we were before doesn’t matter. All that matters is the future.”

“Come on, ladies. I’m just trying to get to know you,” I said. “Here, I’ll start. I grew up in a small town in a place called Florida. My hometown sucked, so I joined the army out of high school and spent four years as an infantryman, because my recruiter convinced me it would be fun. What he didn’t tell me was that I didn’t really gain any valuable job skills during my enlistment, so when I got out after four years I went back to my hometown and got a job as a welder. To be honest, it’s not that great and there is no room for advancement. I had finally gotten around to using the G.I. Bill. I was about to start college next semester, although I guess that won’t be happening now.”

“So you’re a military man?” Cirro asked.

“Not really,” I said, trying to explain. “Back in my world, people often serve in the military just as a job. The pay is okay, and it offers some great benefits. I just did it to get a step ahead in life. What about you?” I asked, turning to Cirro.

“My father is a butcher from the town of Holmar,” she replied. I felt the other women tense slightly at the mention of her past. “This is important for us, you know. The elders of our nation got together to select one woman for this. Out of the whole goblin nation, I was the one selected. I’m a very fortunate woman.”



I whistled appreciatively. “How about you, Thilli?” I asked, turning to her.

She stared at me for a moment, then sighed. “I guess there’s no harm in it. My father is General Cromar. He paid a lot of money for his daughter to have such an honored position in our society. I don’t think there is any greater honor right now among the goblin people than what has been bestowed upon the three of us.”

“How about you, Lossia?”

She moved behind Thilli and crossed her arms beneath her large breasts. “I am a Mother of a New Age. Who I was before does not matter. That woman no longer exists. Please, let’s move on.”

Well, that was certainly an odd answer. I didn’t understand why she was so defensive.

“Lossia, you said earlier that you wouldn’t get a choice at a partner; that your father would choose for you. What are you, royalty or something?” I meant it as a joke, so I gave her my best grin.

She stood there, deathly still. I don’t think she even breathed. Her cheeks darkened and her eyes flashed to the other two women. Until that moment, I didn’t realize goblins blushed.

“Lossia?” I asked.

“We are the Mothers of a New Age,” she replied, her voice stiffly formal.

Thilli suddenly looked down at the bed, refusing to speak. She looked like she was hiding something as well.

Cirro suddenly gasped and covered her mouth with both hands. “*Princess Lossia?*”

Princess? Wait, what?

Cirro looked absolutely horrified. Her eyes, already big, almost seemed to bulge. “Oh no, I *thought* I recognized that name! I thought it was just a coincidence, that someone else shared your name. Oh, Princess Lossia, I am so sorry. I shouldn’t have touched you like that.” Cirro blushed hard and buried her face in her hands. Tears leaked from her eyes.

Holy shit, a princess!

“Nonsense,” Lossia said.

Cirro started to cry into her hands out of shame. She apologized to the princess between her sobs, and begged for her forgiveness.

Lossia walked over to Cirro, who tried to pull back. Lossia grabbed her and pulled her into a tight embrace. Cirro initially resisted, but then laid her head against Lossia’s shoulder.

“Our pasts are erased,” Lossia said, smoothing the other woman’s hair. “We are equals now. Equals, Cirro. You have committed no wrong against me. Touching someone in a moment of passion is no sin. Besides,” she added with a smile. “I liked it when you kissed me.”

Cirro got herself under control and pulled away from Lossia. “I’m sorry,” she said. “It’s hard to get over some things, no

matter what we are now.”

Cirro and Lossia stood there for a moment, bodies pressed tightly together, arms wrapped around each other. Cirro still had traces of fear and shame in her eyes, but Lossia leaned forward and kissed her softly.

“The past is in the past,” Thilli said, straightening up. “Our lives are dedicated to the future.” She looked down at me. “And right now, our most pressing issue is this strange, pink-skinned giant that wants to wed us.” From her tone, I couldn’t tell if she was okay with that or not.

“Have you fought any sorcerers in the past?” Cirro asked me, clearly wanting to change the subject. She gave Lossia an awkward smile and pulled away.

I scoffed. “Sorcerers don’t exist in my world. Magic doesn’t exist either. For that matter, goblins don’t exist in my world, outside of stories and fairy tales. And whenever they’re mentioned in stories, goblins are always like three feet tall and ugly, with big, crooked noses and bony legs. They look nothing like you three.”

Cirro scrunched her nose. “Sounds racist.”

“Yeah, I guess it kinda is. It really changes one’s perspective on things when stories turn out to be real.” A thought occurred to me. “Hey, are there any humans in any of your stories? Anyone like me?”

Thilli and Cirro both shook their heads, but Lossia winced.

“Yeah, I’ve read something like it once or twice. Sometimes they call you by a different name, like primals or something, but now that you’re in front of me, I can tell they were trying to describe humans. But they made them even taller and hairier. And smelly, and you’re constantly at war with each other while destroying your own world.”

“Ouch,” I said. Some of that hit a little too close to home.

“Fortunately,” Lossia added, “Those stories were clearly false.”

I ran my fingers through my hair as I remembered what I had promised them. Somehow, I had to find a way to fight a fucking sorcerer. I looked down at my dick and silently cursed it for making the decisions for me.

“Do you have any fighting experience at all?” Cirro asked. “You mentioned that you were in the Army.”

“Yeah, I deployed to the Middle East,” I said, then realized they wouldn’t know what that meant. I wasn’t a huge fan of talking about my military experience. “I went through some pretty intense training and was sent halfway across the world to fight in a desert. No sorcerers, though. Just men fighting men. Worst year of my life.”

“You fought for an entire year?” Cirro asked, her eyes wide.

“Well, I wouldn’t say that. I was over there for a year. Eh, it’s kind of a long story. All I got from it was a scar on my arm and a hatred of deserts and war in general.”

“What about this training you mentioned?” Thilli said, joining the conversation.

I smiled faintly at nothing. It felt like remembering an entirely different life, but it had only been about eight years ago when I had joined the Army. Fresh out of high school, full of testosterone and wanting to conquer the world, I did everything I could. I signed up for every class, took on additional responsibilities, and built a pretty solid reputation before I realized I was doing a great job of building a life that would never let me settle down.

“Airborne, Air Assault, and Ranger school,” I said. “Might be kinda hard to explain considering your world’s technology levels. The first two schools were fun. The third one, not so much.”

“But you do know how to fight,” Thilli said, seeking confirmation.

“Yeah,” I said. “I would consider myself a peaceful person, but if there’s one thing I know how to do, it’s fight.”

I didn’t think my experience would directly translate, though. Handling an M-4 and worrying about IEDs was quite a bit different than swinging a sword and riding a horse, which is apparently what I’d signed myself up for. Although I supposed a lance was more appropriate with a horse.

In the end, the mental toughness I had gained from Ranger school and my deployment would go a long way towards taking Vogrim out, regardless of the weapon I used.

Still, though, how was I supposed to fight against something like that? I assumed the goblins mostly worked with traditional melee weapons, although stories and video games often described them as crafty little buggers that built all sorts of contraptions. Maybe they had something that could help me out.

Or maybe I could invent something. I was no genius, but with a modern understanding of physics, perhaps I could help them create a rudimentary airplane, from which we could drop a bomb right on this Vogrim guy.

I guess only time would tell. One thing was for sure; I had to be really careful.

“So, uh,” I began. “About that sorcerer.”

Thilli released my arm and Lossia stood there with her arms crossed and stern look on her face. Cirro looked down her nose at me, her eyes colder than a snowstorm.

“Hey, relax,” I said. “I said I’ll do it and I meant it. Remember, this is all new to me. I have a lot to learn. I’m just asking for a bit of patience.”

Cirro sighed. “We understand you need time, but we want you to understand that time is one thing we don’t have a ton of. With every day that passes, we draw closer to extinction.”

I suppressed a groan. Cirro had a point.

The three beauties all gave me contemplative looks, but at least they didn't look to be afraid of me any longer.

"We'll see you, same time tomorrow," Lossia said, drawing herself up and adjusting her hair.

"Here?" I asked.

"Of course," Lossia replied. "This is your room."

I looked around at the beautiful room. There wasn't much in it—just the bed, a copper bathtub, a sink, and some towels—but it was well-made and quite large. Apparently it was mine.

"Kinda odd to give me a room in a temple," I said.

Cirro explained further. "Our elders, our king, and Ulenor brought this plan to Zozella, and she gave her approval. We are her people, and you are here to save us. It would make sense to keep you here, under her watchful eye."

"Free apartment. Not a bad deal, I guess." Something occurred to me. "Hey, where will I get food? I don't see a kitchen here."

“The temple staff will cook for you, silly,” Lossia said. “Did Ulenor and Mayor Beezle not tell you? You will be seen to, day and night. In fact, now that we approve of you, you’ll probably get more furnishings in here as well.”

“No, they didn’t,” I said. “They were probably going to, but I cut them off and asked for some time with you three.” I silently wondered what my fate would have been if the women hadn’t approved of me.

“Well, that’s what you get for being so eager to win us over,” Lossia said with a shrug. She toyed with her minimal outfit for a moment. “We’ll do our best to teach you what we can about our culture.”

My eyes lingered on her perfect body for a moment, but I finally snapped myself out of my brief reverie. If I wanted any of this to happen, I needed to get to work.

“Okay,” I said, taking a deep breath. “Well, I guess it’s time for me to get started on this.”

I looked down at my clothes for a moment and considered the goblin outfits I had seen around town. All the goblin men wore neatly tailored breeches and shirts, some with a matching or at least coordinating jacket, unless they were laboring, in which case they often went shirtless. But their pants were still nice. They were quite stylish in many cases. As for me, I had jeans and a Metallica t-shirt.

Not that the tall, pale guy would blend into a town of goblins with just a change of clothes, but I made a mental note to get something more appropriate. If they were feeding and housing



me for free, I could probably get a couple outfits out of the deal as well. I looked up at Lossia's curvy body while I contemplated.

Lossia noticed me staring at her and smiled. She turned away from me a bit, shaking her round bottom at me.

Cirro saw and laughed. She reached out and slapped her palm on Lossia's bubble butt, causing the curvy woman to gasp. I don't think the princess had ever been spanked before.

I really wanted to spend the rest of the day with them, to get to know them better. They were dedicated to their people and willing to fuck my brains out, but also made it clear they were willing to give me a chance at love since I had agreed to fight for them.

Their personalities intrigued me, and I wanted to learn more about each of them. Thilli was strong, and sometimes almost came off as aggressive. Her father being a general, that made sense.

Cirro was the sassy one of the bunch. Coming from a background of poverty and suddenly being thrust into such a position, she was having to learn an entirely new life, which explained her occasional shyness.

And then there was Lossia. Beautiful, curvy Lossia. She had given up her royal titles to become a Mother of a New Age. She saw me staring and shook her butt at me again as she fastened her belt.

That was another thing I was starting to notice about her. Lossia shook her butt at me, she rubbed it on my lap, and she smiled when I squeezed it. I made a mental note of that, just like how Thilli liked the taste of cum. I had yet to figure out what Cirro liked, although judging by her background I guessed she just liked being appreciated.

After a few minutes, I realized we all had to leave. I felt a bit of sadness, knowing that I would have to wait until tomorrow to see them again. I had just met them, but after sharing such an intimate moment together, I wanted to be close to them. They probably had other responsibilities to attend to, though.

“I wish you all didn’t have to go,” I told them.

Cirro smiled at me. “We’ll see you tomorrow,” she said. “And I, for one, am very excited for tomorrow.”

“Of course you are,” Lossia said. She swung her arm, trying to slap Cirro on the ass. It was clear she had never done that before, and did little more than brush her fingers across the slender woman’s hip. They both laughed.

I stood up and settled my feet in my shoes. “So, what happens next? You’ll be reporting this, correct?”

Thilli nodded. “Not the intimate details, but yes, we have to inform our keeper that you were able to perform. She will pass the message to the mayor, who will tell the king.”

Lossia’s nose wrinkled at the mention of her father.

“Dad’s gonna demand you go see him right away,” she said.

“So, go ahead and prepare for a trip.”

“How far away is York?” I asked.

She thought for a moment. “Not too far. About a week’s ride from here.”

“Well, okay,” I said, clapping my hands and rubbing them briskly together. I had some women to impress, so I wanted to get started on it.

Thilli was closest, so I went up to her first. Her eyes widened as I loomed over her. I took her face in my hands and kissed her, gently and thoroughly.

“I hope you have good stamina, Andrew,” Thilli said, looking into my eyes. “I expect you to have impregnated at least ten women before the week is done. In fact, I demand it, if you want me.”

Wow. What a situation I found myself in.

“I promise I will,” I told her with a smile, then pulled away.

Then came Cirro. I wrapped my arms around her and kissed her as well.

Lossia was already smiling when I got to her. Her soft lips on mine felt incredible, and I made sure to get two handfuls of her beautiful ass and squeeze as we kissed.

I was determined to do this right. To win them all over.

“So, I guess I’ll see you all tomorrow, then,” I said as I walked to the door. I pulled it open and they swayed by, smiling at me as they left. I exited after them, getting an eyeful of Cirro’s perky bottom.

They bade me farewell and left the temple while I closed the door and stayed there for a moment, deep in my thoughts.

What was that old quote? It was from a Clint Eastwood movie I had seen ages ago. Improvise, adapt, overcome. Those were good words to live by, and I was doing my best. I was sure my adaptability was the only reason I had kept my sanity that far. Had I tried to figure out why magic existed or why I was in a different world, I would have lost my damn mind. Instead, I got my dick sucked by three of the most beautiful women I had ever seen.

I opened the door to my room and stepped into the temple, then walked through the rows of pews until I got to the center aisle. From there, I went to the front of the temple, where the stone statue of Zozella was. I looked into her stone eyes as I thought about what to say.

“So, you’re real, it seems,” I said quietly. “That’s not something I’m used to, so please be patient with me.” I looked around, making sure no one was close enough to hear me make a fool of myself talking to a statue. Although I supposed it was normal to them.

“Look, I’m still a little weirded out about this whole thing, but I’m going to give it a shot. These are your people, and I’m going to try my damndest to save them, because honestly this place is a lot better than where I’m from and I’d like to make a life here. It’s going to be tough. I’d appreciate any help you could give me.”

I didn't know if she would care or not, since I was human and not goblin, but I tried.

To my pleasant surprise, her stone hand gently reached out and touched my forehead. A warm sensation filled my body, almost as if I had been dunked in a hot tub. She spoke to me, although no sound reached my ears. As the statue's lips moved, I heard her voice in my head.

"Ask Ulenor to search his books for Eldrick," she said. Her voice was feminine and strong, powerful enough to give me goosebumps. "I have given you my blessing."

"Yes ma'am," I said with a bow of my head, not knowing how else to respond. I straightened up and turned to leave.

"Andrew," she said, and I stopped. I looked over my shoulder at her. Her expression had become more serious. "If you harm my people, I will make you suffer for all eternity."

I barely suppressed a shiver. "No worries there, doll," I said and gave her a wink.

I strode out of the temple, silently cursing my smartass nature, but I heard a faint rumbling laughter in my head. At least she had a sense of humor.

Fortunately, I remembered how to get to Ulenor's place. The layout of the town was like a giant wagon wheel, which made it easy. Ulenor's house was located on the Street of Flowers, I remembered that much.

The journey there was rather curious. Goblins were an accepting bunch, but many of them still watched with curiosity

as I strolled by. The tall, pale man indeed. Several beautiful women caught my eye and I gave them a big smile. If I played my cards right, I'd be spending time with them all.

It took me a few minutes, but I soon found myself in front of Ulenor's place. I knocked twice and waited patiently. After a few minutes Ulenor opened the door and his eyes widened at the sight of me.

"Andrew! Please, come in. Did things go well? Was your time with the women productive?"

"Yeah, you could say that," I told him. "That's kind of a personal question, but I guess we're in a unique situation here. They, uh, made sure everything worked."

Ulenor stepped aside and I entered his house. He smiled at me like a proud father as I walked by.

"We must celebrate," the wizard said, clearly pleased that his people were going to be saved.

He waved his hand toward the chairs in his living room and I sat down in the nearest one. Ulenor excused himself and shuffled down a nearly hidden set of stairs to the basement. I twiddled my thumbs while I waited.

A few minutes later, Ulenor emerged from the top of the staircase holding a tinted glass bottle. A length of cork plugged the neck of the bottle, with enough left above the glass to provide a sufficient grip to pull it out.

"Let me get glasses," he muttered. He set the bottle on his kitchen counter and dug through his cabinets. He selected

several glasses, then frowned and put them back. Finally, he grabbed two tall, curved glasses and smiled. Grabbing the bottle on his way, he came into the living room.

“I hope you like wine,” he said, pulling at the cork. He twisted it back and forth as he pulled, and slowly worked the length of cork out of the bottle. When it finally came out, it was with a hollow-sounding pop.

“Sure, I like wine,” I told him. Being a Florida native, I tended towards hot weather drinks; margaritas, lighter beers, that sort of thing. Wine always made me think of stone fireplaces, snow outside, and reading a good book. While I had my share of good books back home, fireplaces and snow were in short supply in Florida.

Ulenor set the cork on a nearby table, then poured some of the ruby-red liquid into each glass. He did his best to stuff the cork back into the neck of the bottle, then handed me a glass.

“Cheers,” I said, holding up my glass.

Ulenor looked at me strangely, then looked down at his wine.

“Ah, nevermind. It’s something we do back in my world.”

I brought the glass up to my nose and smelled it. To my surprise, I recognized the aromas of fine wine. It was.... Hell, I never understood how they described wine. It smelled like smokey velvet. I took a sip and smiled at the taste.

“You goblins really know how to make some good wine,” I told him.

Ulenor beamed with pride. “We know how to make a lot of good things, Andrew. I think you’ll come to have a lot of respect for us, as you learn more.” Ulenor drank his wine with a satisfied smile. “I’ve been waiting to open this one.”

“Yeah? Waiting for what?”

Ulenor shrugged. “Nothing in particular. Just something worth celebrating.” He took another sip, then looked at me. His expression was serious and contemplative. “You have given me hope for our future, Andrew. I must thank you.”

I shrugged. “To be honest, much of what I’ve experienced here so far has been pretty great. In fact, other than the whole minotaur sorcerer thing, I’d say this is awesome.” I stared into my wine and swirled it in my glass, watching it climb up the sides. “The goblin life is one I could get used to.” I looked up and saw Ulenor smiling.

As much as I wanted to sit there and drink wine with this goblin wizard, I knew I needed to keep at least half of my mind on what was really important. I set my glass down on the table and turned to Ulenor.

“Okay, so let’s talk about Vogrim. If I’m going to do this, I’m going to need a lot of help, training, and preparation. I don’t plan on dying here.”

Ulenor nodded enthusiastically. “Of course, of course! You have my entire spellbook at your disposal. And everything else, for that matter. Once we take you to King Freg, you’ll have anything you could need.”



“Sounds good,” I said. “According to Lossia, I’ll be meeting King Freg rather soon, so we need to get started. Ulenor, we’re going to kill a minotaur.”

I suddenly wanted a pen and paper so I could make a checklist. No task was too difficult if sufficient preparations were made, and writing out what I needed to do, step by step, was how I liked to tackle difficult tasks.

“I’m glad you are confident,” Ulenor said. “We will have a lot of work ahead of us.”

“I shall defeat them on the field of battle for I am better trained and will fight with all my might. Surrender is not a Ranger word,” I said. “Those were words I lived by a few years ago. I’m up to the task, but I don’t want to waste any time.” I stood up. “I’m going to need new clothes made, and armor. Wait, does armor protect against magic?”

“Not usually,” Ulenor said. “There are some exceptions, though. Some people are able to enchant armor or weapons and give them special properties.”

“Perfect,” I said. “I’ll need some of that. I’m going to need plenty of time to train with weapons, as well. Whatever you’ve

got—swords, spears, bows. I already know how to fight with a knife, but I'm sure what I learned was quite different from how you guys would use it.”

“I have something for you,” Ulenor said, then drained the last of his wine. He looked at the bottle longingly for a moment, then set his glass next to it. “I shall return,” he told the bottle with a chuckle. “Come,” he said, waving me up.

Ulenor pushed himself to his feet and limped towards his study. I got up and followed him.

When we got there, I grabbed a nearby stool and sat on it while Ulenor rummaged through his things. He picked through a pile of scrolls on a broad table, then went to a padded rack that held several vials.

With an audible sigh, he selected one vial from the rack and held it reverently in his hands. He turned and came back to me, staring almost wistfully at the vial. When he got to me, he held it out.

“You must drink this,” he said.

“Are you going to explain what it is first?” I asked. “You’ve proven to be a pretty trustworthy guy so far, but I’m not going to just drink strange potions without knowing what they are.”

Ulenor nodded. “Of course, of course. This is a magic potion. That is, it contains the very essence of magic itself. When you drink it, it will bind with your body and grant you access to it.”

“To what?”

“To magic,” Ulenor explained. “You could become a powerful sorcerer yourself, or you could barely light a candle. I have never made one of these before, and hopefully never will again. I do not know what the exact end result will be, but I can promise you it won’t hurt you.” He gestured to him. “Go on. Drink it.”

I examined the small vial in my hand. It was about the diameter of my thumb and almost as long as my hand. The liquid within was a golden-orange color, and almost seemed to glow with energy. I flicked the cork stopper off with my thumb and cautiously smelled it.

“Hey, that smells pretty good,” I said. No one ever said what magic potions tasted like. Only what they do. This one had the yeasty aroma of good beer, like German wheat beer, but with a sweet tang to it, like honey mixed with wildflowers.

“Here we go,” I said, and downed it in one gulp.

It was surprisingly crisp and fruity, although nothing like any fruit I had ever eaten. It reminded me of soda, complete with carbonation. It warmed as it went down, and made my stomach feel like I had a heating pad pressed against it. The warm sensation slowly spread through my entire body, all the way to the tips of my fingers and toes. Even my face tingled.

“Not bad,” I said, looking at the empty vial. Just then, I noticed the sad look on Ulenor’s face. “Hey, why the long face?”

The wizard shook his head. “It’s just.... Goblins are a naturally magical species. It flows through our veins, and even

the weakest goblin has the ability to sense it. More than a hundred people died in order to give their magical essences to make that potion. They gave their lives knowing they would be giving the gift of magic to the savior of our people.”

“What?” I spluttered. The empty vial fell from my fingers and shattered on the floor. “You just had me drink dead goblin juice?”

Ulenor gave me an irritated look, as much for my comment as for the broken glass on his floor. Still muttering under his breath, he shuffled to the corner of his room where he kept a broom and a dustpan.

“No,” he said curtly. “This is not *dead goblin juice*. This is a pure extract of magical essence. I don’t know how else to explain it to you. You just drank raw magical energy.” He swept the glass into the dustpan, then poured the pieces into a nearby trash can. “I made this specifically for our prophesied hero, so you had better not let me down,” he added with a sharp look.

“Sorry,” I said. “I just wasn’t sure what you meant. So, how will I know what kind of effect it has on me?”

Ulenor returned the broom and dustpan to the corner of the room from which he had retrieved them. “It will take some time, and it will be slow. This time tomorrow, we’ll give you your first test. You should grow in power each day, until you reach your limit. We just don’t know if you’ll hit that limit in two days or in two centuries.”

I looked down at my hand and half expected a fireball to appear above it. Would I be able to do rad shit like that? I guess I'd have to wait and find out. Something finally clicked in my head.

“Hey. You're a wizard. This Vogrim guy is a sorcerer. What's the difference?” I vaguely remembered there being a difference from video games and books as a kid.

“Vogrim has a powerful affinity for magic,” Ulenor explained. “It's in his blood. Magic is a part of him, and he can cast powerful spells with the gesture of a hand. He pulls the magic from within himself and creates the spell. Only, with sorcerers it's not always a spell; sometimes they simply use the magic to push and pull on forces of nature.”

“So that's how I'll do it,” I said, pursing my lips. And all I had to do was drink some dead goblin magic stuff to get it.

“Yes. Me, however, I am a wizard. My natural abilities with magic are mediocre at best. Since I cannot pull these more powerful spells from my own blood, I study them. I read them and memorize them and cast them that way. Not everyone can do it, but I am rather fortunate in that I have this gift.”

“That explains the small book you carry with you,” I said, remembering him reading from it before casting something to heal his arm.

“I'm glad you picked up on that,” he said, suddenly looking around the room. “We have much work to do, Andrew. Much work indeed.”

“Looking for something?” I asked.

“I need to send out a scout. I should have done this the moment we got back, but I was too distracted. Too focused on other things.” He walked over to the end of his table and moved a stack of papers aside, then made a noise of triumph. After shoving several papers out of the way, he picked up a stuffed bird from the table.

He held it carefully in his hands, like the little guy could still feel and experience things, even though a taxidermist had clearly preserved him. I wasn't sure what kind of bird it was. Its coloring was gray and subdued, and it was about the size of a crow. I wasn't exactly an expert on birds, but it wasn't a type that I had seen before.

“This is my friend Gus,” Ulenor said, stroking the preserved bird's head.

I opened my mouth to ask why he would name a dead bird Gus, when the bird suddenly moved its head.

It twisted around and looked at me, then opened its beak and let out a loud chirp. Ulenor smiled, stroking the bird's chest with a fingertip. Gus chirped again.

“I know, I know,” Ulenor said. “I'm sorry it's been so long, Gus.” He saw me watching him with a confused expression and explained. “Gus and I have a link, a magical one. When he flies about, I am able to look through his eyes and see what he sees.”

“Why the sudden need for a scout?” I asked.

“Vogrim,” Ulenor said, his voice grave. “Gateways are powerful spells, Andrew. Very powerful. Vogrim would have felt that, even at his distance. I fear he will send minions of his to investigate.”

“And when you say investigate, you mean....” I prodded.

“That all depends on how serious he thinks the threat is,” Ulenor replied. “Vogrim is building an army at the base of that mountain of his. An army of minotaur and lizardfolk. Squads of his soldiers have been known to terrorize nearby villages and towns, including Gillamoor. My guess is that he will send a dozen lizardfolk with a single minotaur in charge of them. If he deems this worthy of closer scrutiny, he might send a full squad of minotaur soldiers.”

“Just out of curiosity, how big are these minotaur?” I asked. “And the lizardfolk too, while we’re at it.”

Ulenor rubbed his chin for a moment and thought. “The lizardfolk are small, smaller than us. Fast breeders. They’re quick, and tend to swarm over enemies when they fight. The minotaur are much fewer in number, but they’re still the more problematic of the two. They tend to be, oh, I guess around nine or ten feet tall.”

Well, shit. I wasn’t planning on backing down, but this would definitely require a lot of careful planning. Also, I wouldn’t be doing the fighting alone.

“Fly north of here, toward the mountain, and look for any signs of trouble. You remember what to look for, right?” Ulenor held the bird in front of him and spoke softly to it.



Gus chirped in reply.

“Good, good,” Ulenor said. He cupped the bird in his hands and walked toward a window. “Andrew, would you mind opening this window for me?”

“Sure thing,” I said. I hurried over to the wall and pushed the window open.

Ulenor held both hands outside the window, then lifted them into the air. Gus flapped his wings and sped away, turning until he was flying toward the mountain.

Ulenor dusted his hands off. “He’s fast, so that shouldn’t take too long. In the next few days we’ll know if Vogrim has sent anyone, and if so then what he sent. That’ll give us time to prepare.”

“Do you expect an attack?” I asked.

Ulenor nodded. “I always expect an attack when Vogrim is involved. The question is how big of an attack. Is this a raid to kidnap some goblin farmers or steal cattle, or will he try to attack the city itself?”

I suddenly remembered what the statue of Zozella had told me.

“Hey, Ulenor. I spoke with Zozella today when I was done with, ah, my duties, and asked her for some help. She responded to me.” I described the statue reaching out and touching my head.

Ulenor’s face broke into a smile. “You have her favor. We are her people, and you have agreed to help us. I wasn’t sure if she

was going to do anything or not, but I'm not surprised. She helps as much as she can."

"Well, that's good to know," I replied. "Anyways, when I asked her for help, she told me to ask you about a man named Eldrick. She wants you to search your books for him."

"Eldrick?" Ulenor asked, his eyebrows raised. "Yes, I know of Eldrick. What of him?"

I shrugged. "I don't know. She wants you to check your books. That's all she told me."

"Eldrick was an apprentice of Vogrim's," Ulenor said as he walked over to a tall bookshelf. He ran his finger along the spines of several books, then finally selected one from a high shelf. He opened it and flipped through, his eyes scanning the pages. After turning the page, he stopped and gasped loudly.

"Look," Ulenor said, holding the book so I could see it.

As I watched, letters formed on the pages, as if written by an invisible hand. It was neat, concise script, each letter perfectly written. Ulenor turned the book back to himself and watched in fascination as the letters and words continued forming. The page turned on its own.

"Thanks, Zozella," I said. Looks like getting on her good side was the right move. "So, you want to tell me what all that says?"

Ulenor nodded, although he kept his eyes on the pages. After a few minutes, the writing stopped. "I need but a minute to read this," he said.

I relaxed a bit, looking out the window while Ulenor read quietly to himself. Life was indeed strange. What was I getting myself into? I almost chided myself for going along with all this so readily, but I remembered that I didn't have much of a choice. If I wanted to return home, I had to work with these guys, no matter how crazy things got.

Besides, me working with them mostly just consisted of sleeping with their women. Their incredibly beautiful women, that I could take as wives if I wanted. Then I'd get to kill a minotaur or two. I wonder if I could bring their horns back home with me as a trophy?

And that was a thought that kept nagging in the back of my head. I didn't like my hometown back in Florida. It was the very definition of a dead end small town.

This weird fantasy world, though? I hadn't even done anything yet and I was already a hero to some. These adorable green people had running water and a clean city. They had a peaceful way of life. It was something to consider.

All I had to do was fight. As an Airborne Ranger, I wasn't afraid of any fight. But a ten-foot-tall sorcerer with fucking bull horns definitely gave me reason to pause.

"Amazing," Ulenor said, turning the page back so he could reread a passage. He looked up at me. "Were I you, I would fall on my knees and thank Zozella at every available opportunity. She has just handed you the key to defeating Vogrim."

I clapped my hands together. “Alright! So tell me, what do I have to do? And who was this guy Eldrick, by the way?”

Ulenor scanned the page for a moment longer, then set the book on his lap and addressed me.

“It has been some time since I read about him, and had forgotten. It looks like Zozella gave us the entire story here, in full detail. Eldrick was a powerful elven sorcerer that lived hundreds of years ago. His strength in magic grew into a need, almost a lust for power. He believed he could become the greatest sorcerer that ever lived, so he made the decision to sacrifice any remaining morality or common decency and study under Vogrim. He became his apprentice, and carried out innumerable foul deeds in Vogrim’s name.

“Eldrick worked for decades with Vogrim and indeed became powerful. Some say he was actually stronger than Vogrim himself. He traveled the world far and wide, seeking out any new arcane knowledge, always adding to his library of spells.

“Eldrick sought his master’s approval, and went to great lengths to attain it. He crossed different species and molded the end result, creating entirely new, terrifying creatures to serve him, like the lizardfolk, the harpies, and things much worse. He subjugated entire cities and forced them to either bend the knee or lose their heads. While Vogrim’s power grew, Eldrick’s ambition grew to match it.

“Eldrick’s pride became his downfall. He sought to replace his master, to overpower and kill him. Eldrick knew just how mighty Vogrim was, so he decided to make two objects of

power to help: a sword and a shield, designed to work together. They were crafted by the finest elven smiths and described as works of art with no equal. Once Eldrick had them in his possession, he poured all of his power into them, imbuing them with magic.

“But in doing so, he left himself vulnerable. Creating such powerful artifacts was very taxing, and left Eldrick incredibly weak for a time. Vogrim has eyes and ears everywhere, and learned of his apprentice’s plot against him. He struck when Eldrick was recovering, slaying him like that,” Ulenor snapped his fingers loudly.

“So what happened to the sword and shield?” I asked. He had me hooked.

“Eldrick had created true masterpieces. They were flawless in every aspect. As they were created to counter his magic, Vogrim couldn’t destroy them. He couldn’t even touch them, or he risked being destroyed. Instead, he separated them and hid them far away, guarded by two of his most trusted servants. Beings so foul and twisted their only thoughts are devotions to their master.”

My heart felt heavy in my chest as the impossibility of this began to sink in. But, if I could get my hands on this sword and shield, perhaps there was a chance.

“At least I know what I need first, right?” I asked, meaning it as a joke.

Ulenor nodded. “Yes. I shall accompany you.” He stood and placed the book on his table, then turned back to me. “You

have a lot of travel ahead of you, Andrew, and soon. We need to get you ready.”

“First and foremost, I feel that I should have some more appropriate clothes,” I said, picking at my Metallica t-shirt. Was Master of Puppets an amazing album? Yes. But the shirt drew its fair number of confused stares. I was pretty sure thrash metal hadn’t been invented in this world yet.

I made a mental note to invent it myself and collect a hundred goblin groupies. When I laughed out loud, Ulenor gave me an odd look. I didn’t even bother trying to explain my thoughts.

“Yes, we will have a tailor come to your room in the temple tomorrow morning,” Ulenor said. “Really, I need to have the mayor handle more of this. He’s just been so busy lately, dealing with Colonel Chuleel as they try to bolster the city’s defenses.”

“Hey, do you have a map?” I asked. It dawned on me that I didn’t really know where any of these other cities were located. Or Vogrim, for that matter.

“Yes, of course,” Ulenor said, going back to his table. “Come here,” he said, waving me over. He grabbed a sheaf of papers and set them aside, revealing the surface of the table, upon which had been painted a map of the goblin nation and its neighbors. The shape of the goblin nation reminded me a lot of Spain.

“York,” he said, pointing to a large star-shaped mark in the southern part of Brovania. “That’s our capital, where the king and queen reside. Here we are,” he said, pointing to a much smaller dot far to the north. “And here is Vogrim.” He pointed to a symbol that represented a mountain, set at the top of the map.

“Of course you brought me to the city closest to the bad guy,” I grumbled. “How far away is Vogrim, anyways?”

“Around a hundred miles,” Ulenor replied. “Not particularly far, however, there is a deep canyon here,” he pointed to the northern border of the goblin nation. “It is filled with poisonous waters and deadly beasts. The Black Lake cannot be crossed. The only option is to go around here, to the east. Travel is slow there, due to the terrain, so that adds another three or four weeks to the journey.”

“I didn’t realize he was so close,” I said. Considering how big of a threat Vogrim was, he was indeed close. Even with the mandatory detour Ulenor just described, it looked like it was only a five-week trip to get to this sorcerer that caused so many problems. If that lake could be crossed, it would shorten



the trip to a single week. Well, at least I didn't have to pull a Frodo and walk almost two thousand miles.

"Yes, no one is a fan of that short distance," Ulenor said. "We have natural barriers that keep us safe—the mountains to the west of the Black Lake are impassable—otherwise he would have flooded this area long ago with his monstrous servants. We have a small outpost of scouts near the lake to look out for any enemy movement. Our best archers and our fastest horses are there."

"Good archers are invaluable," I said. "If you want me to bring this guy down, we'll need lots of archers. I think it would behoove us to find a way to cross that lake, also. How wide is it? How deep? Do you know how to make boats?"

Ulenor made a pained expression. "It's not a matter of how wide or how deep, although if you must know, it would take the better part of a day for a fast ship to sail across. The real problem is what lurks in the waters that fill the Black Lake."

I took a step back and shook my head. "Come on, man. Don't tell me there's some huge monster that lives in there." Although considering what I had already seen, nothing was outside the realm of possibilities.

"Huge? No. But monstrous, yes. She is cold and evil and kills anyone that enters the waters that fill the canyon, if the waters themselves don't kill them. There are other things that lurk in the watery depths, but she is the main threat."

"Being a lake, that should make it easier, at least," I said. "Maybe we could—"

“You don’t understand,” Ulenor said, cutting me off. “She kills everything that touches the water or even comes too near the shore. Everything, without exception. At night, her cries fill the air. One of our scouts once tried to relieve himself in the waters of the canyon. She took his manhood. Tore it right off.”

“Jesus,” I said with a shiver. “Okay, so we’ll avoid the canyon and go around. Why does she kill everyone there?”

Ulenor shook his head. “It is not known. This monster is a woman, an elven woman. She’s not a spirit, but she’s not alive. For as long as any can remember, she has haunted those waters. Some of our scouts have reported that she often cries for vengeance and justice, but no one is able to get close enough to her to figure out what the root cause is.”

“Well, that sounds like something I’ll want to stay far away from,” I said. It was bad enough I had agreed to fight a minotaur sorcerer. Last thing I needed was some undead elven woman ripping my junk off.

“Don’t you worry. When our time comes to face Vogrim, we will be steering clear of her,” Ulenor assured me.

I nodded. “Alright, now that that’s settled, let’s get started on all the things I need.” I held up a finger. “Clothing and armor, preferably enchanted if that’s something we can do. Something that can help keep me safe from this Vogrim guy.” I raised my second finger. “Weapons. Obviously I’ll need Eldrick’s sword and shield, but I can’t rely on those alone. Besides, there are better weapons than a sword. A good spear or halberd will give me twice the reach. And as I said earlier, archers are

invaluable.” A third finger. “Transportation. I’m going to go ahead and assume I’ll be traveling by horse.”

“Unless you feel like walking,” Ulenor quipped.

“I’ll pass. No more ruck marches for me. Hey, do you have a pen and paper?” I needed to work all this out, and writing always helped. “Or, a quill and parchment, or just something to write with and on?”

“Of course,” Ulenor said. He rummaged around on his desk and produced a small piece of parchment and a long feather, neatly trimmed. After setting an ink vial next to them, he handed me the quill.

“Well, first time for everything, I guess,” I muttered, staring at the quill. Taking it in hand, I dipped it in the ink, wiped the excess off on the lip of the vial, then set myself to writing. I produced little more than dark smears.

Ulenor gave me a patient look, but he was clearly confused as to why I couldn’t write when I supposedly came from an advanced society.

“We write with different things in my world,” I explained, then tried again. With a light, careful touch, I managed to make it work. Writing with it was a slow, tedious process.

“Okay, so let’s get all this in order,” I said. “From everything I’ve been told, I’m assuming I’ll be traveling soon to meet King Freg.”

Ulenor nodded. “That is correct. If the Mothers have given their approval of you, I would expect you to leave within the

next few days.”

I frowned. “That doesn’t give me much time here, although I guess I’ll have more opportunities in a larger city like York.” Ulenor nodded in agreement. “With the king’s help it’ll be a lot easier to get the equipment and training I need, also. Then, we need to track down Eldrick’s sword and shield and get those.” I scribbled more notes on the parchment. When I looked up, I saw a peculiar look on Ulenor’s face. “What is it?” I asked.

Ulenor went back to his book and scanned over the open page with a somber look. When he turned back to me, he was tense. “Eldrick’s shield is the closest, and I believe the easiest to retrieve. But it lies to the south, in the Drowned Lands. Those are....” He sighed. “People don’t travel to the Drowned Lands, Andrew, and for good reason. To go there is to die, plain and simple.”

“Well, our only hope is to make it through there, so we had better find a way,” I said, tapping my quill on the parchment for emphasis. It made several black smears.

“Yes, I know,” Ulenor said. “I have the spells to survive the swamps, but you will need something to protect you.” He went back to his bookshelf and ran a finger over the spines of the books until he found the one he was looking for, then pulled it from the shelf.

“Well, at least we’ll have a game plan,” I said. “This seems fairly...I dunno, linear.”

Ulenor looked up from his book to give me a momentary look of concern. “The Drowned Lands are mostly swamps, Andrew. Travel there is difficult enough, as there are only a few roads that cross them. Noxious gasses rise from the swamps themselves, like festering clouds of rot. Breathing these gasses will kill you if you lack protection.” He turned back to his book and opened it, running a finger across the pages. “Of course, there are many other things in the swamps that can kill you as well.”

I found myself hoping my three beauties would appreciate all that I was about to go through. Nothing about this journey seemed like it was going to be pleasant.

“So, I clearly need protection from that, then,” I said, waiting for Ulenor to fill me in.

After a few minutes of reading, he nodded to himself and set the book down. He looked up at me with a determined smile. “Yes, you do. And fortunately, there is something that can protect you. However, it—”

“It’s very hard to get to, and I’ll have to fight a troll in order to get it,” I interrupted.

Ulenor frowned. “Not a troll, no. But you will have to fight a wizard.”

“And I’m assuming this wizard is evil?”

Ulenor nodded. “I think that’s a fair assessment of him, yes. He’s an elf, after all.” Ulenor almost spat the word. “For many years he’s lived on our eastern border, essentially avoiding

both goblins and elves. Odewyn's study of the darkest of magics has made him an outcast, so now he hides out in his lair, his wretched home, trying to grow in power even as his magic consumes his soul."

"What does he do, this Odewyn guy?" I asked. "What type of magic? Why is he so evil?"

Ulenor's brows knit as he continued. "He seeks to bring the dead to life, Andrew. A foul thing, indeed, and something that is only possible with the help of demons."

So. Demons were real as well, as were necromancers. I should have expected that much.

"The dead should remain dead," Ulenor continued, shaking his head in disgust. "Odewyn has done much to garner the power for this. Many years ago, he killed a group of traveling priests on the border of the Drowned Lands and stole a precious amulet from them. This amulet protects its wearer against the effects of the swamp. The effect extends out roughly ten paces, so it will keep me safe as well, should I choose to forego my spells."

"So, I guess it's time for me to learn how to fight against a wizard," I said.

Ulenor looked to the side, towards the window at the side of the room. "Yes, but for now I think you'd be better off getting some rest. Today has been a busy day for you, Andrew; I don't know if anyone in history has experienced as much in a day as you have. Go back to the temple and get some sleep. Tomorrow we will begin your training."

I stood and stretched my arms over my head, then twisted to each side. “You’re right. It’s been a hell of a day.” I offered the small man my hand. “Thanks, Ulenor. For everything, that is. Looks like you’ve brought me into a pretty exciting life, which is just what I needed.”

Ulenor returned my handshake with a smile. “You should get some rest, Andrew.”

“Yeah, I plan on it,” I replied. “I want to get as much done as possible tomorrow.”

“Come see me around lunch time and we’ll get started,” Ulenor said, knuckling the small of his back. “You’ll have others attending to you in the morning. I’m going to get some rest as well.”

I left his place and walked through the large town, smiling at the goblins that looked at me with such open curiosity. The Mothers of a New Age were important and known among the goblin people, which means they probably knew who I was as well, not to mention what I was supposed to do. That gave an extra layer of meaning to the beautiful women that stared at me as I walked to the temple.

“Zozella’s blessings upon you, Andrew,” said a beautiful young woman clothed in a thin silk robe of sky blue that clung to her slender curves and full breasts. Dark blue lace trimmed the edges and embroidery in the same color climbed her sleeves and the sides of the robe, and matched her blue hair. “I am Prazzi, and I will be taking care of you while you stay in the temple.” The way she looked at me through her eyelashes

gave me a few ideas as to how she wanted to take care of me, although it's possible that was just my imagination.

“Alright, lead the way,” I told her with a smile.

She gave me a not-so-shy smile, then turned and walked up the stairs in front of me, placing her curvy backside squarely in my face. I was pretty sure she did it on purpose. Not that I was complaining.

I followed that swaying backside across the marble tiles and to the statue of Zozella, where she bowed reverently and offered a word of thanks. Not knowing what else to do, I dropped to a knee and said a few polite words and thanked her for the knowledge of Eldrick. I was still getting used to the whole goddess-being-real thing.

After that, Prazzi spoke a few quick words to another woman in the temple; while equally beautiful, this woman wore a robe in more muted shades of blue, and with less embroidery. The woman nodded, then Prazzi led me to my room on the side of the temple and held the door for me. I smiled at her as I entered, and she pointed at the large copper bathtub and instructed me to go there for my evening bath.

“Are you going to be bathing me or something?” I asked, meaning it as a joke.

“Of course,” she replied as if it were obvious. “I will be taking care of you in all ways, Andrew.” Again that slight smile.

Moments later a small army of goblins, both men and women, entered my chamber. Each of them carried a large jug of water



that they emptied in turn into the copper bathtub. Faint wisps of steam rose from the tub, and they hurried out and back in, filling the tub in only a matter of minutes.

“I’m almost surprised you don’t have piping to bring the hot water directly here,” I said as I walked to the tub.

“We do in some places,” Prazzi explained. “Larger buildings, where we have the space to heat the water and pump it. But not in this room. It was a storage room before you came here, so of course it is not equipped so. Your clothes?”

The door clicked softly as the last person leaving the room closed it behind them. Prazzi walked up to me and began helping me remove my clothes. I laughed and fended her off.

“I can do this myself,” I told the beautiful woman. Feeling only slightly awkward, I pulled my shirt off over my head, then started on my belt. I stopped when I saw her watching me.

“You really do plan on bathing me, don’t you?” I asked her.

“Of course,” she said matter-of-factly. “You’re the man prophesied to save us, Andrew. The least we can do is treat you in a respectful manner.”

I grinned. Every minute I was around these goblins, I liked them more and more.

“**R**espectful, eh?” I asked. “Well, considering you guys want me to impregnate as many women as possible, I guess I shouldn’t be so shy about undressing around you.” I undid my belt and pushed my jeans and boxers to my ankles, then stepped out of them. Prazzi’s eyes widened as she saw my manhood. I had no idea how big goblin dicks were, but apparently I was quite a bit larger.

I ignored her hungry stares and stepped into the tub. The water was just short of too hot, so settling into it was a lengthy process filled with relaxed sighs. After a few minutes I was leaning back, water up to my chest.

Prazzi moved around to the side of the tub with a cake of soap in her hand. She looked at the water for a moment, then set the soap down and undid her robe.

“I don’t want to get my sleeves wet,” she explained, and let her robe fall to the floor.

Her body beneath was just as breathtaking as the Mothers of the New Age. Her slender frame was topped off with full, round breasts and curvy hips. Her waist was small and her stomach flat, and like the other women she had no pubic hair. Her thighs were slender and soft, and she turned slightly to the side, giving me a peek at her round bottom. She saw me watching her and her sudden smile left her intentions bare. Her smile deepened as she glanced into the water and saw my erection, and she turned and bent over, ostentatiously giving me a close-up view of her nether regions as she fetched the bar of soap from the floor.

When she straightened up, she gave me a small, knowing look as she reached into the water to get the soap wet. Her full breasts swayed gently as she splashed a bit of water onto the bar of soap, then moved around behind the tub.

“Can you get your hair wet, please?” she asked.

“Sure,” I said, and slid beneath the surface for a second. I pushed myself back up and wiped water from my face, then leaned against the curved back of the tub again. Immediately after, she began lathering my hair up and working her fingers along my scalp.

“Now this is something I could get used to,” I said, closing my eyes. It smelled like.... Was that lavender? Prazzi’s fingers were like magic, gently pulling all my stress right out through my scalp. I was, of course, fully capable of washing myself, but why bother when I could be served by such a beautiful woman?

“If you save us, then you deserve such treatment,” Prazzi said.  
“Dunk yourself again, please.”

I slid beneath the surface of the water and scrubbed my fingers through my hair, washing out the soap. When I moved back up, Prazzi was next to the tub with a soapy washrag, ready to continue. She directed me to lean forward and began scrubbing my back.

“How many of you are there?” I asked. “Goblins, that is. In the entire nation.”

Prazzi stopped scrubbing me for a moment and pursed her lips in thought. “I’m not sure. We aren’t as numerous as the elves, or even the orcs, but we have steadily built up our society since attaining freedom. Perhaps a million in total? Maybe a bit more.”

“Wait, did you say orcs?” That sounded like something to avoid.

She frowned prettily. “Nasty creatures, the orcs. They live to the west, beyond Holmar. They generally keep to themselves, although there have been some skirmishes over the years. On very rare occasions a small group of them will cross the border to trade with us. We’re always grateful to see them gone.”

Something occurred to me. “Prazzi, what would have happened if I had been an orc instead of a human?”

She cocked her head to one side. “What do you mean?”

“I mean with the Mothers of a New Age. What if I had been something like an orc? Evil and cruel, but the only hope for

your salvation.”

She pursed her lips. “An orc would not have been kind to the Mothers. He probably would have killed them, to be honest. That is why we honor them so; they were chosen to be your firsts, to ensure you were safe for the rest of us.”

The risk those women took finally started to solidify in my brain. The bravery, the courage. I would have to show equal bravery if I was to win them over. Of course, whether I wanted to win them over or not, they still wanted me to impregnate every goblin woman possible.

“I need to wash the rest of you,” Prazzi said. “Would you mind....”

She probably meant my arms or legs, but for some reason I decided to just stand up in the tub. Prazzi stared at my cock for a moment, hanging low from the warm water. She looked up at me, then back at my member and reached out, running the washrag along my thighs, across my lower stomach, and finally along the length of my shaft.

Of course with a beautiful woman touching me there, the inevitable happened and I almost immediately got an erection. In that situation I think it would have been impossible not to get one. Prazzi stared at my cock hungrily, and the washrag fell from her hand and splashed into the water. She continued stroking me with both hands, biting her lip.

“How many women am I expected to mate with?” I asked her suddenly. It was hard to think with her stroking me like that.

She blinked and released me, then lowered her eyes and blushed. “I’m sorry, Andrew. I’m here to bathe you, not to....”

“Oh, you’re fine,” I said, dunking back into the water to rinse the soap off of me. “Can you hand me a towel?” I stood back up and she handed me a soft white towel. I dried myself as I stepped out of the tub. “Like I was saying, though. How many women am I expected to mate with?”

“I don’t know the answer to that, Andrew. You’ll have to ask the king.”

Her eyes fell onto my erection again as I dried my hair. The desire on her face was so intense it was almost comical. Her fingers traced down her breasts, down her stomach as she stared at me.

I wrapped the towel around my waist so she could think again. “I’m sorry, Prazzi. I’m just trying to get an idea of exactly how much they expect me to do.”

She tapped her lips for a moment. “I would assume King Freg would want you to impregnate as many women as possible, if your goal is to save us. And word has spread that the Mothers of a New Age have tested you and found you a worthy mate. So now it’s time for the rest of us to get a turn with you.”

“Did you say ‘the rest of us’?” I asked with both eyebrows raised.

She nodded, and her eyes finally met mine. She took a small step toward me and lowered her hands to her waist. “You won’t be able to mate with all of us—there simply isn’t

enough time for something like that. But the women you choose to carry your seed will be honored throughout history.” The eagerness in her eyes was as plain as a sign that said “fuck me” in flashing neon.

I smiled as I walked to the large bed. I heard Prazzi’s soft footsteps behind me. Still with a grin, I climbed onto the bed and rolled onto my back, lying there with my hands behind my head and my erection plainly visible. Prazzi almost looked to be trembling.

I wasn’t sure what to say to the woman. Of course I wanted her—she was as beautiful as could be and likely soaking wet with desire for me. Anyone in my situation probably would have felt the same; it wasn’t every day that a man found himself lusted after by every woman around him, except maybe Brad Pitt in the nineties.

“Come here, Prazzi,” I said, patting the bed beside me.

She practically flew onto the bed and knelt next to me, her eyes on mine, her lips parted expectantly.

“Do you want this?” I asked her. “Do you really want this? To lie with me?”

“Yes, Andrew. Please.” She reached out and laid a hand on my bare chest.

“I feel like I’m in heaven,” I said, reaching out and caressing her face.

“What is heaven?” she asked.

“This,” I said with a laugh.

She smiled politely, not understanding the joke. That was fine.

Enough being shy. Enough be cautious. They wanted me to father a new generation. I was going to fuck as many of them as possible, then marry the Mothers of a New Age and live a perfect life here.

I reached out and pulled Prazzi to me. Her body was small and lightweight in my hands, and her lips soft upon mine. We kissed for a moment, then she pulled away and rolled over onto her back.

She watched me with eager eyes as I rolled over to her. My hands traced along her pale green skin, along her perfect breasts and dark nipples. I rolled one between my thumb and forefinger until it hardened, and smiled as she gasped.

Prazzi raised both of her legs and hooked her hands beneath her thighs, pulling them back. Her eyes focused on my erection, half desire, half fear.

“Please be gentle,” she said, her voice small and her eyes wide as she stared at my cock.

I looked down and understood what she meant. She was a small woman, around four and a half feet tall and eighty pounds soaking wet. My cock was practically the size of her forearm.

“Don’t worry,” I said, and moved my head between her supple thighs. I licked along the length of her lips and found her hot and absolutely soaking wet. She moaned softly as my tongue touched her.



“Please,” she said after only a few seconds. “Get inside me, Andrew.”

No need to tell me twice. I kissed my way up her taut stomach, across her round breasts, and along the side of her neck. Her breath caught as the head of my dick pressed against her wet opening.

Reaching down, I grabbed onto the base of my member and rubbed the tip against her lips, covering it with her slick juices. I leaned down and kissed her deeply and passionately as I worked the head of my cock inside her.

As I began to enter her, her body tensed up in my hands. I whispered soothing words in her ear and she took a deep breath and relaxed. After that I moved my hips back and forth, slowly working my way inside her, an inch at a time.

Prazzi bit her lower lip and closed her eyes as a smile spread across her face. Soft moans escaped from her lips, and she leaned up and began kissing me. There was a happiness in her eyes, a sheer joy that was beyond just physical pleasure.

“Thank you for this, Andrew,” she said against my lips, then pressed her tongue into my mouth.

I reached up and squeezed onto one of her breasts as I pushed myself further inside her, all the way until my balls were pressing against her ass. She gasped, then wrapped her arms around my neck and kissed me again.

“Come on, Andrew. Go faster,” she said, working her hips in small circles.

Well, I hadn't been expecting that.

With a smile, I began pumping in and out of her wet hole, relishing her tightness. She held onto me firmly and moaned loudly between kisses. Her legs wrapped around my hips, pulling me into her.

Now, I had been with a few women before, perhaps a dozen or so. I would consider myself pretty decent in bed, with good stamina. But I had never in my life felt a pussy as tight as Prazzi's. She squeezed her muscles as I was balls-deep inside of her and I had to stop and take a deep breath so I didn't cum so damn quickly. This woman was determined to finish me off.

Hooking an arm beneath her lower back, I held her to me and straightened up, lifting her from the bed. She yelped and clung to me, but recovered in only a few seconds and went right back to kissing me. My hands gripped her firm ass tightly as I slid her up and down my full length.

Prazzi rocked her hips with me, eager for every inch. She only stopped kissing me long enough to moan loudly against my lips. I fucked her with long, slow strokes to try to last longer, but it was only a few minutes until I felt myself approaching the point of no return. Prazzi noticed this and leaned back suddenly.

"Lay me down," she said breathily. "Cum in me while I'm lying on my back."

I leaned forward, plopping her on the soft bed. She giggled and immediately pulled her legs back, letting me get deep

inside her. She moaned loudly, practically shouting my name, and that was enough to push me over the edge.

I moaned with her, then smothered our noises with a sloppy kiss as I came inside her. She squeezed her pelvic floor muscles, clamping down on me like a vice while gyrating beneath me. I squirted my seed deep inside her while she smiled and held me tightly.

“Yes!” Prazzi shouted. “Give it to me, Andrew!”

I think I came harder than I ever had before just then. Prazzi wrapped her legs around me, holding me on top of her while she kissed me again. Only after a few minutes of that, she let me go and I rolled off her, breathing hard.

She pulled her knees against her chest and held them there. Her face was glowing, her smile full and beautiful.

“I hope it’s a boy,” she said, rocking gently from side to side.

I laid there on my back, breathing hard, and looked over at her. In all my years, I don’t think I had ever seen a woman as happy as her at that moment.

“Thank you, Andrew,” Prazzi said, still smiling from ear to ear. After a moment, she let go of her legs and rolled over to me. She kissed me softly and snuggled against me for a moment, sighing happily. After that she got up and crawled off the bed, looking at me over her shoulder and wiggling her butt at me with a wink.

“Hey, just doing my job,” I said, smiling.

Prazzi fetched her robe from near the tub and shrugged into it, then wrapped the soft folds of silk around herself. She tied the robe, still smiling. She bade me farewell and hurried from the room, her slender legs peeking from the robes as she moved.

Life was good. It was hard to think of anything other than that as I relaxed on the bed.

I didn't want to get blindsided by the endless sea of pussy I was swimming in, though. I still had a sorcerer to fight.

Vogrim was my ultimate goal. I was tough and knew how to fight, so I wasn't overly concerned with him as long as I was adequately prepared. People kept telling me that King Freg was going to summon me soon, so I made a mental note to ask him for help with training and gearing up. Once I finished my, ahem, duties with the women there, I'd go kill that wizard Odewyn and take his amulet. Then, using that amulet, I'd fetch Eldrick's sword and shield, and bring a small army with me to Vogrim's doorstep.

He wouldn't stand a chance.

I rolled off the bed and walked to the bathtub, feeling surprisingly light-hearted considering I was planning a battle. I had no doubts about my future fight with Vogrim; if I could survive the Korangal Valley, I wasn't even remotely worried about some walking livestock, even if he could cast spells.

I fetched the washrag from the bathtub and washed Prazzi's juices from my crotch and the sweat from my body. After patting myself dry, I went back to my bed, ready to get a full night's sleep.

As soon as I touched the bed, someone knocked on my door. I was still naked, so I crawled in bed and pulled a sheet over me.

“Come in,” I called out.

The door opened and Prazzi stuck her head in. Upon seeing me, she smiled, then backed away. Two goblin women entered the room, one with cherry red hair and the other with black hair, and both of them just as beautiful as could be. They wore simple robes of linen, not silk, and they looked a bit younger than Prazzi, although I still had difficulty discerning goblin ages.

The two women studied me for a moment, then hurried toward the bed.

“Uh, do you need anything?” I asked them.

They giggled and tossed their robes to the floor, exposing their lean, naked bodies. The redhead crawled onto the bed, right toward me, and the one with the black hair grabbed the sheet and pulled it out of my hands.

“Oh, it *is* big,” said the redhead, looking at my crotch wide-eyed.

“I have a feeling I know what you two want,” I said with a grin.

“Do you accept us as mates?” asked the redhead. “Are we to your liking?” She straightened up, giving me a good view of her slender figure. The raven-haired woman looked at me seductively.

My smile deepened. “You are both very much to my liking.”

They practically tackled me, their lips against mine, their hands going straight for my dick. They were as eager as Prazzi, probably even more.

And when I had finished with them, another woman came in.

I didn't get much sleep that night, and that's not a complaint.

When a soft knock came at my door the next morning, I wasn't sure if it was someone waking me up or coming to have sex with me; either one was equally possible. Apparently, since the Mothers of a New Age had given their blessing, every woman around wanted me to impregnate her. I pulled the blanket over my head, but the knock came again, followed by the sound of the door opening.

I pulled the blanket down and saw Prazzi's beautiful face in the opening, smiling at me.

"Oh good, you're awake," she said, and pushed the door open the rest of the way.

She walked into my room and another woman followed, of course short and breathtakingly beautiful like the rest of them. This woman had silver hair, which contrasted oddly with her green skin, and a petite frame. More notably, she carried a tray of food in her hands and brought it straight to my bed.

“You need to keep your strength up so you can continue to perform your duties,” Prazzi said as she reached the side of the bed. “Are you feeling well, Andrew? Did you get enough sleep?”

“Yes to the first question, no to the second,” I said as the beautiful young woman set the tray of food on my bed. It was covered with fresh fruit and hard cheeses and a few eggs.

“This is Kimi,” Prazzi said, waving her hand toward the slender woman. “She’ll be taking care of you this morning.” Her lips twitched into a faint smile.

“Hi, Kimi,” I said as I took a bite of something that looked like a purple strawberry. “Oh, wow. The produce here is amazing.”

Kimi looked to Prazzi, who nodded, smiled, then stepped back. Kimi turned to me and crawled onto the bed. “I hope the food pleases you, Andrew,” she said in a shy voice.

I looked at her for a moment, fully understanding what was about to happen. “Just let me eat first, okay?” She nodded and smiled, making herself comfortable on the bed. Prazzi left the room, closing the door quietly behind her.

I stuffed my face with fresh fruit and four different types of hard cheese. There were three hardboiled eggs there, about half the size of a chicken egg. I barely chewed them before swallowing.

I handed the tray to Kimi, who took it and carried it out of the room. After that, I went to my sink and took a scoop of water from a bucket set nearby. I used that to scrub my teeth with



soda and a small, handmade brush. Wasn't the best, but with all the natural food I found my mouth a lot cleaner anyways. After a gargle and spit, I took a washrag and wiped myself down. I probably smelled like a whorehouse after last night.

Feeling much better after cleaning myself, I made my way back to the bed, still nude. Kimi came back and paused, eyes wide as she saw me walking without any clothes. I hopped back on the bed and she followed me.

Her robe was soft linen in a pale gray, without any embroidery at all. I think the material and amount of decoration on their robes dictated their social standing. She stood next to the bed, her nipples gently poking through the thin material, holding the lapels of her robe nervously in both hands.

"How long have you been here?" I asked her. "In the temple, that is. What do you do?"

"I've been here since I became an adult and left my parents' home," she replied. "For two years I have learned the ways of Zozella and studied in her school. She values knowledge, so I learned arithmetic, writing, science, and studied the arts."

"How old are you?" I asked. I knew they aged differently, but I wasn't sure they entered adulthood at the same age humans did.

"Nineteen," she replied. She toyed with the edges of her robe as she spoke. "I... Can I be honest, Andrew? I want this, but I don't know what to do."

"Well, you wanting it is the most important part," I replied.

“Okay,” Kimi said. She looked down at herself and opened her robe, revealing her slender body and small, perky breasts. Like the rest, her body was completely hairless. The robe fell to the floor and she climbed onto the bed.

Being with four different women last night had left me rather tired, so while the sight of her toned body excited me, I didn’t move. Well, my dick moved and became erect in seconds, but the rest of me just laid back on a few pillows and wished for more sleep.

“What do you want me to do?” she asked, crawling toward me and kneeling next to me.

I sighed. Her petite body looked like a lot of fun, and in different circumstances I would enjoy her all day long, but I had work to do.

“Come here,” I said, patting my lap. “Straddle me.”

Kimi looked at my dick nervously for a moment, then threw a slender thigh over me and sat on my lap, directly atop my stiff cock that was lying against my body. Her pussy was warm and wet against my erection.

“Lean forward a bit,” I told her.

She complied, leaning her small torso over and positioning her hips better for penetration. I licked my fingers and reached between her thighs, ensuring she was good and wet. Her breath caught as I touched her.

“It’s okay,” I said, gently rubbing her thigh with my other hand.

“I’m sorry,” she said, blushing slightly. “I’ve never been touched down there before.”

“Just relax,” I told her, gripping my rock-hard cock. I rubbed the head against her wet pussy and gently guided it inside her.

Kimi took a deep breath and closed her eyes as I pushed myself in. When she winced I immediately stopped, but after a moment she nodded and we continued. In short time she was riding on top of me with my hands tightly gripping her tiny waist.

As tired as I was, I let her do most of the work. She was eager for it, and her face melted into a bright smile as she rode me, with the occasional moan. I let my hands slide down to her tight round bottom and squeezed it as I thrust up into her like a piston.

I didn’t have time for a long session of lovemaking, so I held her tightly while pounding her hard and fast. Her small breasts shook in time with each thrust, bouncing gently, and sweat slicked her chest. As tight as she was, it didn’t take me long to reach orgasm, even being tired.

We moaned together in ecstasy as I blasted my seed deep inside her. She collapsed on my sweaty chest and I held her tightly, kissing the top of her head while we both laid there for a while, catching our breath.

“You ladies have to give me a break,” I told her with a chuckle. “I’m practically cumming dust at this point.”

She smiled against my chest and snuggled more closely, tucking her head beneath my chin. I held her tightly and let my exhaustion take me.

I woke a short time later, feeling refreshed. Kimi was still lying on my chest, smiling contentedly, with my soft cock still inside her. After kissing the top of her head, I stretched my arms to the sides.

“Alright, beautiful. I need to get up and start my day,” I told her.

She raised herself off my chest with a slight pout on her flawless face, then leaned forward and kissed me. “Thank you, Andrew,” she said in her quiet voice. “I hope to see you again soon.”

Kimi rolled off of me, then stepped off the bed and grabbed her robe. As she wrapped the robe around her, her face glowed with a smile just like Prazzi’s had. I watched her petite body as she dressed, from her small breasts to her tiny waist and perky backside.

“This has got to be a dream,” I said to myself. After being with so many beautiful women, life just didn’t quite feel real.

I certainly wasn’t complaining. My new normal was quickly growing on me.

After Kimi left the room I hopped off the bed and made my way to the tub again, where I washed myself off a second time. My eyes cast around for something to wear, and I realized I

only had my old Metallica t-shirt and jeans. Hopefully I would get some new clothes today.

A fresh breakfast and a beautiful woman was a great way to start the day. I reached down and grabbed my old clothes and pulled them on, eager to see what they day held for me.

As soon as I left my room I looked around for any familiar faces. From across the main room of the temple, Prazzi saw me scanning around. She hurried over to me with another woman in tow. Instead of silk or linen robes, this woman was wearing work clothes; pants, a sturdy shirt, and a canvas apron that strained over her full chest.

“How was your breakfast, Andrew?” Prazzi asked with her ever-present smile.

“Wonderful,” I replied. “Especially the dessert. So, who is this?” I stopped myself from asking if I was going to be impregnating her as well.

“Trina, honored to serve you,” the other woman said with a bow of her head.

She was a highly attractive woman, if not quite as stunningly beautiful as the ones I had been with so far. She was built more thickly than the other goblin women I had seen, almost enough to be called chubby, but it was all in the right places. I couldn't place an age to her, but streaks of gray marked the dark brown hair at her temples and faint wrinkles lined her green eyes when she smiled.

Her gaze took in my t-shirt and jeans and her mouth twisted faintly in displeasure. She placed both fists on her hips as she looked me up and down.

“Not a fan of Metallica?” I asked with a grin.

“I can see Prazzi wasn’t exaggerating. You definitely are in need of my services.” She looked back down at my jeans and shook her head.

“I’ll let you get to work,” Prazzi said with a smile. She bowed her head to me, then turned and walked away.

“Alright, these clothes won’t make themselves,” Trina said in a brisk voice. “Let’s get to work.”

She herded me back into my room and closed the door behind us. A bag filled with rolls of fabric was slung across her shoulders, and she dropped it on the floor without taking her eyes off of me.

I rubbed my hands together excitedly. “Finally, some new clothes! I’m looking forward to this,” I said. I actually was.

“Alright, step out of what you’re wearing,” Trina ordered. “I have a lot of work to do, so I want this to move quickly.” She reached into one of the pockets of her apron and withdrew a measuring tape.

“Yes ma’am, right away,” I said as I pulled off my shirt and tossed it to the floor. By this point I was used to being naked around goblin women so I removed my pants and boxers without any hesitation. Her eyes widened for a moment when she saw me naked.

“I see the rumors about you are true,” she said quietly, staring at my dick. With a shake of her head, she approached me, measuring tape in hand. “Stand up straight,” she ordered, and I complied.

She measured the length of my arms, the circumference of my neck and waist as well as the top of each thigh. When she knelt in front of me to measure my inseam, things got a little weird.

Although at this point, I fully expected it.

She held the measuring tape to the floor with one hand, then ran it up the inside of my thigh, right to my junk.

“Would you mind moving it out of the way?” She asked politely.

“Oh, sorry,” I said, pulling my frank and beans to the side.

“Thank you,” she said, finishing her measurement. Her eyes stayed on my dick for a long, awkward minute, until she finally cleared her throat and stood up.

“I’m sorry, Andrew,” she said, her cheeks coloring. “I’m sure this is strange for you as well. It’s just.... You’re here to sleep with as many of us as possible, to save our race, and you’re right here in front of me, and it’s so damn *big*.”

The way she said it made me feel like a porn star.

She bit her full bottom lip for a moment, still staring at my body. “How many women have you been with so far?” she asked.

“Uh,” I had to think. “Five, I think. I haven’t really been keeping count.” Why was she making this weird?

She bunched the measuring tape in her hands. With her standing this close, I was able to see straight down the front of her shirt. How those double-D sized breasts fit on a woman that was probably four-foot-five, I didn’t know, but this close they looked fantastic. I took a deep breath so I didn’t get an erection; I wanted to get my clothes made, and the sooner the better.

“You’re strong,” she said, still watching me. She looked up at my face and studied me for a moment.

“May I ask a personal question?” I made my voice gentle.

“Of course,” she replied.

“How old are you?” I asked.

She took a deep breath, visibly grateful for the change of subject. She turned and walked back to the large sack of cloth she had dropped. Of course my eyes went right to her backside. It was a large one as far as goblin butts went, two big round cheeks just ripe for squeezing. Trina bent over and selected a roll of dark blue fabric, then turned and came back to me. She unrolled a few feet, held it up near my face, then nodded with satisfaction.

“If you must know, last month I turned sixty-eight,” she replied. Some of the tension left her voice as she unrolled the fabric and began to cut.

“Wow,” I said without thinking.



Her scissors stopped mid-cut. “What was that?” she asked with a raised eyebrow.

“Oh, nothing bad,” I said with a laugh. “I’m still learning your people and how they age. I couldn’t put an age to you. You’re quite beautiful, you know.” I wasn’t trying to flirt with her, I was just being polite. Other than the wisps of gray hair, she didn’t look any older than mid-thirties. But then again, goblins lived longer than humans.

Again she fixed me with that scrutinizing stare. “Thanks,” she said, falling back into her brisk tones.

Her scissors whisked through the cloth and in no time she had several pieces roughly cut out. She muttered something under her breath about a table, then looked about the room. Seeing the bed, she pulled her materials behind her and went back to work.

“Over here, please,” she said, pointing at a spot on the floor near her.

I walked over to her and stood there while she worked. She grabbed another roll of cloth from her bag and began cutting it as well. She worked quickly, with no wasted motions. Not long passed before I could see what she was making.

“I should have started on your pants first,” she muttered. “So I wouldn’t have to see that thing the whole time.” By her tone I couldn’t tell if she was upset or not.

“Hey, I’m sorry,” I said, looking for where I had thrown my clothes. “Let me go put something on. I don’t want to make

you uncomfortable.” I walked back and grabbed my boxers, then stepped into them. “Here, now you can measure me if you need, and it should be less, uh, bothersome.”

She gave me an odd look, then broke into a smile. “Don’t worry yourself so much, Andrew,” she said. “Get back over here and take those things off. I’m not uncomfortable, it’s just a bit distracting. Not in a bad way.” She offered me a smile. “I should have your first outfit roughed out, then I can get started on a few more. I’ll finish them later in my workshop. Come here,” she said, waving me over.

I shrugged and walked back over to her, letting my boxers fall as I approached. Trina laughed to herself as she raised a shirt that was pinned together and held it in front of me.

“I think this will look just fine on you,” she said with a satisfied nod. She set the shirt back on the bed, then pulled her apron over her head and set it on the bed as well. “I had a question for you as well, Andrew.”

***D**on't stare at her huge tits. Don't stare at her huge tits.  
Don't stare at her huge tits.*

I was only partially successful. I caught a quick glimpse of them as she leaned over the bed. Man, my libido was on fire the past couple days. That blessing Zozella gave me seemed to have turned me up to eleven.

“How soon do you need these?” Trina asked, pointedly not looking down.

“I’ve been told by several people that I’ll be leaving in the next few days for York,” I told her. “To meet King Freg.”

She pursed her full lips and nodded for a moment as she pondered that. “Well, I’ll have you looking sharp in no time. I’m assuming you’ll be killing Vogrim as well?” Her tone left no wiggle room.

“I will,” I said with a nod.

“I’ll have my assistant stitch you together something more sturdy, then. A basic jacket, and some good traveling pants

with a matching cloak.” She suddenly seemed to realize that I was staring very pointedly at her face, and smiled. Not a seductive smile, but one that threatened to break out into laughter. She looked down at her breasts, peeking out of her shirt, and chuckled. Leaning forward, she pulled open the front of her shirt, giving me a fantastic glimpse at those beautiful round melons.

“Go ahead, Andrew. You’re saving us all, so I don’t suppose a look is going to do any harm.” She gave me a sweet smile and grabbed onto her full breasts and gave them a squeeze.

“Ah, jeeze,” I said as I immediately got an erection.

Trina looked down at my throbbing member and laughed. “It’s a shame I’m not younger,” she said. “Were I of child bearing age, I would leap at the opportunity to take this for a ride.” She reached out and wrapped her slender green fingers around the base of my cock and gave it a squeeze.

“Trina, you’re killing me here,” I said with a laugh.

“Oh, relax, you,” she said. “You need to save all your strength for the younger women. You’ve got a race to save, young man. This thing is our future.” She bent down and placed a kiss on the head of my dick, then laughed again and stepped away.

She turned around and began gathering up all of her cloth, as well as the pieces she had rough cut. I looked down at her round bottom and thick thighs and somehow my body managed to pump even more blood into my crotch.

Trina straightened up suddenly and turned around, catching me as I was staring at her. Her smile deepened and she wagged a finger at me.

“Now now,” she said. “I’m old enough to be your grandmother, Andrew.” She slowly walked away, ostentatiously swinging her round hips from side to side. When she got to the door she turned sideways, cocking her hip to one side, and faced me. “I’ll see you tomorrow,” she said with a smile. She pulled the door open and left, chuckling “still got it” under her breath.

I took a deep breath and suddenly wished for a cold shower. I had never in my life seen a body as ridiculously voluptuous as Trina’s. That ass of hers was made for squeezing. It took a few minutes, but my erection finally went down and I fetched my clothes.

As I finished pulling on my shirt, I found myself excited for my meeting with Ulenor later in the day. He was going to test my magical ability. I assumed my first spell would be something incredibly weak, but I was excited nonetheless. Sleeping with beautiful women *and* casting magical spells? Talk about awesome.

I left my room, this time without interruption. My steps took me immediately to the statue of Zozella, in front of which I knelt.

“I just wanted to thank you for all of this,” I told her. “I gave you my word, and I intend to keep it. I’m going to save your people. Our people.”

“Looks like you’re off to a good start,” Zozella’s voice chimed in my head. A smile crept upon her stone face. “Stay on your path, and do not falter, Andrew,” she said. “No matter what obstacles you are faced with.”

“Yes ma’am,” I said with a nod, then straightened up. After a slight, awkward bow, I turned and walked out of the temple.

Trina had mentioned rumors about me, and now I saw the reality of that. People had always watched me with curiosity in this town, but now many of the women stared at me with open desire. Men watched me with hope. These people saw their savior when they saw me.

No pressure or anything.

Not knowing where else to go, I set off toward Mayor Beezle’s house. He would certainly know what to do.

I didn’t take a dozen steps before a beautiful young goblin woman rushed up to me, urged on by her parents ten feet behind her. She strode up to me, blushing faintly, and curtsied. Her hair was pink, and she held a straw-colored linen cloak closed around her with both hands.

“Good morning, Mr. uh, Andrew. Should I call you just Andrew? No bother. My parents wanted me to ask, that is, I was wondering—”

“Take a deep breath,” I told her in a gentle voice. “I’m a regular person, just like you. There’s no need to be nervous. What is it you wanted to ask me?”

She turned and looked back at her parents, who nodded enthusiastically. After turning back to me, she blushed even deeper, then spoke.

“Well, as I’m sure you’ve been told, it’s considered a great honor to be chosen as one of your mates. You’re saving us, after all. I wanted to know if you would choose me,” she finished in a rush. With that, she opened her cloak, revealing her nude body beneath.

By this point, I was over much of the shock of seeing so many perfect bodies. Still, she was absolutely breathtaking. She had a slender, muscular body, like a gymnast, with strong thighs and a flat stomach. Her breasts were on the small side, but were perfectly round and topped off with darker green nipples. She looked up at me expectantly.

“How old are you?” I asked.

“I turned nineteen a month ago,” she replied, still holding her cloak open.

I took a step toward her and gently brought her cloak around her, then wrapped my arms around her and held her tightly. When I kissed the top of her head, I smelled honeysuckle.

“Will you?” she asked again.

“Of course,” I said with a laugh. “Just come see me tonight at the temple. What’s your name, lovely?”

“Una,” she replied, then looked up at me.

Her eyes were a shade of dark violet that, when combined with her pink hair, made me think of candy. I leaned down and

kissed her soft lips, gave her another hug, then hurried on my way. She rushed back to her parents, all three of them smiling.

Other women saw this and eyed me with even greater interest. I picked up my pace and began to wonder if I would even make it to Mayor Beezle's house or if these women would strip me bare and ride me right here in the middle of the street. The rest of them would probably cheer me on.

"Andrew! Andrew Jones!" a man called out.

I turned and watched a goblin man wearing subdued shades of dark green hurrying toward me. I stopped and waited for him.

He was tall for a goblin, probably five foot even, with a lean, athletic build. He walked with a purposeful stride and carried himself with the strength and dignity of a man that fought for a living. If the green clothes, clean-shaven face, and short black hair weren't a giveaway, the straightforward way he spoke was.

"I'm glad I caught you before the women did, else I'd have to fight them off," he said as he strode up to me. "Come with me, Andrew. Ulenor has directed me to train you on weapons."

"Finally!" I said, rubbing my hands together. Important first steps. "Lead the way."

"Right, right," he said, turning and walking back the way he came from. "I'm Sergeant Nerras, by the way. Second platoon leader of the third infantry company."

"Good to meet you, Sergeant Nerras," I replied. Third infantry company? I was immediately curious about their units and



structure.

I continued talking as he led me through the city, and did my best to ignore the women calling out for me.

“I was an infantryman, back in my world,” I told him. “503rd Infantry Regiment. Lots of memories there. I was actually a sergeant myself.”

Sergeant Nerras looked back at me briefly upon hearing that. There was an understanding in his eyes this time, a sort of weighing look.

“Good,” he said as he continued walking. “The fact that you’re a fighting man will make this a lot easier.”

“The weapons of my world were much different than the ones of yours, but I know the basics, yeah,” I said.

He led me to a compound of buildings surrounded by a high wall made from sturdy logs. Some of the buildings had the look of barracks. We went past that, to a large field where several men in padded clothes sparred. A platoon-sized element of shirtless men alternated doing pushups and squats.

“We have about two hours before lunch, so if you don’t mind, I’d like to get right into it,” Sergeant Nerras said. “We need to see where your fighting skills are so I know where and how to train you the most.” He led me to an open space on the field where a rack of weapons stood and pulled his shirt off. His body was lean and well-muscled, exactly what I expected to see on a fighting man.

He selected a spear slightly taller than him, with a padded tip, and tossed it to me. I caught it in the air and went to examine it, but he tossed a helmet to me immediately after. I caught that left-handed.

“Put the helmet on,” Sergeant Nerras said. “Make sure it fits well. You’ll be taking some hits to the face.”

I laughed. This guy wasn’t playing around. “Well said,” I told him as I pulled the helmet on. It was a little snug, but the padding made it reasonably comfortable. Steel bars covered my face, close enough that nothing could get through.

Sergeant Nerras pulled a similar helmet onto his head, then grabbed a padded spear for himself and turned to face me.

“First, your stance,” he said, and took up a fighting stance. “Like this.”

I copied him as best as I could, then he immediately came over and adjusted my position.

“Right hand at the butt of the spear,” he said, pushing my hand to the very end of the shaft. “Left hand here. Good.” He took a few steps away and grabbed his spear, then took up the same position. “The primary attack with the spear is a thrust, most often directed at the face of your target.” He quickly thrust forward, head-height, five times.

I copied his movements. It was a basic attack, so it was quite easy.

Sergeant Nerras then drilled me on body attacks, and a slashing motion that he said should be used with extreme

caution.

“Any time your spear isn’t in front of you, you’re vulnerable,” he explained.

After he judged my attacks to be sufficient, he stood in front of me with his spear up and directed me to attack him. I stabbed forward, right for his face, not holding back. He parried each thrust, but praised me nonetheless. He told me to continue and to be ready to defend myself.

After my fourth attack, he knocked my spear to the side and jabbed me straight in the chest. Sergeant Nerras was a small man, but struck like a cobra, and the padded spear knocked me back.

“Always guard yourself,” he instructed. “Keep the end of your spear up, in front of your head. Remember, you’re trying to stab them in the face, but they’re probably trying to do the same to you.” He jabbed his spear toward me and I slapped it to the side, although my motion was a bit too slow and his padded spearpoint scraped the side of my helmet.

“That was good, just be faster,” he said, and lunged again.

I wasn’t faster.

He struck like lightning, so while I was fast enough to begin the parry motion, I still caught his padded spear point in the face, in the shoulder, and once in the stomach, which left me wheezing. At least he let me catch my breath.

Sergeant Nerras pulled his padded helmet off and set it on the stand near us. “Always maintain equanimity,” he said. “You

did well at not getting flustered, even after I hit you a few times.” He grabbed a towel and wiped some sweat from his face, then turned back to me. “What do you know of hand-to-hand fighting?” he asked.

I had progressed to level two combatives while in the army, and studied boxing for a year when I got out to help stay in shape. All in all, I was a pretty solid fighter. Furthermore, I was a foot taller than this guy and considerably heavier. I was looking forward to a chance to prove myself.

“A bit,” I said.

Sergeant Nerras eyed me up and down. “You’re big, so that’ll help if you ever have to fight one of the lizardfolk. Remember, though, they bite. Elves are roughly your size, but with a more slender build. Orcs are a bit heavier. And don’t even think of fighting a minotaur. Are you ready?”

“Ready, Sergeant,” I replied with a grin.

I raised my fists in front of me and took a step toward the smaller man. Sergeant Nerras narrowed his eyes slightly as he recognized my stance and brought his own fists up.

“No direct face shots. We’re not trying to hurt each other, I’m just testing your skill level,” he said as he stepped toward me, hands raised. “Go ahead.”

He was only as tall as my shoulder, so it felt a bit like fighting a child. I kept my wits about me, though. This was a man that fought for a living, so underestimating him would be a mistake.

I stepped in, feinted a few times, then dropped into a jab to the stomach to soften him up. He caught it on a forearm and countered with a flurry of blows at my midsection that left me gasping. For such a small guy, his fists felt like hammers.

I rushed forward and overpowered him, taking him to the ground. Now, I was in my element. With a tight grip on his wrist I tried to pull him into an arm bar, but the slippery

bastard wiggled out of my grasp and slammed his elbow into my ribs. Wheezing, I leaped forward and plowed into him like a lineman, smothering him on the ground, then got my arm around his neck. I squeezed, and after a few seconds he slapped his hand on the grass several times.

I rolled off of Sergeant Nerras, breathing hard. With a grunt and a laugh, he pushed himself to his feet and brushed grass and dirt from his body.

“You’re a tough bastard,” I told him. I pulled up my shirt and saw half a dozen red, fist-shaped marks on my torso. Those would be bruises by nightfall.

“That extra weight you carry really gives you an advantage,” he replied, offering me a hand.

“Thanks,” I said, letting him help me to my feet.

“I don’t think there’s anything I can teach you when it comes to hand-to-hand,” he said, taking a deep breath. “But if you need a sparring partner, I’m game.” A sudden grin split his face in two. “That was a ball of fun.”

“Crazy, as well as tough,” I said with a laugh. “So, what’s next?”

Sergeant Nerras grabbed his shirt from the weapons rack and wiped sweat from his face. “The spear or one of its variations would be your primary weapon as an infantryman. However, you’re a special case. You won’t be doing much fighting in formation; you need to be trained in duels. Now, in that

situation I would still advise a spear in most cases, but a good sword goes a long way, especially one with a long blade.”

He grabbed a wooden practice sword from the rack and tossed it to me, then grabbed one for himself. Mine was a few inches longer and slightly heavier.

“Another benefit of the spear is that I can train you in all the basic moves in a single day and have you ready to fight in a week. You won’t be an expert, but you could survive a mild campaign. The sword, however, takes months to learn and years to master.”

“When you put it that way, it definitely makes more sense for me to use a spear,” I said. “Why am I learning the sword again?”

“There are many angles to this,” Sergeant Nerras replied. “You’re also here to save my people. The hero of my race deserves a better weapon than a stick with a pointy end. Swords are a status symbol, Andrew. You should see the king’s! Plus, there are moves with a sword you can’t do with a spear, which we’ll get to.” He raised his wooden blade. “Ready?”

I gripped the hilt with both hands and brought my sword up. “Ready, Sergeant.”

“Not like that,” Sergeant Nerras said. “Use a single hand. I’m assuming you’re going to be taught magic?” I nodded. “You’ll want to keep a hand free, in that case.”

I shifted the sword to my right hand and gave it a few test swings. It felt awkward and heavy.

“I’ll go easy on you, don’t worry,” Sergeant Nerras said. “Just try to parry my attacks and see if you can get a jab in. Again, I’m just trying to see where you’re at.”

With that, he brought the sword around and swung for my midsection, purposely going slowly. I brought my practice sword to my side, deflecting his blow, then immediately shifted my stance and twisted to block an attack from the other side. He was moving slowly, but he was still relentless. Furthermore, he attacked me from odd angles. I didn’t get an opportunity to strike back at all.

“Maybe we should stick with a spear,” he said with a grunted laugh. “You’re quite horrible with a sword.”

“In my defense, swords stopped being useful weapons several hundred years ago in my world,” I replied.

“Is that so? What do you use?”

“Kind of hard to explain,” I said. “Imagine a crossbow but more compact, and a hundred times more powerful. Also, it can shoot thirty bolts as fast as you can pull the trigger.”

Sergeant Nerras whistled between his teeth. “Sounds impressive. I’m afraid we don’t have anything like that, although we do have some run-of-the-mill crossbows.”

“Hey, I’ll take it,” I told him. “I think I’d be a lot more comfortable with one of those. Hell, maybe I could even help you guys build a better one.”



“That could certainly come in handy.” Sergeant Nerras placed his hands on his hips and fixed me with a stare. “Look, we train hard and fight hard, but the truth is goblins are a peaceful folk. War isn’t in our blood. Us soldiers, well, a lot of citizens feel uncomfortable around us, on account of the duties we’re expected to perform. Violence isn’t a native thing to us, even after so many years of being beaten down by the elves.” He spat the last word.

“Well, if there’s one thing humans know, it’s war. I’ll be glad to help however you can. I’m sure with a bit of effort we can improve upon what you’ve got here.” I turned and looked toward the wall surrounding the city. I could just see the top edge over the roofs of some houses. “Although to be honest, it looks like you’re doing a great job. The wall around this city is solid, Sergeant, and I’ve seen your archers on top. I would hate to attack this place.”

“Thanks,” he said. “We do our best.” He started walking away and jerked his head so I would follow. “Sometimes that Vogrim bastard sends patrols this way. Lizardfolk, harpies, minotaurs if we’re really unlucky. Our wizard can spot them ahead of time, usually. Something magical he does. We’ve been caught off-guard a few times, though.” He went silent after that, which said more than words could have.

“It won’t happen overnight, but I’ve given my word that I’ll kill him,” I said quietly.

“If you need help, let me be the first to volunteer,” Sergeant Nerras said grimly. “I can’t even begin to describe what it’s

like. To have all your.... To lose all your abilities as a man.” His face darkened with anger. “At least I’m one of the lucky ones. The rest of my body still works. Some guys get it bad and go nearly comatose.”

“Is it permanent?” I asked. “If you could get away from the poison rain for a while, would it clear up?”

Sergeant Nerras shrugged. “I’ve no idea. He covers every city, every town, and every village with his poison rain that falls every few days. I’m sure one of us could go live in the wild for a few months, then come back and see if he’s better, but if more than a few people did it Vogrim would be sure to notice.”

“How would he know, Sergeant?” I asked. “Does he have spies in the city?”

“You keep calling me by my rank,” Sergeant Nerras said. “Is that how you do it back in your world?”

I chuckled. “Yeah. In the army, you address other military members by their rank. Especially superiors. If you don’t, it can be seen as disrespectful, and some of them will light you up for it.”

He frowned. “I suppose the rigorous adherence to protocol has its benefits, but it just feels cumbersome to me. We only use our ranks at certain times; for example when I introduced myself to you. But you can just call me ‘Nerras.’”

“Alright, Nerras,” I said.

“But to answer your question, he has spies in the city, but not what you would think. I don’t think any goblins would be

stupid enough to align themselves with Vogrim. Vermin, however, are sometimes used as spies. Creatures that feed upon death. He sees what they see, or so I'm told. You'll notice there aren't any rats, vultures, or crows anywhere near the city."

I nodded. "That's good information to have. I never thought I'd have to keep an eye out for bird spies, but now I know. What's next?"

Nerras continued walking toward a large building. "Depending on how long you'll be here, we need to make you some weapons and armor. I'm guessing you'll be heading to York soon, so that might not happen, but we'll do what we can."

He led me around the edge of a large building—enlisted barracks, according to Nerras—and toward a smithy. Two goblin men with thickly muscled arms and leather aprons manned the forge, one hammering and the other running a small piece of metal against a large grinding wheel.

"Hey, Gully!" Nerras called out. "You finish anything nice recently?"

Both goblins looked up but it was the one on the grinding wheel that answered.

"Mostly arrowheads, these days," he said in a coarse voice. "Got a few knives for the officers as well. Feel free to look through 'em." He squinted and looked at me. "So, is this the guy?"

“Yup,” Nerras replied. “Andrew Jones, the guy that’s going to kill Vogrim.”

Gully peered at me for a moment. “Make it hurt,” he said. “Make it hurt as bad as you can.”

I nodded. “I give you my word, I’ll do my best,” I said. How was I supposed to respond to a statement like that?

“Come on,” Nerras said, and we continued past the forge to a small building.

The interior of the building was rough-hewn wooden planks, floor, wall, and ceiling, with weapon and armor racks filling the room. Most of the weapon racks were filled with six-foot-long spears, but a handful of swords crowded a rack on the far side of the room. Nerras pulled me over that way and we both looked through the rack.

If I was going to be fighting anyone with a sword, I needed something with a long blade. Something that could poke my enemy full of holes before they could reach me. Unfortunately, the rack was filled with thick-bladed swords about the size of a machete. I could probably get something made in York.

A handful of knives were laid out on top of the rack and my face brightened upon seeing them. I picked one up and pulled the blade free from the simple leather sheath.

“You seem awfully happy about that knife,” Nerras said.

“This looks just like a Fairbairn-Sykes fighting knife,” I responded.

Nerras raised an eyebrow. “You want to expand on that?”

I held the knife in my hand. The balance felt just right. “It’s a knife with a lot of history back in my world. A lot of elite military units used it over the years. Can I have this one?”

“You can have anything in here you’d like,” Nerras said, spreading his hands.

“The knife will work for now. I imagine I’ll be outfitted when I get to York.” I slid the dagger back into its sheath and tucked it into my belt. “What else do you have for me, Nerras?”

“Honestly, not much,” he replied. “Captain Gomar chose me to see where your fighting skills are at and improve them as much as I can before you leave for York.”

“Why were you chosen?” I asked.

His face melted into a sudden grin. “Because I tend to like fighting,” he said. “Makes some people uncomfortable, but I figure it’s my job so I need to take it seriously.”

I laughed. This guy was my kind of crazy. “So, if there’s nothing else to do today, I’m guessing I’ll see you tomorrow morning.”

“And your guess would be correct,” he said, still grinning. “I’ll be here shortly after breakfast.”

“I won’t keep you waiting too long,” I said. I offered him my hand. “Sergeant Nerras, it’s been a pleasure.”

He shook my hand firmly. “I look forward to whipping you into shape,” he said with a laugh.

I left the military compound and hurried toward Ulenor's place. Magic was on the menu today.

I did my best to ignore the stares and whispers as I hurried down the cobblestone street. Most people went about their business, giving me little more than a curious glance, but a number of women eyed me with open interest, sometimes elbowing their friends and pointing as I walked by.

“Excuse me,” I said to a woman passing by. “Can you tell me where the Street of Flowers is?”

She looked me up and down, immediately recognizing who I was. I was the only human in the city, after all. Possibly the world.

Her cheeks flushed and her lips twisted into a sultry smile. “So you’re him, right? By Zozella, you’re tall! Say, if you’re not busy right now, I would love to—”

“I’m actually in a rush, sorry,” I said quickly. While she was beautiful, I had to focus on getting things done.

“Oh,” she said, clearly disappointed. “It’s over that way,” she said, turning and pointing behind her. “Follow this street for a

bit. The second intersection from here is the Street of Flowers.”

“Thank you,” I said, offering her my best smile. She smiled back, though hers was much deeper and less innocent, and I hurried away.

As pretty as she was, my mind was on one thing and one thing only; magic. Today, Ulenor was going to test me and determine my magical ability. To say I was excited was an understatement.

I walked quickly, almost a jog, until I got to the second intersection like the woman had said. I recognized it immediately, and turned right onto the Street of Flowers. Some of the houses were familiar, so I walked with confidence down the street until I saw Ulenor’s place on the left. I walked across his veranda and knocked firmly on the wooden door.

“Yes, yes, I’m coming,” came Ulenor’s muffled voice. Moments later, the door opened and Ulenor stood there, face split with a smile. “Andrew! Good to see you. Please, come in, come in.” He stepped aside and waved me through.

“Thanks,” I said, entering his tidy house.

“I imagine you’ve been busy,” Ulenor said as he closed the door. He looked at me with a raised eyebrow and a knowing smile.

“You don’t know the half of it,” I said, although I couldn’t help but smile as well. “But yeah, I didn’t get a lot of sleep last



night. That reminds me, I need to drink lots of water so I can keep up with this.”

“Water?” Ulenor said, eyeing me strangely. “Would tea work?”

It took me a second to remember that drinking plain water was largely a modern thing. Throughout history people drank tea and beer, as they were cleaner than water. Granted, the goblins had figured out rudimentary plumbing and water purification, but I imagine the habit of drinking tea remained.

“I would love some tea,” I said. “And lots of it.”

Ulenor directed me to sit in the living room while he poured water into a tea kettle. For a moment I wondered if he was going to light a fire to heat it, which would make the room sweltering, considering the warm weather outside. To my surprise—or not, really—Ulenor pulled out his small spell book and read while placing his hand on the tea kettle. Steam rapidly shot out of the spout, just short of whistling.

“So, it’s not all fireballs and calling lightning, I see.” Until that moment I had never really given much thought to the practical uses of magic.

“I use magic for many things,” Ulenor said as he placed a pierced metal globe filled with herbs and leaves into the top of the kettle. It was suspended by a small chain, which clipped to the top. He brought the kettle and two cups into the living room, then set them on a small table in front of me. After pouring tea into each cup, he grabbed one for himself and settled into a chair near me.

“So,” he began after inhaling the steam coming from his tea cup. “From your comments, I trust things have been going well? How were the Mothers? Have you given more thought to Vogrim?”

“At this rate I’ll have half of your women pregnant by the end of the month,” I said, taking a sip of the tea. Other than being incredibly hot it was great, tasting faintly of lemongrass and rose hips. “The Mothers.... Look, I’ll be straight with you, Ulenor. Those women are most of the reason I’ve decided to stay.”

Ulenor nodded, his smile thoroughly satisfied. “Amazing how a good woman can affect one’s thoughts.” His eyes took on a faraway look for a moment. “Many, many years ago I loved a woman. Still do, of course. I sacrificed everything for her, and broke rules I shouldn’t have.” His eyes grew damp.

“So, what happened?” I asked. “Come on, you can’t leave me hanging like that.”

He looked over at me and smiled politely. “I’ll see her again one day, Andrew. Enough of that. Let’s talk about magic.”

“Yes, yes!” I said excitedly. I took another sip of my tea and set it on the table. “I’m ready. Or at least, I hope I am. Can we go ahead and start my test?”

Ulenor chuckled. “Of course we can. “Let’s finish our tea first, though. You just told me not five minutes past that you needed to stay hydrated.”

“Yeah, you have a point,” I said, grabbing my tea cup. “Vogrim,” I said. I chewed on the name, thought about him and rolled him around in my mind. “I do have some ideas for him. First and foremost, I’ll need Eldrick’s sword and shield, and of course that amulet so I can get them. When I go to attack him, I want to bring a few dozen soldiers with me. Some magic-users as well. A small, well-trained unit can pass where a full army can’t. I imagine he’ll know we’re coming; there’s no way around that.” Ulenor nodded in confirmation. “So we’ll just have to be prepared.”

Ulenor cleared his throat. “The path to Ulenor’s fortress is fraught with danger. Eldrick’s experiments on elves and other races roam the area, attacking like wild animals. There is the danger of the Black Sea to consider, of course. The fortress itself is more of a small town, filled with his minions and prisoners stolen from raids on nearby cities. All of those will be barriers to your journey.”

“Well, you never said it would be easy,” I said. It didn’t concern me; I had survived worse situations, although at that time I had an M-4 and some grenades. Regardless of the weapons, I knew that with sufficient planning, almost any situation could be resolved.

I drained the last of my tea with a gulp, wincing at the heat. After setting my cup down, I clapped my hands and rubbed them together. “So, can we get started? Can you test me for magic?”

Ulenor's smile was almost fatherly. "Yes, of course we can, Andrew. I know you're excited."

He set his tea down and pulled his small book from his pocket, then began flipping through pages.

"First I need to guide you through several things. Most importantly, I need to teach you how to gather your magical power from within and channel it into a spell."

"Let's do it," I said, moving to the front of my seat. I was as excited as a kid in a candy store. Maybe even more. Like, a kid in a magical candy store.

Ulenor explained in great detail how my magical power was within me, and how I could tap into it. He described it carefully and slowly, letting me follow along step by step. Inside me was a well of power, and I had to learn how to direct that flow of magic, guide it and coax it into the spell I wanted, or to alter physical forces.

"First, we'll do this," Ulenor said, holding his hand out palm-up. He uttered a few words and a marble-sized ball of light appeared above his hand, glowing softly.

I held my hand out and found the power within me. It was like a tiny stream in the wilderness, perfectly clear water gently bubbling over small stones.

"What words do I say?" I asked.

"No, no," Ulenor said. "You have the power within you, so you don't have to say anything. You direct your power into the

spell. See the ball of light. Feel the ball of light. Know it exists.”

“Okay,” I said, and focused on my palm. I imagined a ball of photons, a tiny sun that would fit in my hand. I willed it into existence and felt the power within me flow into it.

“I did it!” I exclaimed as a ball of light appeared in my hand. It burned brightly, and both Ulenor and I turned away. I reduced the amount of magical power I fed into it, and the light eventually faded into a dull glow.

“To say I am impressed is an understatement,” Ulenor said, letting his own ball of light wink out. “It takes many people months to be able to do what you just did.”

“I guess that blessing Zozella gave me is really helping,” I said.

“I’m sure it helps, but this is something within you,” Ulenor said. “Remember, when I sent a gateway looking for you, I had it seek a person with specific qualities. Magical affinity was one of those qualities.”

“Well, I never would have expected that,” I said, looking down at my hand. I half expected to see a burn mark on my palm after how bright that light was, but my skin was unharmed. “So, I know magic now.”

“Your ability is small at the moment, but it will grow.” Ulenor leaned forward and poured more tea into my cup. “You will tire easily until you gain more experience.”

“Can I try a different spell?” I asked.

“I don’t want to push you too hard, but I suppose there is no harm in it.” Ulenor’s brow furrowed in thought for a moment. “Would you like to control the wind? That’s a simple spell.”

“Hell yeah, I would,” I said. I grabbed my tea cup, sipped half of it down, then returned the cup to the table. “I’ll learn anything you teach me.”

Ulenor opened his book of spells and turned the pages. “This is one of the simplest spells for a sorcerer. You will simply use your power to push the air in the direction you choose.”

He uttered the spell quietly, then held his hand toward me. A gentle breeze ruffled my hair and blew through my clothing.

That seemed much simpler than creating a ball of light. I held a hand up in front of me and tapped into my magical well, then directed the flow of energy toward the air in front of me. My enthusiasm caused me to be a touch...ham-fisted.

Ulenor’s hair and beard whipped around as a gust of air blew him back into his chair.

“Sorry!” I said, cutting off the spell. “Are you okay, Ulenor?”

Ulenor stared at me, wide-eyed. “Yes, yes, I’m fine,” he said quietly. “I’m just shocked that you are already this strong, Andrew. We’re done with magic for the day. I think from now on we’ll test you in safer places.”

“Especially if you teach me something with fire,” I said.

Ulenor barked a laugh. “That won’t happen for a while.”

“Ulenor, are you there?” A faint voice called out from somewhere in the house.

Ulenor set his spell book in one of the pockets of his robe and pushed himself out of his chair. With a slight limp, he hurried into his study.

“Mayor Beezle, how are you?” Ulenor said. The rest of their conversation faded into unintelligible rumbles.

Curious, I got up and went to Ulenor’s study. When I got there, I saw him talking to a small mirror, in which a faint image of the mayor was visible. The two had a conversation as if they were using some form of video chat.

“Here he is,” Ulenor said, noticing my entrance.

“Andrew, come here, my boy,” Mayor Beezle said.

I walked closer and stood behind Ulenor. Seeing me, Mayor Beezle smiled.

“Enjoying things so far, Andrew?” he asked with a knowing smile.

I laughed, perhaps a little too hard. He knew exactly how I was filling my time.

“Well, I know you’ve been busy, Andrew, but you’ll be traveling soon. Very soon, in fact.” The mayor nodded enthusiastically. “I spoke to the king and he demanded to see you immediately.”

“I’m assuming you talked to him in the same way?” I asked, gesturing to the mirror.

“Yes, isn’t this wonderful? It has completely revolutionized things. Ulenor really outdid himself with the talking glasses.”

Ulenor shrugged.

“So, when am I leaving?” I asked. While I was enjoying Gillamoor, I was excited to see the goblin capital.

“Tomorrow,” Mayor Beezle said. “As soon as you’re done with breakfast, someone will come get you and you’ll start your journey.”

My smile suddenly faded. “Wait, what about the women? Uh, the Mothers of a New Age? Are they coming with me?”

The mayor looked confused for a moment. “Why would they?”

“Well, first, Lossia is the king’s daughter, and second, because I plan on keeping them.”

Mayor Beezle’s smile returned. “Already planning your future here, I see. Glad to hear of it. If you need them to come with you, I’m sure we can come to an arrangement. I’m sure the king would want to see them anyway.”

“Great,” I said with a nod. “It’s decided, then. I’m going to see the king and I’m keeping my women with me.”

Both of the other goblins laughed.

“There is something else I wanted to talk to you about, Mayor,” Ulenor said, his voice turning serious.

“Yes?”



“I looked through the eyes of my scout earlier today. Gus was able to fly above the Black Sea without causing alarm—I always tell him to avoid that damned place, but he never listens. Vogrim has dispatched a sizable force, I assume to investigate my gateway spell, or perhaps retaliate. They’re moving quickly and will be here in a few weeks.”

“How sizable are we talking?” I asked.

“Larger than he’s ever sent,” Ulenor said, his voice grim. “At least a dozen minotaurs, with as many orcs and no less than thirty lizardfolk.”

“That many?” Mayor Beezle asked. “Oh, I must speak with Colonel Chuleel to ensure our defenses are adequate. I’m sure he’ll use this as an excuse to remind me that we should be throwing our soldiers at Vogrim, as if that would solve anything.”

“I don’t understand,” I said. “You guys have a stone wall surrounding the city, with archers on top. It sounds like less than fifty people are heading this way. Why are you so concerned?”

Ulenor turned and looked at me. “You haven’t seen minotaurs before. That’s why you aren’t concerned.”

“Andrew, a force that size would make it past our arrows, right to our gate. Minotaur skin is thick, and they are often armored. And try as we would to defend it, a dozen minotaurs would beat our gate down in a matter of minutes.” The mayor’s face was shadowed with concern.

“If their armor is too thick, then fight dirty,” I said. “Set traps on the ground, right in their path. When they make it to the gate, pour boiling oil on them, then set them on fire. Have a squad of scouts ride out and hit them with poisoned arrows a few days before they get here. Or you can smear horse dung on the arrows. Their wounds will get infected, and you won’t have to worry about them any more.”

Both goblins stared at me, eyes wide, mouths hanging open.

“What?” I asked.

“Andrew, you must understand,” Ulenor said. “We are a peaceful people. We have always been a peaceful people. Hurting and killing are very foreign to goblins; our military is out of necessity. These things you mention, with hot oil and poison.... I think some goblins would faint after merely hearing you talk about them.”

I clapped my hand on Ulenor’s shoulder. “Well, lucky for you guys, humans have been at war with each other about as long as humans have existed. If there’s one thing we know, it’s how to kill. I’ll gladly help bolster your defenses, but if these monsters are as dangerous as you say they are, you’re going to have to get nasty. There’s no way around it if you want to survive.”

“Are you saying Colonel Chuleel is right?” Mayor Beezle asked.

“Not at all,” I replied. “I don’t think you should be throwing your soldiers away, no. But since you’re facing such vicious

opponents, you're going to have to fight dirty. It's either that, or they'll break through the gates."

Mayor Beezle nodded solemnly.

"Oh, that reminds me," I began. "Find whoever makes your spears and tell them to make some about four feet longer. As is, they're too short. Your soldiers will have to get used to the extra length, but it'll be worth it."

"I'll pass the message along," the mayor said.

"How do you deal with this violence, Andrew?" Ulenor asked me. "How do you sleep at night? How do you not let it consume you?"

I shrugged. "I guess it's just normal where I come from. I mean, we're not all at war constantly. But at any given time, there is some nation in the world warring with another, or so it seems. With more than seven billion people, I guess that's bound to happen."

"Did you say *billion*?" The mayor was shocked.

"Yeah," I replied. "And growing."

"This is a lot to take in. Thank you, Andrew. I'll mention some of the things you brought up to Colonel Chuleel. How long do we have, Ulenor?"

"About three weeks," the wizard replied.

"And I'll be here," I said.

They both looked at me.

“Well, it’s a week to York, so if I spend a week or less there, that gives me enough time to get back and help out. There’s a guy named Sergeant Nerras in your local military that can come with me and train me while we travel.”

“Looks like he already has it planned out, Mayor,” Ulenor said.

“Yes, I suppose there’s no use arguing with you. Besides, we need the help. I’ll make sure you have what you need when you leave tomorrow. Is there anything else, Ulenor?”

“No, Mayor.”

“Alright, my friend. I’ll talk to you soon.”

With that, the mayor’s image faded until it looked like a regular mirror again.

Ulenor let out a great sigh.

“Don’t worry, buddy,” I said, clapping him on the shoulder again. “You guys are going to be just fine. I’ll come back in time to help, and we’ll kick their asses all over the place.”

“I’m glad you’re optimistic,” Ulenor said. “Vogrim has always been a threat, but he has never sent more than a handful of his soldiers our way. We’ve been able to deal with them in the past, but as I said earlier, goblins are peaceful folk.”

“Can’t you cast a spell and kill them all?” I asked.

He shook his head. “Such spells are unavailable to me. Besides, it takes me too long. Even if I managed to kill one of the minotaur or a handful of lizardfolk, it would take time for

me to read the next spell. I would be an easy target for their spears.”

“Sounds like you need a powerful sorcerer,” I said with a grin.

“Now, as it just so happens, I know a guy that’s learning how to be one.”

Ulenor made lunch for us while I did my best to assure him that they would be alright. They had a secure, defensible position and sufficient archers, and the attacking force was not overly large. It was well within the capabilities of their town.

“Now, that being said, never underestimate your enemy,” I said as he set a plate in front of me piled high with food. I jabbed my fork into something that looked like a sauteed turnip and took a bite. It was delicious, although at this point that didn’t surprise me. The goblins knew how to do things right.

“You will need much training if you want to be effective at using magic in combat,” Ulenor said between bites. “For that reason, I have decided to go with you to York. Besides, it’s been a long time since I’ve seen the capital. I’m curious as to how it’s changed over the years.”

I was excited to see what the goblin capital city looked like as well. By all accounts, Gillamoor was somewhere between a

very small city and a large town, and I could spend the rest of my life here and be happy.

It was at that time I heard the sound of rain falling. I leaned back and looked out the window and saw drops falling steadily on the street outside. Looking back inside, I saw Ulenor's brow furrowed in a deep frown.

"Hey, sorry if this is a dumb question," I began. "Have you or any other magic user just tried to blow the cloud away?"

Ulenor shook his head. "If only it were that simple. I have tried exactly that, as have others, and the clouds ignore all attempts. I must emphasize that Vogrim is incredibly strong with magic—perhaps the strongest magical being ever born. He laughs at our attempts to fight back."

"So he's sat there for hundreds of years, slowly gathering his power, and now is beginning his conquest by first eliminating the goblins? Do I have that right?" I shoved another bite into my mouth.

"Yes, yes," Ulenor said. "And he is still building his power, which I suppose is why he hasn't bothered attacking in force. Or perhaps he's afraid that the entire goblin population will rise up and fight against him, although I still believe he would win that fight. But for whatever reason, he has chosen to eliminate us in the...*laziest* way possible. Once we're gone I would expect him to attack the elves. By that point the orcs will probably join him voluntarily."

"So, this is the beginning of the end, then?" I asked.

Ulenor nodded. “That’s a good description of it.” He sighed and set his fork down. “I suppose I will have to train you in forms of magic I am not too fond of. If you are expected to defeat Vogrim, you will have to learn how to use magic as a weapon.”

“Sounds like my days are going to be full,” I said. “Somehow, during our trip to York, I’ll need to learn how to use magic, fight with a sword and shield, *and* convince the Mothers to love me.”

Ulenor chuckled. “Yes, yes, you will certainly be busy, Andrew.”

I finished the last of my food and bade Ulenor farewell. As I peered through the doorway, I saw that the rain had stopped. People had started to fill the streets again.

I felt an overwhelming urge to go back to my room and prepare, but the problem was I didn’t have anything to prepare yet. I mean, I was still wearing the same jeans and t-shirt I had arrived in, although at least I was supposed to have a new wardrobe delivered today.

So deep in thought was I that I walked right into a small goblin woman with blue hair. I bit off a curse and grabbed her, preventing her from falling.

“I am so sorry,” I told the woman. “I was just thinking about some stuff and not paying attention, and.... Are you alright?”

“Yes, I’m fine,” she said, a touch of irritation in her voice. When she looked up at me, I recognized that look in her eyes.



She knew exactly who I was, and judging by the way her lips curved into a smile, had heard some rather flattering rumors about me.

Thilli's voice suddenly reverberated through my memories. Specifically, that instance when she told me she expected me to impregnate at least ten women before the week was done. I looked down at the blue-haired woman, who looked to be choosing her words.

"Would you like to come to my place?" I asked in a gentle voice.

She blushed, but nodded enthusiastically. "If you'll have me, yes."

I placed my finger beneath her chin and lifted her up to face me. Her eyes were large like the rest of the goblins, and in a shade of emerald green that caught the sunlight and glittered. Her cheeks flushed as she looked into my eyes. Her lips were thick, almost pouty.

"I would be honored," I told her. First, I needed to collect my new clothes and maybe a few other things, so I tried to think of where she would fit into my schedule. "Can you come by in about two hours? I'm at the temple. Just go there and they'll bring you right to me."

"Oh, thank you," she said with a smile, blushing deeper.

I leaned down and kissed her soft lips, and she suddenly threw her arms around my neck. I wrapped my arms around her tiny waist and straightened up, lifting her from the ground and

holding her against me while we kissed. She giggled against my mouth and continued kissing me.

After a moment I set her down and did my best to ignore the stares of people around us. Some of them probably wondered if I was going to sleep with her right there on the street. Half of them would probably cheer me on and ask if they could be next.

“I’ll see you soon,” I told her with a wink.

She smiled and hurried away, and I turned to watch. Her knee-length skirt was made of soft cloth that laid on her curves just right and hinted at the beauty beneath. I felt my body start pumping blood to my crotch and turned back around. No need to sport a boner in public.

After all, someone might jump me.

The past twenty four hours had been like a teenager’s wet dream come true. Beautiful, voluptuous women practically lined up to have sex with me, and once I was done with them I got to marry the three most beautiful women I had ever seen.

I hurried down the street, trying to think non-sexy thoughts. I still had that knife tucked into my belt. Once I got to York I would get some weapons, probably made by the best smith among the goblin people seeing as I’d be there with the king. Some armor, too. Then, once I did my, ahem, duties, it would be time to start my journey. First Odewyn, then Eldrick’s sword and shield, then Vogrim.

I had a plan. Over the next few weeks I would add more detail, but I had a roadmap to success. Everything was going to be fine.

“Hail, Andrew Jones!” A man shouted as I walked by.

I found myself startled by it. With what Vogrim had done to the goblin men, I expected them to be bitter and angry, and even to hate me or be jealous of me. Instead, I saw stern nods of approval from several men as I strode down the street.

Not knowing what else to do, I raised a hand and waved at them, then hurried along.

Once I got to the temple, I took the stairs two at a time and pushed the carved wooden doors open.

Inside things were exactly as I expected. Several temple workers—I idly wondered if some of them were priestesses—walked about on errands, and some younger women cleaned. Several worshippers knelt in front of the statue of Zozella.

I walked straight down the center aisle to the statue and waited my turn. As soon as the other worshippers were done, I approached Zozella and knelt respectfully.

“Hey, so I wanted to thank you again for this,” I said, still not really knowing how to talk to a goddess. “I really appreciate this world I’m in. I just wanted to give you an update; I’m working on a plan to defeat Vogrim, and I’ll be leaving tomorrow for York.”

“I know,” her voice rang out inside my head.

I looked up and saw her smiling down at me.

“Sorry,” I said. “I guess I never stopped to think about how much a goddess would know.”

“You’re doing well, Andrew,” she said. “Keep your strength up and continue saving my people. Your blood will forever change the goblins, but it will be for the better, and seen as a blessing.”

“Will I see you in York?” I asked.

“I have a temple there, but I imagine you will be too busy to visit,” she said. “Do not worry; I will be following you.”

“Well, I’ll be learning a lot over the next few weeks. I’ll be back in time to help your people defend from an attacking party Vogrim has sent this way. At least I’ll have Ulenor to keep me company and train me with magic.”

“Take good care of Ulenor,” Zozella said. “He is a very important man, and has single-handedly changed the fate of all goblins. Protect him at all costs.”

“I will,” I promised. With a bow of my head, I stood and went to my room.

As I went to open the door, I noticed it was slightly ajar. My hand went to the knife shoved through my belt, then I stopped with a laugh. No one was going to attack me here. There were no assassins waiting beneath my bed. I pushed the door open and walked inside.

A large wooden rack had been erected in the corner of the room near my copper bathtub, with half a dozen outfits

hanging from it. Standing in front of the rack of clothes was a woman whose figure I recognized immediately.

“Good afternoon, Trina,” I said, tearing my eyes away from her voluptuous bottom. Like the day before, she wore a snug-fitting pair of pants and a matching top. Although as she turned around to greet me, I saw the top she wore today was lower cut. *Much* lower.

“Well, hello there, Andrew,” she said with a sultry smile. She raised an arm to gesture at the clothing hanging next to her, and the buttons on the front of her shirt struggled to contain her massive breasts. “I have all sorts of clothes for you today. I hope you like them.”

Hung neatly were clothes in the goblin style, so pants and matching light jackets with snowy white shirts. Three were in varying shades of blue, one was dark green, one unrelieved black, and another a deep shade of red. A dozen white shirts hung next to them.

“Would you care to try them on? I think you’ll look quite handsome in these clothes.” Again the smile.

It appeared that Trina’s plan was to flirt with me and tease me the entire time. Since she considered herself too old for children, she seemed to enjoy giving me a boner the entire time, perhaps so she could still feel young and beautiful.

Well, while she was pushing seventy, she didn’t look a day over mid-thirties at the most, with a body that bordered on ridiculous.

The flirtation could go both ways.

I pushed the door shut behind me and walked over to stand next to her. After giving the clothing a quick glance and a nod of approval—they actually looked quite nice, to be honest—I grabbed the bottom hem of my shirt and pulled it over my head.

“Let’s do it,” I said. “I’m pretty excited to have some new clothes. And I must say, you look especially beautiful today, Trina.” I gave her my best smile.

“Oh, stop,” she said, but she blushed faintly. Her bright green eyes looked me up and down in a way that suggested she was going to lay the flirtation on thick today.

I grabbed my belt and began undoing it, then winced and sucked in air between my teeth.

“What’s wrong, Andrew?” she said, taking a step closer.

“I tweaked my finger earlier today, training with Sergeant Nerras. I guess I didn’t realize it until I started undoing my belt. Could I get some help?” My hand *was* a little sore, so it wasn’t a complete lie.

“Of course,” Trina said, again with that naughty smile.

She stepped even closer, until her large breasts nearly touched me, and tugged at my belt. I looked straight down the front of her shirt, not even trying to hide that I was checking her out. From her occasional smirk at me, I was pretty sure she enjoyed the attention.

“Now just step out of them,” she said, pushing my jeans down to my ankles. She tossed my jeans aside.

I stepped out of them and stood there in my boxers. When Trina straightened up, her breasts brushed against my semi-hard cock, probably on purpose. Oh yes, she was definitely laying it on thickly today.

I stood there for a moment, my penis becoming fully erect and gently poking Trina in the stomach. Neither one of us dared move. She looked up at me, her eyes still full of coquetry.

“I see someone’s awake,” she said, glancing down at my crotch.

“Sorry about that,” I said. “You’re just so pretty, Trina.”

Her smile deepened. Oh yes, I was pushing all the right buttons. And from the look in her eyes, she was planning on pushing all of mine as well.

“No need to apologize,” Trina said with a smile. She looked down again and grabbed onto the waistband of my boxers. “The rest of your clothes?” I nodded and she pulled my boxers off as well, then tossed them to the side.

She looked me up and down appreciatively, then placed her fists on her round hips. “Well, look at you, Andrew,” she said. Color faintly stained her cheeks again.

Trina turned around and picked through the hanging clothes, bending over just slightly to accentuate her round bottom. My heart pounded in my chest, but not nearly half as hard as I wanted to pound her.

“Which color should we try first? I think the blue will look splendid with your fair complexion.” She grabbed a medium blue jacket and matching pants and turned back to face me.

“Hey,” I began. “I just wanted to take a moment to thank you. Making all of this in the space of a day couldn’t have been



easy, so I just want you to know that I'm grateful for your efforts. Really."

"I do work hard," she said with a polite smile. "It's nice to know that you at least appreciate that. My feet have been killing me all morning."

And there it was. There was my angle of attack.

I stepped forward and lifted her into my arms without warning, drawing a surprised yelp from her.

"What are you doing, Andrew? Put me down!" She didn't seem angry, just shocked.

I hurried over to the bed and laid her gently on top, then hopped up next to her. She eyed me warily, probably wondering if I was going to take advantage of her.

"Relax," I said. "Ignore this," I pointed at my dick, "and relax for a moment. Grab a pillow."

I pulled her shoe off and worked my thumb along her arch. Her words of protest immediately turned into oohs and ahhs, and I continued gently rubbing her little green foot. She stretched back and grabbed a pillow, then pulled it beneath her head.

"How's that?" I asked gently.

"I haven't had anyone rub my feet since my sweet Dragga passed away ten years ago," she said, her eyes closed. "I think that feels about as good as something can feel."

I set her leg down and began massaging the other foot. I was by no means an expert masseuse, but I did my best. Judging by her smiles and deep breaths, I was doing a fine job.

Stifling a laugh at my amateurish efforts at seduction, I slowly worked my fingers up to her ankle, then into the muscles of her calf. Moving upwards, I gently rubbed her thigh right above her knee.

“Andrew, are you trying to seduce me?” she asked breathily, her eyes still closed.

“Maybe,” I replied. “Is it working?” I switched to her other leg and started at her calf.

She chuckled in reply, but didn’t protest as I made my way north of her knee and began rubbing her other thigh. I gently kneaded her leg, working my way slowly upward. In anticipation of what was certain to happen, I already had a full erection.

I wrapped a hand around the back of her thigh and rubbed her hamstring while keeping my other hand on top, working my hands up until I was just beneath her butt. I let my other hand gently trace up, over her stomach and nearly to her breasts, and then gently caressed her on the way down.

Her face was all smiles, so I decided to go for it. This was a woman that—at least I assumed—hadn’t been with a man in many years, so I really wanted to take my time and please her the right way.

I placed both hands on her hips and kissed my way up the top of her thigh, all the way up to her waist. When I got there I gently tugged at her shirt, pulling it out from her pants, and quickly undid a few buttons to expose her soft green stomach. I let my lips trace across her midsection, undoing buttons and replacing each with a kiss until I got to her massive breasts.

I tried not to giggle like a kid in a candy store, but those things were *huge*, especially on her small frame. After kissing my way around each one, I licked and sucked on her large nipples, bringing soft moans from her.

Once I got to her neck, she wrapped her arms around me. Our lips met in a fiery kiss that was many hours overdue. Her tongue pressed into my mouth and mine into hers, a kiss of raw desire and lust.

While keeping my mouth on hers, I slid a hand down and untied the front of her pants. She reached down and pushed them past her hips, then wrapped her arms around me again. Trina's mouth was practically glued to mine, and I was perfectly okay with that. She was a fantastic kisser.

I finally broke our kiss and let my lips trail down her neck, past her beautiful breast, and to her soft stomach. While kissing just south of her belly button I pulled her pants down further. She wiggled and moved her legs around, eager to be out of them, and I pulled them off and cast them to the floor. She pulled her shirt off and threw it as well.

I settled between her thick, curvy thighs and started kissing my way down. Her body tensed momentarily and her breath

caught, but after a few soft words from me she relaxed again.

I ran the top of my tongue down the full length of her labia, then brought it back up to her clitoris and gave it a wet, sloppy kiss. Trina giggled and squirmed in my hands.

I brought my arms around her, gripping her waist tightly, and latched onto her clit. My tongue attacked it, bringing soft coos and moans from her. I held her firmly and kept licking, and her moans began to rise in intensity.

After a few minutes I brought one hand between her thighs and gently worked two fingers inside her. I only inserted them shallowly, then curved my fingers and gently massaged the front wall of her sweet opening. Trina's body tensed up and her breath caught as I pleased her.

Several minutes later, Trina's breathing quickened and I knew she was almost there. I redoubled my efforts, rubbing my tongue side-to-side on her clitoris while massaging her g-spot. Her body suddenly tensed in my hands, then like a dam breaking she let out a loud moan that was just shy of being a shout. Trina's fingers tangled in my hair as her soft body shook in orgasmic bliss. I kept licking and rubbing and after a minute her moans turned to a wail as she came a second time.

"Please," she said between deep breaths. "Give me a minute to catch my breath," She gently pushed my head from between her thighs.

"Sorry, my dear," I told her with a grin. "No rest for you."

I stood next to the bed, then grabbed her by her waist. She was a feather in my hands as I lifted her from the bed. I planted a kiss on her soft, full lips, then set her down in front of me and bent her over the bed.

She pressed her round ass cheeks against me and begged for me to get inside her. I grabbed my iron-hard erection and rubbed the head against her wet lips, then pushed it inside. She was quite a bit shorter than me, so I reached down and grabbed her by the waist with both hands and held her off the floor.

Her fingers gripped the bed and she moaned loudly as I thrust inside her, watching waves travel through her round bottom each time I slammed into her. She took every inch of me and begged for more.

I wanted to be closer to her, so after a few more long, deep thrusts, I pulled out of her and set her feet on the floor. My intention was to climb on the bed but she had other ideas.

She brought her left knee up on the bed and looked at me over her shoulder. In that position, the roundness of her ass was so inviting I could barely contain myself. I had intended on moving onto the bed, but seeing her spread open like that filled me with lust, and I moved back in, right behind her upraised leg.

I pushed myself inside her and brought my left hand around to her massive breasts, gripping one firmly. With long, hard thrusts I pounded her tight opening, and bent down to kiss her. She was a bit too small for kissing in that position, so I gripped her by her soft waist and just rammed myself into her

like a piston, over and over again. Her moans pealed loudly with each of my thrusts.

She was just as tight as the younger women I had been with, so I had to slow down for a moment. I pulled myself out of her and crawled onto the bed. She reached out a hand and I took it, pulling her onto the bed after me.

I laid on my back with a couple pillows propping me up, and she excitedly crawled to me. I grabbed her by the arm and pulled her closer, kissing her for a brief moment.

Trina straddled me with one knee on the bed and the other foot on the bed, giving me a perfect view of her hairless pussy. Her massive breasts filled my vision and I reached out, caressing and squeezing them. She reached down and grabbed onto my cock with her small hand, squeezing it as she lined it up with her wet opening. She impaled herself upon my shaft with a soft moan and immediately began working her hips in small circles.

My hands went from her breasts to her thick hips and I held onto them tightly while thrusting into her. She grabbed onto her breasts and leaned forward. With a grin, I licked and sucked on one nipple, then the other. My hands slid around behind her and I grabbed onto her gloriously round ass and gave it a good squeeze.

“By the gods, that feels incredible,” she said. Her eyes were closed, as she was focused on all the pleasure she was receiving.

She moved her breasts and leaned down, kissing me. Her kiss was aggressive, her tongue fighting with mine, her lips pressed hard against mine. I responded by ramming myself into her harder than before, filling the room with the sound of flesh slapping against flesh.

I grabbed one of her hands and pushed it between her thighs, and she immediately began rubbing her clitoris in small circles. She leaned her head back and I resumed sucking on her massive breasts.

While my hands were squeezing onto her big, round ass, I decided to up the ante a bit. I slid one hand around further, getting my finger soaking wet from all her juices, then gently pushed it into her ass.

“Oh, Andrew!” she called out, rubbing furiously on her clitoris.

I was second-knuckle deep in her ass, working my finger in and out, and ramming my cock into her pussy at a rate that ensured I would blow soon.

Trina’s moans built to a crescendo along with her finger-rubbing and my pounding. She called out my name at the top of her lungs as her entire body trembled. My hands clamped down on her ass and I roared like a wild animal as I erupted inside of her. My muscles clenched and I squirted into her five, six, seven times.

Trina collapsed forward, her head against my shoulder while her breasts pressed against me. She kept working her hips back and forth as I shot the last of my cum into her. I pulled my

finger out of her ass, but kept my hands on those incredible round cheeks of hers.

“That was incredible,” she said breathily against my neck.

I was inclined to agree. I squeezed her amazing ass again, slowly sliding her up and down my softening cock. She brought her face around to mind and kissed me again. This one was softer than her earlier kisses, with her hands on each side of my face. Honestly, I could have kissed Trina all day long.

“So,” I said between kisses. “If that didn’t get you pregnant, we’re trying again.” I gave her ass another firm squeeze.

“I told you, I’m too old to carry a child,” she said.

“Are you sure about that?” I asked.

“Andrew, I’m sixty-eight years old,” she said, straightening up slightly. She sat back on my cock and worked her ass on my lap with a smile. “There’s no way I can get pregnant at my age. It’s unheard of, even among goblins.”

“Guess we’re trying again first thing tomorrow, then,” I said.

“Come early, though. I have to leave for York tomorrow morning.”

“Oh, you silly man,” Trina said, kissing me again.

I was mostly soft at that point, but I squeezed her ass again and she smiled and worked her pussy up and down my full length. After that, she laid her head against my shoulder and I wrapped my arms around her, then closed my eyes.



I enjoyed my naps with these women. They were giving me their bodies, the most precious thing they could offer, and it felt good to show them appreciation and affection afterwards.

A soft knock at my door pulled me from my slumber.

Trina moved but I held her tightly to me. “Stay here,” I said. “Let them see that I chose you.”

Her big green eyes focused on mine for a moment, and she nodded. She leaned forward, laying her head against me, though it was turned so she could see the door. I was still inside her, and I felt some blood flow back into my cock again, stiffening it slightly. Trina looked up at me, a smile spreading on her face, and I reached down and grabbed two handfuls of her ass again, giving it a hefty squeeze.

“Come in,” I called out. Trina moved her hips in a small circle, bringing more life to my dick. She giggled faintly against my neck.

The door opened and Prazzi stuck her head in. When she saw Trina lying on top of me, her face broke into a smile.

“I thought I recognized your voice,” Prazzi said as she entered the room. She closed the door behind her.

“Oh my goodness,” Trina said. I looked down and saw she was blushing furiously. She covered her face in both hands, and moved to get off of me.

“There is no need to be embarrassed,” I told her softly. “You are a beautiful, passionate woman. Never be ashamed of not being quiet and timid.”

“It’s really fine, Trina,” Prazzi said. She approached the bed as if nothing were out of the ordinary. She looked down at Trina’s ass and saw my cock buried inside her pussy and nodded in approval. “You get to join a group of honored women that will help save our people.” She laid her hand on Trina’s arm.

“So, what are you here for?” I asked Prazzi before things got any more awkward.

“I brought your dinner,” she replied. The way her face suddenly broke into a smile told me that my dinner involved more women.

“Can we just have a minute?” I asked her.

Prazzi nodded. “Of course! I’ll tell them to knock in five minutes.” She looked again at Trina sitting on top of me and smiled, then turned and left the room.

“That is so embarrassing,” Trina said against my shoulder. “Ugh, I want to hide under a rock.”

“Nonsense,” I said.

My cock had returned to life and was growing inside her, so I squeezed her ass again and thrust inside her. She responded with a loud moan.

“Oh, Andrew,” she said, leaning forward and kissing me. “You’re going to give me a heart attack if you keep this up.”

I thrust inside her several more times, bringing more moans from her. We kissed and made gentle love for a moment, then I held her tightly against my chest.

“Will you come back tomorrow morning?” I asked. I had to have her again.

“Of course I will,” she said against my neck.

Trina finally straightened up and pulled herself off of me. She looked down at my erection with a smile, then grabbed her clothes. After looking at her clothes for a moment, she walked to the door, still naked.

“You aren’t getting dressed?” I asked.

“Prazzi is right. I should be proud that you chose me. I’ll get dressed out there,” she said as she grabbed the door handle. She suddenly looked down at her body and grabbed one of her large breasts. “Besides,” she added. “I should show these young ladies what they’re up against.”

I couldn’t help but laugh.

Trina gave me a wink, then opened the door. “Come and get him, ladies. I got him all warmed up for you.”

**U**nder normal circumstances, I simply wouldn't have been able to keep up with the steady stream of women throwing themselves at me. Zozella's blessing had filled me with vigor and given me the stamina to perform at superhuman levels. Apparently her blessing was made of Viagra.

Prazzi had brought me two more women that couldn't have been more different from each other. One of them was the tallest goblin woman I had ever seen, perhaps five feet tall or an inch over, with a slender, muscular body. The other woman was short, perhaps only one or two inches over four feet, and slightly chubby with large breasts and thick thighs.

I was already warmed up from Trina, so it didn't take me long to cum with the tall woman. Tears of joy leaked from her eyes when I fired off a round inside her. Afterwards, I kissed her thoroughly and held her tightly; she held me so tightly in return I didn't think she was going to let me go. Eventually, she left the room, rubbing her stomach as if she were already pregnant.

The chubby woman sat on the bed with me for a while and we talked while I ate my dinner—my actual dinner. I needed to recover before I could go again. Her name was Hissia, and she was rather cute, if a tad more plump than I usually preferred.

When I was done I went to my sink and brushed my teeth, then walked over to the bed. Hissia had already shed her clothes and a light of excitement flared in her eyes when she saw my cock rise. She barely gave me an opportunity to get on the bed before she started trying to suck me dry.

We laughed and rolled around in the bed, kissing and groping each other. She finally rolled off of me and got on all fours, shaking her ass at me. I entered her from behind and gave her a solid pounding, which eventually turned into a missionary position.

Hissia's face was all smiles as I came inside her, and she covered me with kisses and thanked me nonstop. I held her tightly for a moment and squeezed her butt one last time, then she got off me and rolled onto her back. She held her knees against her chest for a few minutes to increase her chances of getting pregnant. Afterwards, she covered me with kisses again, then pulled on her robe and left my room.

After all that, I was dying for a bath. I stuck my head out of the door and called for Prazzi. When she came over, I asked her to bring some hot water for a bath. She immediately gave orders to several temple workers, who rushed to comply.

I walked over to my copper bathtub and looked at my new wardrobe. It suddenly dawned on me that I still hadn't tried

any of the clothes on. I laughed at the interesting turn of events.

At least I would get to spend more time with Trina tomorrow morning. That body of hers was simply incredible, and she had done a good job convincing me that goblin pussy was the best pussy.

As I stood there, naked with my hands on my hips, half a dozen temple workers began filing in and out of my room. Each of them carried a large ceramic pot filled with hot water, which they emptied into the tub. Several of them were beautiful young women who stole glances at me.

“Do you need anything else, Andrew?” Prazzi asked.

“No thanks,” I said as I stepped into the tub.

Prazzi nodded and shut the door.

I slowly sank down into the tub, then grabbed a fresh washcloth that had been draped over the edge. After soaking it, I folded it into thirds and laid it across my eyes, then leaned back in the tub, resting the back of my head against the brim.

I probably could have fallen asleep like that. After a day of hard work—and let me tell you, impregnating three women in a single day took some effort—it was nice to relax.

The door opened and I smiled. Prazzi had probably sent a beautiful young temple worker in to wash me, and by wash me I meant fuck my brains out. I stayed where I was, too relaxed and comfortable to move.

“You must be tired,” a soft voice said as gentle hands traced down my neck and across my chest. Two more hands gently massaged my scalp.

“Very,” I replied.

Wait a minute, their voices sounded familiar.

I snatched the washrag from my face, rubbed water out of my eyes, and looked up.

Cirro, Thilli, and Lossia all knelt next to the tub, smiling at me. Somehow they seemed even more beautiful than the first time I saw them.

“Hard at work, I see,” Thilli said. “Are you going to meet the goal I gave you?” She gently raised one slender eyebrow.

“Possibly by tomorrow morning,” I replied, straightening up.

They wore more conventional clothing this time. Thilli and Cirro wore skirts and snug-fitting bodices that left the tops of their breasts bare, while Lossia wore a simple dress that accentuated her delicious curves.

“You know, I was just wondering when I would see you all again,” I said with a smile.

“Did you miss us?” Cirro asked, splashing the water a bit.

“I did,” I said. “A lot, actually.” I looked back up at Thilli. “I’m working on it and I’m ahead of schedule, but don’t get mad if I can only see nine women before I have to leave for York.”

“That’s one of the reasons we came to see you,” said Lossia from behind me.

“So, how many so far?” Thilli asked.

I briefly tallied the women in my head. “Seven. Knowing Prazzi, I’ll be at nine before I go to bed.

Thilli continued giving me a stern look, but a smile broke through. “Well, if you’re lucky, maybe one of us will be number ten. We’ve been asking about you, Andrew. It seems you are taking your duties seriously.”

“Yeah, I still find it a little odd that you are encouraging me to sleep with all these other women,” I told her. “Definitely not used to that.”

“I know,” Thilli said, and her smile softened. “And I’m sorry if you find it strange. Perhaps you and I will love each other one day, Andrew, but for now my number one concern is saving my people. If that means I have to marry a pink giant and encourage him to sleep with a hundred women, then I’ll do it.”

While I had been enjoying the past two days more than words could describe, a single thread of thought had wormed its way through and remained in my mind. I reached out and grabbed Lossia’s hand, since she was the closest.

“To be honest, I think I’ll be glad when this is all done and it’s just us,” I said, my smile taking in all three beauties.

Cirro blushed at that. Lossia squeezed my hand.



“We’re told that you’ve requested that we travel with you to York,” Lossia said.

“You should know that you can’t order us around,” Thilli said, although her smile ruined the stern look she was attempting.

“Is that so?” I asked, forming a devious plan.

“Yes,” she said with a firm nod.

I released Lossia’s hand and reached out for Thilli. She slipped her slender hand in mine, but kept her stern facade.

“Kiss me,” I said, struggling not to smile.

Thilli leaned down an inch before stopping herself with a wry grin.

“I will do no such—”

Using my grip on her hand, I snatched her to me, then grabbed her by the waist. In a single swift motion I hefted her into the air and dropped her in the bathtub with me, right on my lap. She shrieked and spluttered, sending water everywhere, but I held her tightly. I slipped my hand behind her neck and gently pulled her to me, then laid a quick kiss on her perfect lips.

“Andrew, how da—”

I cut her off with another kiss.

She looked down at herself, fully clothed and sitting atop me in the tub, and her cheeks colored. Initially I thought she was angry, but she suddenly burst out into laughter and leaned against my chest. The other women laughed as well.

“I’ll get you back for that, one day,” Thilli said against my neck. She wrapped her arms around me and held me tightly.

“Shame you didn’t bring a change of clothes,” Lossia said.

“They probably have something here I can wear,” Thilli said.

“You could always let Andrew choose your outfit,” Cirro said with a chuckle. “He’d probably just have you walking around naked, though.”

“She’s right,” I said, looking down at the wet cloth clinging to her body.

“Well, as much as I’m sure that would please you, we have things to do,” Thilli said as she pushed herself up. She stood in the tub for a moment, frowning at her wet clothes, then shrugged and stepped out of the tub, dripping water everywhere.

“So, as I had started to say, we wanted to bring up the topic of traveling to York,” Lossia continued, stifling a laugh at how thoroughly soaked Thilli was.

“As they said, you shouldn’t get into a habit of ordering us around or demanding we travel with you,” Cirro said. “But as it turns out, we were also summoned by the king, so we’ll be going with you.”

I sat up straight. “That’s great! Maybe we can finally start getting to know each other.”

Cirro and Lossia smiled at me. Thilli did as well, but I could still detect a bit of hesitance in her voice.

“What’s wrong, Thilli? You seem quite different than the last time I saw you. Is something bothering you?”

She pursed her lips. “You want the truth? I wanted this; to be one of the women that saved the goblins. I never expected you to stay after doing the deed.” She sighed. “And I guess it’s dawning on me what I’ve gotten myself into.” She looked at the other women. “What *we* ’ve gotten ourselves into.”

“I’m excited for it,” Lossia said quietly.

“I just hope you live up to your word,” Cirro said at the same time, in a tone that suggested me breaking my word might be hazardous to my health.

“So why were you ladies summoned by the king?” I asked.

“My father wants to talk to us about you,” Lossia answered. “He wants to hear it straight from our mouths, if you are truly a worthy man. If you’re going to save us.” She shrugged. “He also probably misses me and just wants me home.”

“Maybe you can show me around while I’m there,” I began, but Thilli laughed.

“You’ll be much too busy to spend time with us in York,” she replied.

It took me a moment to realize what she was getting at. I was going to be quite busy during my stay in York.

“I can only stay a week, though,” I said. “Vogrim dispatched a small force that’s heading toward Gillamoor, and I plan on being here to help defend the city.”

Thilli smiled at that.

Cirro suddenly laughed and spoke in a mockery of my voice. “Sorry, your highness, I know you have a hundred women lined up for me but I need to go get in a fight instead.”

The other women joined her in laughing.

Thilli grabbed her waist-long hair and began squeezing the water out of it. “Cirro, can you unbutton my bodice?” she asked. The shorter women began undoing the back of Thilli’s top with a smile.

Thilli kept her eyes on me as she let her bodice fall to the floor. She hooked her thumbs into the waistband of her skirt and pushed it over her hips, letting it fall to the floor. She stood there, fully nude, her eyes on me.

She held both arms out to the side and Lossia and Cirro moved closer, so Thilli had an arm around each. Cirro’s hand immediately went to Thilli’s ass, and her other one rested on Thilli’s toned midsection. Lossia wrapped both arms around Thilli and held her closely. All three women watched me.

“Keep your word, and we are your reward,” Thilli said to me.

Cirro looked down at Thilli’s breast and licked her nipple, drawing a surprised gasp from the taller woman. She didn’t seem bothered, just not used to the action.

“Don’t worry, I plan on keeping my word,” I said. It was hard to think clearly when my body was trying to pump its entire blood supply to my dick.

“We’ll see you in the morning,” Thilli said with a smile. She released the other two women and slowly turned around. My eyes went to her ass like a magnet. “I hope you’ll have good news for me,” she said, giving her hips a shake.

She bent over, giving me quite the view, and fetched her wet clothing from the floor. After flashing a smile over her shoulder, Thilli walked away along with Lossia and Cirro. Lossia looked back several times, smiling sweetly. Cirro held the door open for the other two women, then winked at me before closing the door behind her.

Talk about motivation.

I pulled myself out of the tub and grabbed a nearby towel right as I heard a gentle knock at the door.

“Come in,” I called out.

A slender woman with purple eyes and pink hair pushed the door open a fraction and peeked inside. It was Una.

“May I come in?” she asked.

I let my towel drop to the floor.

Like many of the other women, Una saw our coupling as something incredible, and was all smiles the entire time. When we finished, she covered my face with tender kisses and hurried from the room, while I laid back on the bed and almost immediately fell into a deep sleep.

My dreams that night were about as varied as dreams could be. I dreamed of a line of women, all naked and bent over, with a crowd of people surrounding us, cheering me on while I performed. It was a bit awkward, but quite a nice dream. After that, I dreamed of a ten-foot-tall minotaur that raised his hands and fired twin gouts of flame high into the sky. Behind him, everything burned. That one wasn't so nice.

While I was always happy to sleep with more women, I found myself grateful that Prazzi didn't send anyone in after Una. Eight women over the past two days had left me exhausted.

I always imagined the perfect wakeup to be gentle rays of morning sun shining on me while birds sang outside, but it turned out that Trina's mouth was far superior.

She had slipped into my room unnoticed the next morning and climbed into the bed with me. She got me up and ready in no time, then smothered me with her huge breasts while riding me. It was probably the best wakeup of my life. I held her tightly when we finished and made a few jokes about her getting pregnant. She still thought she was too old for it. I had a feeling Zozella's blessing would fix that. Even still, she was a lot of fun in the sack.

Once we were done, she left the room and a serving girl brought in my breakfast. I ate it quickly so that I could get my day started, but as expected she asked me to pump a round into her as well. I happily obliged. Thilli would have to be satisfied with nine women. There was no way I would be able to do any more before leaving. There simply wasn't time.

I washed myself in the cold bathwater, dried off, and finally tried on the clothing Trina made for me. She was a true artist with fabric; each outfit fit me perfectly. But then again, she had been doing this for around fifty years, according to her.

I selected a blue pair of pants and matching jacket, both made out of a thin yet strong material that reminded me of linen without being so wrinkly. I pulled the snowy white shirt over my head and tucked the tails into my pants, then found myself wishing I had a mirror to check myself out. I hadn't had time for a cobbler, so my feet went into my old running shoes, which ruined the look. Note to self, get boots made in York. Stylish boots.

As I left my room, I ran into Prazzi.

“Good morning, Andrew,” she said to me with a bright smile. “You’re leaving this morning, correct? I’ll make sure we give you something to carry your things in.”

“Oh, perfect,” I said. “I was hoping to find you for that exact reason.”

“Don’t worry,” she said. “We’ll take good care of you.” If the double meaning wasn’t obvious, her sudden smile made it so.

I went to the statue of Zozella and knelt before it. It still felt weird, deities being real and statues talking in my head, but I adapted. I gave her a brief word of thanks, then walked out of the temple.

To my surprise, a convoy of horses and wagons stood in front of the temple, with a double dozen goblins running about, making preparations.

“Guess I slept in a bit,” I said, checking the angle of the sun. It looked like they had been at this for a few hours already, prepping everything for our trip to York while I impregnated women.

Four covered wagons stood in a line, with a dozen horses before and after. Armored soldiers wielding crossbows stood next to the horses, checking girth straps and saddlebags.

Ulenor waved his hands at two goblins that carried a crate and directed them towards the last wagon. They carefully loaded it into the back.

Sergeant Nerras was there as well, standing with his arms crossed, barking orders at the armored men in the front of the



convoy. They hurried to follow his commands and moved like a well-oiled machine.

As I walked down the stairs at the front of the temple, two goblin workers approached me. They bowed their heads briefly, looking uncertain as to how to address me.

“We’re here to get your things from your room,” one of them said. They both carried large canvas sacks.

“Uh, go ahead,” I said. “I don’t really have anything other than some clothes.”

They shrugged and made their way into the temple. Upon seeing me, Ulenor waved in greeting and approached me. I held out my hand as he walked near and he graciously returned the handshake, pumping my hand up and down.

“Andrew! It’s good to see you,” he began enthusiastically. “How has—”

“All that’s going just fine,” I said, cutting him off. “Sorry, I still just find it a little weird that you guys keep tabs on how much sex I’m having.”

Ulenor laughed. “Yes, yes, I suppose I understand that. This is important to us, so I think sometimes we get a little carried away and forget the person behind the hero, eh?” He gave a little chuckle. “Well, you certainly took your time getting out of bed, but you made it here right on time. We’re finishing up our final preparations and getting ready to leave for York.”

He stepped down the stairs and motioned for me to follow. Together, we walked toward the second wagon in the

formation.

I checked in the back and the interior of the wagon was outfitted with padded seats and had several chests loaded up inside. A man was settling himself in the bench at the front of the wagon, probably the driver.

“We’ll be riding in here,” Ulenor said, patting the wagon.

“And we’ll be right behind you,” came Cirro’s voice.

My head snapped around and I saw the Mothers of a New Age standing right behind me. They wore thin dresses with light traveling cloaks in matching colors. Thilli took a step closer to me.

“I’m at nine,” I told her the moment she opened her mouth.

“There just wasn’t time for any more.”

She closed her mouth and smiled at me.

“How are you, Andrew?” Lossia asked, placing a hand on my arm. Her dress was a deep violet that matched her eyes perfectly. She gave me a warm smile.

“Doing well, thank you,” I replied. “Hoping I get to spend some time with you three on our journey.” I looked over at Thilli and Cirro.

“Maybe,” said Thilli.

“I’m sure we’ll figure something out,” said Cirro with a slight grin. After a brief hesitation, she leaned forward and kissed me.

Being the affectionate one, Lossia kissed me after Cirro. Thilli crossed her arms and just stood there, watching me, although the corners of her mouth twitched into the faintest grin.

All three women turned and walked back to their wagon. I watched them go, offering up a silent prayer of thanks to Zozella as I stared at their perfect figures.

Ulenor cleared his throat behind me. I turned and saw him watching as well. He blushed and quickly looked away.

“My apologies, Andrew,” he said, grabbing hold of the wagon and pulling himself in. “You are truly a fortunate man, you know.”

I turned and looked back at the women, who had just reached their wagon. Thilli gave me a quick smile before disappearing behind the cover.

“Believe me, I know,” I replied.

Ulenor reached down and offered me his hand. I took it and he grunted as he helped pull me into the wagon.

“I should have remembered how heavy you are before offering to help,” Ulenor said with a laugh. “For a moment I thought you were going to pull me right out of the wagon.”

“Oh, I wouldn’t do that to you,” I said, settling myself on the padded seat. It was reasonably comfortable, although a tad too small.

The two goblin workers that had gone into the temple to gather my clothing returned, large canvas sack in hand. One of them lifted the sack into the rear of the wagon while the other

handed me my knife. I thanked him and threaded my belt through the sheath.

“Move out!” Sergeant Nerras’s voice called out from the front of the caravan.

“So, how boring is this trip going to be?” I asked, fastening my belt around my waist.

Ulenor peered out the front of the wagon at the horses in front. With a satisfied nod, he turned back to me. “I don’t think it will be bad, Andrew. I plan on teaching you as much as I can about magic, and I’m sure you’ll want to spend time with your future wives.”

“Yeah, and I’ll be training with Sergeant Nerras in the evenings as well,” I added. “I guess it won’t be too bad.” I leaned back a bit. “I gotta say, I’m pretty excited to see York. So far I’ve been quite impressed with your people. *Our* people,” I corrected. “Once Vogrim is taken care of, I’m looking forward to settling down and living a simple life.”

Ulenor chuckled at that. “I have a feeling those women won’t let you settle down too much. Oh, you’ll have a home and a family, but they’ll keep you on your toes.”

“Better than being bored,” I said. “Zozella really came through. I don’t think I’ve ever felt as good, physically, as I have since she gave me her blessing.”

Ulenor’s expression changed at the mention of the goddess. “Yes, she loves her people and she’ll do whatever she can to

help them. She would strike down Vogrim herself if it were allowed.”

I ran my fingers through my hair. “So why doesn’t she? You said ‘if it were allowed.’ Who tells a goddess what to do?”

Ulenor settled himself in his seat and smoothed his robes over his legs. “Even gods and goddesses have rules, Andrew. Selemis, the God of All, the Bringer of Light, he set forth very strict rules that other deities must follow.”

“So, he’s like the main god? The most powerful one?”

Ulenor nodded. “He is the original one, yes. He created other gods and goddesses as time went on. Perhaps he was bored,” Ulenor said with a faint smile.

“And he set limits on how other gods can interact with the world? What would he do if someone were to break his rules?” The notion of a god punishing another god felt very reminiscent of Greek or Roman pantheons to me. It was fascinating.

“Now, that is a story worth telling,” Ulenor said.

Ulenor cleared his throat and adjusted his position in his chair. “Sorry, old bones,” he said. “Interestingly enough, this story involves Zozella herself.”

“Zozella broke the rules?” I asked.

“No.” Ulenor shook his head. “But her lover did.”

I avoided asking how goddesses could have lovers.

“Dulios was his name,” Ulenor continued. “He was one of the most minor gods in the entire pantheon, barely powerful enough to justify being called a deity. Since day one, he had loved Zozella. Her beauty and calm, compassionate nature intrigued him, as he was more of a chaotic being. For millennia he pursued her, doing everything he could do to win her over.”

“What kind of things would a god do to win over a goddess?” I asked, intrigued.

Ulenor smiled. “In the mountains there is a flower known as Dulios’s love. He was not a god of creation, but he poured his

power into this and made an entirely new species of flower, just for Zozella. It's a gorgeous flower, but can be difficult to find due to where it grows. Sometimes brave men will climb the mountains to the north and west, seeking one of the flowers. If they manage to find one, bringing one home to a woman is a surefire way to garner her attention."

"Noted," I said. Maybe that would help Thilli be a little less prickly.

Ulenor sighed. "He created a bird as well, which was much more difficult than a flower. It was really just a common sparrow with new coloring, but it was quite beautiful. Ultimately, he won her over. Dulios and Zozella were lovers for thousands of years. They oversaw the goblin people together, even though Dulios didn't look like one of them. I think many goblins have forgotten about Dulios, since it's been so long."

"Which means something bad happened," I said.

Ulenor nodded. His smile held a mountain of sadness. "The elves happened. They conquered and enslaved the goblin people, destroying their homes, their culture, and their history. Zozella gave her blessing to several brave goblin warriors, but they were slaughtered by the elves. And so began the dark years of slavery."

"I remember you told me about that," I said to show I had paid attention. "You said the goblins were slaves for a thousand years."

“A thousand horrible years,” Ulenor said quietly. I barely heard him over the gentle rumbling of the wagon wheels on the cobblestone street. “Zozella wept as she watched her people forced into servitude. She was forbidden by Selemis from interacting directly or she would have laid waste to the elves the moment they took her people. Of course, then she would have wound up at war with Elan, the god of the elves. Dulios would have helped her, though. Perhaps together they would have prevailed. Either way, the people would have suffered.”

“And after a thousand years,” I began, bringing him back on topic.

“Yes, yes,” Ulenor said. “After a thousand years, Dulios found himself at his wit’s end and decided to act. You see, gods and goddesses see time much differently than we do. To them, a thousand years probably feels like a few days. But, after many years of seeing his beloved Zozella weep, Dulios decided that he had to break the rules to help her.”

“Oh, what did he do?” I asked.

“Dulios came to the physical world and took the form of a goblin man. He spoke to the goblins in secret, building up their confidence and teaching them to make weapons of war. Goblins are naturally peaceful people, remember, so even in their dark situation, it was difficult. After months of working with them, he convinced the goblins to rebel against their masters.”



“Wait a minute,” I said, holding up a hand. “Didn’t you say your father organized their revolt?”

“Yes, yes,” Ulenor said. “Dulios, in goblin form, spoke to many people including my father. He helped my father convince other goblins to rise up against the elves. Oh, it was a dark time,” he said, letting his head hang for a moment. “For such a peaceful people to kill others with barbaric weapons was unheard of. But, the goblins caught the elves by surprise and fought for their freedom. Dulios was a powerful sorcerer and used his magic to kill thousands of elves. He was the only reason they escaped.

“He went with them as they fled the cities, helping to defend them against the pursuing elves. But, the use of such powerful magic had caught the attention of Selemis. Directly fighting in battles with mortals is strictly forbidden to the gods, a rule that Dulios had knowingly broken. As a result, although Selemis knew Dulios was just in his actions and was trying to correct a great injustice, he was punished.”

“How does someone punish a god?” I wondered aloud.

“By making him a god no longer,” Ulenor said gravely. “Since Dulios had taken the form of a goblin, Selemis forced him to live as one. Dulios’s powers were stripped away, all but the smallest trickle of his magical ability. His punishment was to live as a mortal, to suffer as mortals do, and to eventually die. Dulios’s only hope is that if he lives a good enough life, upon his death Selemis will restore him to godhood.”

I whistled. “After spending eternity as a god, I imagine being forced to live as a person would be quite the step down.” Something occurred to me. “So wait, where is this guy? Dulios as a person, or whatever his name is now.”

Ulenor shrugged. “No one knows.

“Wait a minute,” I said, looking at Ulenor. “Is it you?”

Ulenor laughed at my comment. “Andrew, do I look like someone that used to be a god?”

“I guess not,” I said, although I had no idea what a former god would look like. Superhero physique and stylish hair, perhaps? Besides, Ulenor’s age was wrong. But, somewhere out there, a former god was living as a man, a goblin man. If I could find him, I could learn so many incredible things. Certainly everything I needed to defeat Vogrim.

Word had apparently spread as our convoy left the city, as people clapped and cheered as we passed through the gates. Several people even chanted my name. It was a little strange to be treated that way after having been a welder in north Florida, but I was quickly adjusting. I just tried to avoid letting it go to my head.

I turned and looked behind us. In the wagon trailing mine, just past the driver’s head, I could see Cirro’s blue-green hair moving as she talked. I briefly wondered what they were talking about, but decided to focus on more important things for the time being. Namely, magic.

Ulenor did his best to give me a thorough education on magic and its history. The topic was a strange mixture of fascinating and incredibly boring. Ulenor was a good teacher and did his best.

He taught me how to tap into the magical well, as he called it, within me. A well was the best way to describe it, according to Ulenor. A well of magic that would steadily grow in power as I gained more experience, and I used that power to cast spells.

In the interest of safety, Ulenor avoided teaching me many spells while we were inside the wagon. As he explained it, small enclosed areas were simply too dangerous until I learned better control. I spent the better part of an hour just practicing tapping into my well of power.

It seemed incredibly vast; that was the only word I could think of to describe it. It felt like dipping my finger into an ocean. Ulenor's eyes widened at that. According to him, people's magical wells were usually rather small, especially in the beginning. Hell, most people couldn't even reliably access their magical powers without a month of training and practice.

The weather was pleasantly warm, so we decided to tie the canvas sides of the wagon up to let some air flow through.

"It's really a nice day today," I said, looking behind us. Lossia's face appeared behind the driver's head, and she smiled at me. I smiled back, but my smile faded when I looked far into the distance, beyond the caravan, to the north. I could just make out the faint outline of the mountain that Vogrim

called home. It stood there, monolithically in the far distance, an ever-present reminder of the task I had to complete.

The road we traveled on was dirt but well maintained. It wound through the countryside and into the forest, near the area Ulenor had first summoned me. While there were a few hills in the region—Brovania, the nation was called—the road steered clear of them so it stayed flat.

Roughly three hours after we left, when we were deep in the woods, our wagon passed by several guards skinning an animal along the side of the road. The animal looked like an antelope, but with a coloring I hadn't seen before. The men's crossbows were on the ground beside them, and I saw one of the bolts had taken the animal straight through the head. As we passed, one of them noticed me watching and waved a hand in greeting.

"We'll eat well on this trip, Andrew!" he called out, then went back to skinning the animal.

I turned back to Ulenor. "Sometimes I'm surprised that so many of the men like me. I was afraid many would be jealous and would resent me."

Ulenor nodded his head slowly. "Jealousy isn't a strong feeling among many goblins, so I'm not surprised. The men are in a sad situation, but they recognize you as the savior of their race. I think many of them would push their own wives on you without a second thought, and proudly raise the child as their own. After all, if you succeed, they can live their lives again."

I shook my head when he said that. “That’s definitely not how humans would act.” I barked a sudden laugh. *Man, that’s some cuck shit*, my old roommate Greg would have said. But then again, Greg was a douchebag.

I thought about how Thilli demanded that I impregnate ten women within a week’s time to gain her favor. Nine would have to be enough.

“I’d like to work out a plan of attack for Vogrim,” I told Ulenor. “I think I have some good ideas on how we should do it.”

The old wizard nodded. “Yes, yes, I know. And that’s good, but let’s take it one step at a time. First, we need to see where your magical strength lies, as you’ll need that to defeat him. Then, we’ll focus our efforts on Odewyn.”

I had forgotten about Odewyn. That old necromancer had an amulet I would need.

“Well, in that case let’s work on a plan of attack for Odewyn,” I said. As soon as Ulenor opened his mouth, I continued. “Actually, scratch that. I know what you’ll say, and you’re right. I’m just excited and getting ahead of myself. If anything, I want to focus my efforts on this raiding party that’s coming for Gillamoor.”

Ulenor nodded in approval and smiled at me. “Much better.”

We spent the next several hours discussing battle tactics and town defense. For a self-proscribed pacifist, Ulenor was quite knowledgeable about such things. He insisted that I not

underestimate just how devastating the minotaurs could be, but I still felt that the city wall and some good archers could make short work of a small raiding party. Only time would tell.

When the sun was high overhead, the caravan stopped. The men tended to the horses, while I stretched my legs. I wanted to talk to my future wives, but they were talking in a small group of people and looked busy.

“Alright men, you’ve got thirty minutes so tend to your horses and eat quickly,” Sergeant Nerras’s voice called out from the front.

After climbing down from the wagon, Ulenor tugged at my sleeve. “Come with me,” he said. “I want you to try something.”

A portly goblin woman, her light red dress struggling to cover her swollen breasts and chunky midsection, hurried up to Ulenor and me with a basket of fruit under one chubby arm. They were apparently apples, but in a shade of bright violet that I hadn't seen before. She handed one to Ulenor and one to me, then took a long look at me and handed me a second apple. I was just glad she didn't ask me to impregnate her.

Crunching on the apples, Ulenor and I walked off the road and into the forest. We didn't go very far—just enough to finish the apples, really—and Ulenor suddenly stopped and looked around. With his eyes closed, he took a deep breath and smiled.

“I've always loved places like this,” he said quietly, still watching the forest surrounding him. “It's so pure and untouched. No goblin hand has touched these woods. Or orc or human, for that matter.”

I was a big fan of the wilderness myself, and had a habit of taking my dirtbike through the Apalachicola National Forest on weekends. There was a certain peace in the middle of the forest that couldn't be found elsewhere.

“So what are we out here for?” I asked, tossing an apple core to the forest floor. The ants would make short work of that.

“Your favorite thing, Andrew. Magic.” Ulenor smiled at me for a moment, then pointed out into the trees. “Now, there might be water out there somewhere. We don't know yet, but using magic we can search for it.”

I scratched my head. “You mean like a pond, or a stream?”

Ulenor nodded. “Exactly. We clearly can't hear or see any streams nearby, but perhaps there's something. We're going to use this as an exercise to work on your magical skills.”

Ulenor taught me to pull deeply from my well of power and to feel for water in all directions. It was almost like I was reaching out with invisible tendrils that sought only water. Apparently, I could attune them to feel for almost anything. With my eyes closed I suddenly turned and pointed. I opened them and realized I was pointing back toward the convoy of wagons and horses.

“Of course there's water there. We brought plenty with us.”

Ulenor turned me back to the woods and had me try again.

This time I pulled deeply from my well, all the power I could, and reached out my invisible fingers across the forest. I raised my hands in front of me, although the action wasn't necessary;



I controlled my magical tendrils with my mind. The amount of magical power within me burned like the sun and froze my veins like an ice storm. My blood rushed in my ears. I briefly wondered how sorcerers were able to concentrate when they were filled with power like this.

“Yes, yes,” Ulenor said, next to me. “Keep reaching out.”

And then, I felt it. A sort of resonance from one direction, like the faintest memory, quickly fleeting, or a finger against the back of my neck, almost touching. There was water in that direction. I knew it.

“Now, focus,” Ulenor urged.

Instead of feeling in all directions, I focused the entirety of my power toward where I had detected water. The sensation of something being there grew exponentially until I was absolutely certain I detected water.

Using my magical powers, I reached out and connected with the water. I couldn't tell what it was; river, stream, pond. I assumed there was a way to detect if it was moving or not, but that would take more experience. I pulled water from it, lifting it into the air, and brought it back to me.

The water sped through the trees, whip-quick, until a ball of water the size of a small horse suddenly hovered in the air before me.

Ulenor's eyes widened. “This is incredible!” he exclaimed.

I didn't know what else to do with the water so I sent it a few dozen feet away and released it. The water splashed all around

and created a large puddle on the ground. When I stopped pulling power from my magical well, a deep exhaustion washed over me, like I had run a marathon that morning and not rested since.

“I have never seen such capabilities manifest so quickly,” Ulenor said, almost shaking with excitement. He noticed me sagging in place and took my elbow to help support me. “Come, come, let’s get some food in you and get you back to the wagon. That’s the first time you’ve really used your powers, so it’s natural that you’re tired.”

“Yeah,” I said. “I feel like I didn’t even sleep last night. Holy shit, I could use a nap.”

Ulenor nodded as we walked. “Using magic is very tiring. As you grow in power and experience, you will gain more endurance. You will also be able to cast more complex and difficult spells. Although with you being a sorcerer, perhaps ‘cast’ is the wrong word.”

“That’s right,” I said, taking a deep breath. “As a wizard, you cast spells from your book. I direct my power from within.”

“I’m glad you’ve been paying attention,” Ulenor said with a smile.

I ate my second apple as we walked back to the wagon. When we got there, people were walking around, stretching their legs as they prepared a quick lunch. Through the crowd, I caught Thilli’s eye and gave her a smile, which she returned. She was definitely warming up to me.

Sergeant Nerras approached me as I was standing by my wagon. He called out to me and clapped me on the back. I noticed he held two practice swords in his off hand, and did my best to stifle a groan.

“Andrew, good to see you. Interested in a quick spar before we get back on the road?”

“No,” I said, shaking my head. “I just worked with magic a minute ago, so I’m absolutely exhausted right now.”

“Interesting,” he said. “I guess you think you’ll always be well-rested when you fight?” He offered me a practice sword, hilt-first. “Now is a great time. Come on, give me five minutes. You must learn to fight, even when you’re tired. *Especially* when you’re tired.”

He was right. I took the sword and followed him off to the side. The downside of us practicing at that moment was that Lossia, Thilli, and Cirro took a few steps towards us so they could watch with interest. I didn’t want them to see me sparring when I was this tired. Nerras was likely to kick my ass all over the place.

“Okay, now hold it like this,” Nerras said, adjusting my hand on the hilt. He looked at my off-hand for a moment. “No magic this time,” he said with a grin. “Heads up.”

I barely got my sword up in time to block a swing at my shoulder. My hand stung with the impact.

“You need to stay on guard,” Nerras said, moving the tip of his sword in small circles. “You’re going to be in some rough

situations in the near future and you can't afford to relax. In fact, I may attack you out of the blue, just to keep you on your toes. Here, let me show you the proper way to parry.”

He stood next to me and instructed me on how to move my sword. In his skilled hands, the motion looked natural, almost easy. I copied his actions and repeated the move under his scrutinous eye until he nodded in approval. Nerras then moved in front of me and slowly attacked me a few times, giving me an opportunity to practice the move. He added in some new movements, then went back to a savage swing at my midsection. My parry was clumsy, but improving.

After a few more minutes Nerras took a step back and lowered his sword. He always seemed a bit more relaxed around me, and his usually gruff voice held a note of approval. I thought back to when he had mentioned that most goblins understood the need for the military, but were often uncomfortable around fighting men.

“You learn quickly,” he said. “It’s good that you’re a military man. You know violence, you know killing. I can teach you how to swing a sword, but the first time that blade connects with flesh, that is the moment that will make or break a man.”

I raised my practice sword and examined the wooden blade for a few seconds while I thought. Back in Afghanistan, I had been in more than my share of firefights, but the thought of lopping someone’s head off with a sword was different. It was more intimate, in the worst of ways. Sort of like killing with a knife. That was something that would haunt a man.

After lowering the practice sword, I handed it back to Nerras, hilt-first. He gave me a quick bow of the head and went back to the front of the caravan.

I stifled a yawn with the back of my hand. Our practice hadn't been very rigorous, but after working with magic I felt like I was ready to fall over.

"Come on, get in here before you pass out on the road," Ulenor said with a chuckle. He offered me his hand and grunted with effort as he helped pull me into the wagon.

Standing in the back of the wagon, I looked over at my seat. It wasn't particularly large or conducive to sleeping. Fortunately, there were several heavy canvas sacks in the back of the wagon with clothing and supplies in them.

"This'll do," I said as I curled up on top of the sacks. "Wake me in a couple hours, or if anything interesting happens," I said to Ulenor. I never even bothered eating my lunch.

**W**hen Ulenor finally woke me some time later, I opened my mouth to ask him why he hadn't let me sleep for very long, but then stopped. It felt like I had just fallen asleep five minutes ago.

We were in a thick forest, but through the treetops I was able to roughly discern the position of the sun. It was much lower than I expected.

"How long was I asleep?" I asked, rubbing the sleep out of my eyes.

"Oh, perhaps three hours or so," Ulenor replied.

The sides of the wagon were still tied up, so I looked around us. The road passed through a dense forest, so trees surrounded us on either side.

"Well, I guess I didn't miss anything," I muttered, staring at the thick trees.

"Good morning, sunshine," Ulenor quipped. "Did you know that you talk in your sleep?"

“Uh oh. What was I saying?” Hopefully nothing weird about goblins.

“No discernable words. You mostly just uttered random syllables and grunted a few times. It probably involved your magic-induced exhaustion.” Ulenor adjusted his position in his seat. “You can expect to be that tired each time you use magic for the next month or so. After that, it’ll start getting better, one week at a time.”

I yawned and stretched my arms over my head. I was still tired, but I decided to move onto my seat.

The pace at which we traveled suddenly bothered me, although I wasn’t quite sure why. Sure, this world wasn’t as technologically advanced as mine, but this pace just felt painfully slow, like a waste of time. There had to be something I could do, something I could invent that would help.

“You guys need a train,” I muttered, staring at the road behind us.

“Care to explain further?” Ulenor asked. “Is that something from your world?”

I nodded. “It’s a good way to move a lot of stuff a long distance. Instead of a road, you have two metal rails that run from one location to the next. Then you build a wagon, much like this one but with metal wheels designed to stay on those rails. All you need is a motor to propel it and brakes to stop it, and you’ve got yourself transportation that doesn’t need food or water.”

Ulenor pursed his lips and nodded. “Yes, yes, I can see how that would be a great help. Perhaps you could bring this up with King Freg. If something like this were to happen, he would be the one to provide funding and direction.”

“I think Gillamoor is a sign that the goblins have built a great society,” I explained. “If your other cities are similar, then I imagine Brovania is a great place to live. Being able to travel from city to city faster, cheaper, and more easily would be a great help to your economy. Imagine making the trek from Gillamoor to York in a single day.”

“Yes, yes,” Ulenor said, nodding in understanding. “We could ship raw materials there, and they would return finished goods. We could send wool and receive linen. The possibilities are endless.”

“I’m glad you see the benefits,” I said. “Now, building it with your current level of technology might be difficult.” I thought for a moment. “How hard is it to get iron or steel? We would need a lot to build it.”

Ulenor stared at me for a moment. “You know I can’t help you build this, Andrew. King Freg is the man to talk to.”

“Of course,” I replied. “But you can help me figure out a solid plan that works with your resources, so when I propose it to him he’s more likely to agree. Now, how much iron and steel do you have?”

Ulenor shrugged. “That’s not really my area of expertise. They have a lot in York, being the capital and all. Most goblins have a natural affinity for magic, as I have told you before. Some



are able to use it to detect metals in the ground. They help with mining.”

“Okay, next question.” My mind was churning with possibilities, but first I had to learn what the goblins were capable of. “In my world, early trains burned coal. It’s a good fuel source, but dirty and leads to other issues, most notably pollution and health problems. I have a feeling the goblin people wouldn’t enjoy that too much. How hard is it to magically enchant something?”

Ulenor’s eyes narrowed. “What do you mean? Armor and weapons can be enchanted, sometimes, but it is very difficult.”

“Can you use magic to turn a wheel?” I asked. “If we could use magic to power a rail system, that would give us a big head start.”

Ulenor pursed his lips. “Hmm, I’m not sure. I don’t know that anyone has ever tried that here. The elves use magic to help with many of their daily tasks, so I’m sure something is possible. Not that I recommend talking with them.” His lip curled into a brief sneer at the mention of the elves.

“I wonder if we could make a lightweight rail and put a sail on it, then have some goblin magic users create a wind that would power it.” If we could enchant items, the possibilities would be endless.

“A sailboat on land?” Ulenor asked, eyes wide. “That is some imagination you’ve got there, Andrew. I like it.”

I continued brainstorming magical ideas while Ulenor told me if they were possible or not. Magical enchantments often gave an object a quality—like a flaming longsword, which was something that could exist and made my inner nerd happy. While enchanting a wheel to turn might be difficult, there was a possibility of using magic to create a battery that never ran out of power.

As the shadows began to turn long, our caravan slowed to a halt. I watched, fascinated, as a handful of goblins went to the side of the road and used magic to clear the area.

No thick trees stood to our immediate right, just tall grass and bushes. The goblins worked methodically, using magic to tear the bushes straight out of the ground and throw them further into the forest. The grass was cropped short, better than any lawnmower I had ever seen.

I decided to tap into my magical well to see if I could determine how they were doing it. The method of making the magical tendrils was still fresh in my mind, but I wasn't sure what to tell them to look for. I tried to make the tendrils sensitive to magic itself, just like what was in my magical well.

“What are you doing, Andrew?” Ulenor asked from behind me.

“Trying to learn how they're doing that,” I replied as I focused.

Gently, I sent my tendrils out in the direction of the goblin workers. A kaleidoscope of sensations were returned, things I

could guess and things I couldn't fully process. I focused hard and was able to determine that the goblin nearest me was using hair-thin blades of pure fire to slice through all the undergrowth, then creating gusts of air to blow it away.

The next goblin down the line controlled the soil itself and caused it to seemingly invert, pulling the plants below the surface.

They all used different methods, but in five minutes there was a smooth patch of land sufficient in size for our caravan. Our driver pulled on the reins and clicked his tongue and the horses pulled our wagon to the right, off the road and onto the clear land.

I stopped pulling on my magical well and immediately felt that familiar tiredness, although not nearly as much as when I had drawn the water to myself. Sleep would come easily tonight.

“As you see, there are many ways to accomplish the same thing,” Ulenor said when he noticed I had released my power. “It is rare that there is only one spell that can accomplish something, unless you are trying to do something extremely specific.”

“So, that's another thing I've started to notice,” I said, turning around. I settled back into my seat and relaxed for a moment while I gathered my thoughts, then turned to Ulenor. “You're a wizard, so you cast spells. Very specific spells, as I've noticed. Sorcerers tend to be more...elemental. I can push or pull on water, or create fire. Can I heal a wound the way you can? Can I create a ball of light to illuminate a dark room?” Well, I had

already created a ball of light—that had been the first thing I did with magic. It was the only other example I could think of.

Ulenor smiled at my words. “I’m glad you’re thinking like this, Andrew. Come, let us make camp for the evening, then we’ll continue this conversation.”

I hopped out of the wagon and helped Ulenor down, then I grabbed the two folding stools hanging from the side. As I turned and set them on the ground, I saw Ulenor reading from his spell book. With the wave of his hand, several head-sized stones rose from the forest floor and sped toward him. They slammed into the ground, forming a neat circle. Next, a branch broke away from a nearby tree, then broke into smaller pieces. As it flew toward us, its leaves fell to the ground.

I stepped next to Ulenor right as the pieces of wood arranged themselves in the circle of stones. Ulenor’s brow furrowed and he moved one of his hands, which resulted in tiny droplets of water suddenly forming on the outside of the branches. The water grew and formed into a single ball, which then launched itself into the woods.

“There,” Ulenor said, taking a deep breath. “I’ve never liked that spell. It’s far too tiring for what it accomplishes. But, now we have dry wood to burn. Would you like to try lighting it?”

“Do you think that’s safe?” I asked with a laugh.

Ulenor frowned in thought for a moment, then he nodded and pulled out his spell book. “I’m ready if you should fail. The key is to focus on creating a small fire, like the flame of a single candle. Don’t push it too hard, or you’ll create

something much larger. As strong as you already are, you'd probably burn the whole camp down."

I opened myself to my well of power and pulled a trickle of magical energy from it. I focused my thoughts on a candle flame, on a match lighting. In my mind I saw fire, I felt fire. Holding out my hand toward the circle of stones, I imagined one of the logs burning.

To my surprise, I felt heat move within me. A great warmth seemed to come from my very core and traveled down my arm. One of the smaller logs suddenly burst into flame.

I took a step back, biting off a curse. Ulenor clapped his hands triumphantly.

"Yes, yes! This is splendid, my boy, just splendid!" Ulenor looked at me with pride beaming in his eyes. "Your powers are growing in leaps and bounds, Andrew."

I released my magical well and plopped down on the small wooden stool. It creaked alarmingly, but held.

"We all just survived your first conjuring of fire!" Ulenor said, still smiling. "I think this deserves tea." He walked to the rear of the wagon and rummaged through our supplies while I thought on magic.

It seemed that I could control and possibly conjure elements. I just set that log on fire. Could I have created a ball of water to soak it? Thinking back, I remembered how Ulenor had me search for water, instead of simply bringing some forth into

existence. Perhaps that wasn't possible; maybe I simply added energy to the piece of wood until it caught fire.

Sadly, I didn't think anyone around me was scientifically educated enough to understand where I was going with those thoughts. For that matter, I didn't fully understand them myself. But it appeared that whatever my powers were, they were at least somewhat confined by the laws of physics. I tried to learn more.

"Hey Ulenor," I called out.

"Yes, what do you need?" he replied as he walked back toward me with a kettle in hand.

"So, I just set that log on fire. Could I have soaked it with water instead?" I hoped my assumptions were correct.

Ulenor shook his head. "If you had a water source nearby you could have brought that water to our fire and smothered it, but you can't just make water appear."

I grinned as my guess was proven correct. I still had a lot to learn, but this was an eye-opening moment. Now that I understood the basics of how magic worked a bit better, it would be much easier to learn control over.

Ulenor's spell had pulled water out of that tree branch as it broke it into more usable sizes. I could probably pull water from the ground nearby and extinguish our fire, although I imagined it would take a good bit more control than I currently had.

Ulenor placed a handful of tea leaves into a pierced metal ball, then put that within the kettle. He had already filled it with water. He hung it above the fire and relaxed on his stool next to mine.

“I don’t know about you, but I’m looking forward to sleeping beneath the stars,” he said. “I much prefer the forests to the cities. Most of the time, at least.”

“I can understand that, but I like running water,” I said in reply. “Running water and soft beds. I spent enough time outdoors in the army, sleeping in the rain, marching through deserts or forests. Give me comfort any day.” I looked to the side. Two goblin workers were pitching a large tent for my future wives to sleep in. Where was my tent?

“Hey, I’ll be right back,” I said as I stood up.

I strode over to the beautiful women and put my best smile on. Lossia returned the smile, of course. After a moment, Cirro smiled as well. Thilli still looked like she was trying to figure out how she was supposed to feel.

As excited as I was to see them, when I stepped up to them I realized I didn’t know what to say. I stood there for a moment with my mouth open like an idiot.

“Is everything okay, Andrew?” Cirro asked.

“Ah, sorry,” I said. “I guess I just wanted to make sure you three were doing okay. Traveling in wagons isn’t the most exciting thing, or the most comfortable.”

They watched me expectantly while I struggled to think of something interesting to say. My mind suddenly went blank, and I couldn't think of anything to talk about. Probably because I spent most of the day in a wagon.

"Thilli, what's your favorite color?" I blurted out. At least I wasn't talking about the weather.

"Red," she said cautiously.

"Andrew, is everything okay?" Lossia asked. The gentle one of the bunch, she seemed to put me at ease.

"Yeah," I said with a bit of a self-deprecating laugh. "I just suddenly realized I had nothing to talk about and didn't want to bore you."

Lossia gave me a sweet smile, but it was Cirro that came forward and looped her arm around mine.

"Walk with me," she said.



**T**ogether, we walked along the treeline. A dozen tents had been quickly erected and several campfires filled in the gaps between, with goblins hurrying about to prepare their camp. The antelope that guards had shot earlier had already been butchered. Part of it was roasting on a spit, and the rest had been cut into chunks for a stew along with potatoes and other vegetables I didn't recognize. Whatever it was, it smelled wonderful.

“How are you adapting to our lifestyle so far?” Cirro asked.

I was glad she began with a question like that. In fact, she couldn't have picked a better one.

“I love it,” I said truthfully. “I have a military background and you guys brought me here to fight Vogrim, but.... I have to say, I really like the peaceful nature of the goblin people. I like how you value your children, and education. Your cities are well planned and clean, another strong point. I think my people could learn a lot from goblins, but I guess I won't be seeing them again,” I said as I patted her hand.

She looked up at me and gave me a sad smile. “Do you miss your family? I miss mine. They’re over in Holmar, which is pretty far from Gillamoor.”

“How far?” I asked.

She thought for a moment. “About as far as Gillamoor is from York. I don’t own a horse though, so I’m not able to make the trip back. Plus, now that I’m serving in this new role, I simply don’t have the time.”

I squeezed her slender hand. “Hopefully all of this will be done soon and you can go back to some semblance of normalcy.”

“Well, when all of this is done I’ll be your wife. I’m not sure I’d call that normal, but either way I imagine you wouldn’t want to go live in Holmar.” She barked a laugh as if I would understand that.

“What’s wrong with Holmar?” I asked, curious.

“Sometimes it’s hard to remember that you know nothing of us. Holmar is to the west, near the Orc Wastes. A wide river separates the two lands.” She made a sound in her throat. “The orcs are horrible. Everyone talks about the elves, but the orcs are monsters. They’re the opposite of us in every way. Holmar is surrounded by a massive wall, with another one further toward the river. Some people joke that we have more archers than people, and some worry that it’s not really a joke.” She shook her head. “To be honest, a lot of it is for show. The orcs know we have a thousand archers, and that’s what keeps them

from raiding Holmar. If they knew that the archers hated violence, we'd be overrun in a week."

"Well, hopefully I won't have to deal with any orcs in my journeys," I said, trying to keep my voice light. If they were anything like what I had read in books and seen in movies, they would be quite terrible.

"Nope, just some minotaurs," she replied.

Of course, as if I could forget about those ten-foot-tall assholes.

"Don't worry," I assured her. "I have some ideas that I'm going to bring up to King Freg, things that will help transportation greatly."

She looked up at me. "So you're really staying here, then?"

"Of course," I told her with a smile. "I mean, you three being half-naked in front of me kinda helped me make that decision, but every day I become more certain that it was the right decision. I like things here. I think we'll build a nice life together."

That answer seemed to satisfy her. She smiled and looked back towards the camp.

"Tell me about your family," she said.

Uh oh. I had a feeling she wanted to hear about my family because she missed hers. It would probably have the opposite effect.

“I didn’t come from a good family,” I began cautiously. Cirro glanced up at me, a questioning look in her eyes, so I continued. “When my father was home, he was usually drunk. He would get mad over the smallest things and beat my mother, and often my sister and me as well.”

Cirro gasped and her fingers tightened on my arm. I continued.

“My mother loved us, but she was miserable most of the time. A deep depression fell over her. My sister was murdered when I was a teenager, and as soon as I graduated from high school my mom pushed me to join the army so I could escape.” I sighed. “After a few months she just couldn’t handle it any longer, and she killed herself.”

“Andrew!” Cirro exclaimed. She forced me to stop walking and wrapped her arms around me. “I have never heard such a horrible story before. My heart bleeds for you, Andrew. I am so sorry you’ve had to suffer so greatly.”

I hugged her back. My story was a horrible one, but it was the only reality I had really known for many years. It hadn’t been until I joined the army that I first saw how different things could be.

“It took me a long time to realize things could be different. They could be better,” I told Cirro. “And don’t worry, I promised myself when I was thirteen years old that I would never treat anyone that way. So don’t worry about me ever harming our children.”

“Good,” she said, a hint of sternness entering her voice. “I think if anyone were to ever harm my child, I... I don’t know.”

I would beat them with a frying pan.”

I reminded myself that they probably used cast iron pans in this day and age. A serious threat, indeed.

“Don’t worry, honey,” I said, holding her close. “I’ll protect us. When you’re with me, nothing will ever be able to hurt you.”

“I believe you,” she said, hugging me back.

“Do you know any magic?” I asked her suddenly.

She pulled away and looped her arm through mine again.

“What do you mean?” she asked as we continued to walk around the camp. “Can I control air and water like you? Only a tiny amount.”

“Ulenor told me that almost all goblins can, at the least, feel magic. Most can use it to some extent.”

“It’s true,” Cirro replied. “Although most of us are incredibly weak with magic, and few can do more than light a candle. I can do a little more than that.”

“Like what?” I asked.

She looked up at me with her beautiful big eyes, and smiled as a sudden gust of wind pushed my head to the side.

I chuckled. “And the others? Are they the same?”

She frowned in thought. “Thilli is even weaker than I am. I think Lossia is stronger, or at the least better trained. Which makes sense, considering how she grew up.”

So it seemed that most goblins could use tiny amounts of magic, but powerful users were few and far between. A squad of these more powerful users would come in handy when I launched my assault on Vogrim.

After walking in a complete circle around our camp, I stopped near the ladies' wagon. Thilli and Lossia were settling down on stools near their small campfire and talking with a heavysset woman. From their tones, it sounded important, so I didn't interrupt. The sides of their large tent had been tied up to help with airflow.

"Thanks for walking with me," I said to Cirro.

She looked up at me and smiled, then stretched up onto her toes and brushed a kiss on my cheek.

"It's always good to see you, Andrew. Oh, by the way. Thilli's favorite color is red, and she loves flowers." Cirro winked at me, then released my arm and went to join her companions around the fire.

That was a bit of information that could be quite important when utilized properly, which I intended on doing.

I slowly walked back to my own campsite, where workers had laid out two bedrolls and erected a small canopy above. With the warm weather, I was grateful Ulenor and I weren't being forced to sleep in a stuffy tent.

It did feel a bit strange, not sleeping next to my future wives. I tried to remind myself that we weren't there yet; right now, I

was the guy saving the goblin people and fighting the villain. My reward for all of that was three breathtaking wives.

Still, it would be nice to have them next to me, where we could talk and learn about each other. But, as long as I focused and did my duties, that time would come soon. I looked over my shoulder and caught Lossia's eye. She smiled at me and waved her fingers, then went back to talking with the heavysset woman.

"So, are you ready to continue where we left off?" I asked Ulenor as I dropped down onto my stool.

The diminutive wizard thumbed through his spellbook, then uttered a few words under his breath. A large wooden bowl, filled to the brim with stew, floated in the air toward me.

I reached out and took the bowl with a word of thanks. Fortunately, a spoon was already in it. I grabbed it and dug in. After working with magic, even only for a few minutes, I was still exhausted. My appetite was here in full force as well.

"What were we talking about?" Ulenor said around a mouthful of boiled potatoes.

"The differences between how I manipulate things and how you cast spells," I told him. I scooped up a piece of meat with my spoon and popped it in my mouth. "Oh wow, this is great. You goblins really know your food. Anyways, can you teach me to heal wounds?"

"Yes, yes, of course. I remember now." Ulenor's brow furrowed as he thought. "So, healing wounds as a sorcerer is

very different from how a wizard would do it. As you saw when we first met, I can simply cast a spell and heal myself. Not so, with you. You have to learn to manipulate your target's life force."

Whatever that was, it didn't sound easy.

"So like earlier when you had me feel around for water until I found some, I would do the same thing but try to manipulate a person's life instead?" It sounded a bit crazy, especially since I had taken the Combat Lifesaver course back in the army. Man, if I had just been able to magically heal people, that would have made my job a lot easier.

"That's a very simple way to put it, but yes. That is the general nature of it." Ulenor chuckled softly under his breath. "I suppose it helps balance things out a bit. Sorcerers are always vastly more powerful than wizards, but they also tend to struggle with complex castings."

"Like what?" I asked.

Ulenor gestured to the ring of stones and the campfire. "Like that. For me it was one spell with a bit of guidance. For you, it would be five or six different things, all at once."

"You have a good point," I said. "Well, it's not like I have the next ten years to train, so I should start trying my best to master the simple stuff first, right? No matter how strong Vogrim is, he'll have a tough time fighting me if he's on fire."

Ulenor's face turned grave. "Never underestimate him, Andrew. He is a sorcerer and not a wizard, correct. But Vogrim



can manipulate his powers and cast spells that would burn me to a cinder to even try. He has been the most powerful magic user in the land for nearly a thousand years.”

I suddenly found myself wishing for my old M-4.

“Well, I won’t be discouraged,” I said, ignoring the tiny seed of fear trying to take root in my gut. A thousand years? “Everyone has a weakness. We already know Vogrim’s; Eldrick’s sword and shield will make short work of him.” I refused to believe he was as invincible as Ulenor made him out to be.

Something tickled at my memory. “Hey Ulenor, how did you make my bowl of soup float over to me? A spell of course, but can you explain the spell? Or how I might do it as a sorcerer?”

Ulenor nodded slowly while chewing another bite of stew. “Yes, yes. Please, try to follow along, Andrew. There is a force in the world that pulls everything down, toward the ground.”

“Gravity!” I exclaimed. “You’re talking about gravity!”

He looked at me for a moment. “I’m not sure what this ‘gravity’ is that you mention, but in this world we have a force that pulls things toward the ground. My spell reduced it, even reversed it for a moment, so your soup rose into the air.”

“Holy shit, Ulenor, are you telling me I can manipulate gravity?” My mind raced with the possibilities. Ulenor continued giving me an odd look, so I explained further. “The force you’re talking about is called gravity in my world. It’s the same thing. It doesn’t technically pull things down; it pulls

objects with mass towards each other.” I pointed up in the sky, where a crescent moon was rising. “That moon up there, it’s orbiting around your planet due to gravity. Furthermore, your planet is orbiting around the sun due to gravity.”

Ulenor shook his head. “That’s too much for me tonight. You’ll have to explain it better tomorrow, while we’re traveling.” He yawned and brushed his fingers through his thick beard. “I don’t know about you, but a belly full of hot stew makes me sleepy. My old bones need some rest.”

“Hey, I’m right there with you,” I said. “Working with magic is tiring. I plan on doing that a lot over the next week, so I guess I’ll be tired a lot. I’m hoping I can grow in strength quickly.”

“Just be careful that you don’t overdo it,” Ulenor said as he stretched his spindly arms over his head.

Both of us moved toward our bedrolls. The sun was only just setting, but I was tired enough that falling asleep wouldn’t be an issue.

Everyone knew that we would be up early for travel so there was no drinking, no loud laughter, nothing of that sort. Everyone pretty much ate their dinner, brushed down their horses, and went to sleep. I looked over and caught a glimpse of Sergeant Nerras checking the horses and the wagons, ensuring everything had been done properly. Good man.

I settled onto my bedroll and tried my best to get comfortable. It was fairly thick and there were no stray roots or rocks in the ground beneath, so while it wasn’t a memory foam mattress, it

wasn't too bad. After pulling my thin blanket over me, I quickly fell into a deep sleep.

Some time later, I was awakened by a gentle shaking. My eyes snapped open and my right hand went for my rifle before I fully came to. Old habit.

Lossia was kneeling over me, wearing nothing but a diaphanous shift with a lace robe wrapped around her. Her eyes widened at how quickly I had moved when she woke me.

"Hey, Lossia," I said quietly. "Is everything okay? Do you need anything?"

"You startled me. I didn't expect you to wake like that," she said, a touch of color visible in her cheeks in the pale moonlight. She looked down at me and bit her lip for a moment. "I just thought.... Well, I thought it would be nice if I didn't sleep alone."

There wasn't much room on the bedroll, but I slid over a few inches and pulled my blanket back. Lossia climbed in and cuddled up next to me with her head on my shoulder. As light as she was, it wasn't too uncomfortable, especially with her thick breasts resting on me and one of her legs thrown on top of mine.

"Oh, looks like someone is awake," she said at my sudden erection. She wiggled her hips on top of me and giggled quietly.

"Usually I would be happy to entertain that, but I'm exhausted tonight," I said.

“It’s okay,” Lossia whispered against my neck. Her arm wrapped around my waist. “What do you want our life to be like?” she asked after a moment of silence.

“Good question,” I said to her, keeping my voice low. “I guess I still need to learn more about the goblin lifestyle before I can give a good answer.”

“Well, what did you want back in your world?” she asked. “What would have been your perfect life back there?”

“A lot would have had to change to make things just right,” I said to her. “First off, I wanted to move somewhere cooler. Where I lived it was just too damn hot all the time. Too many mosquitos, too. Living somewhere with mountains would have been nice. A nice little house with a little bit of land. Maybe a stream nearby.”

“What about a family?” she asked. “Did you think about that?”

I sighed. “I got out of a bad relationship not too long ago, and I had decided to just focus on my education for the next year or two. Once I figured out the direction I wanted my life to go, I was going to worry about finding a good partner. But, I guess I didn’t give it a lot of thought. One or two kids, maybe a dog and a cat. How about you?”

“Well, with me being the princess, I at least knew part of my future. I was destined to marry some wealthy, boring man and have a dull life. I have no brothers, so I would have taken over after my father as Queen of Brovania. I would have been expected to bear children; an heir, of course.”

“Is that why you chose this?” I asked.

She nodded. “Partially, yes. I mean, of course I wanted to be one of the people that helped save all goblins. But when I became a Mother of a New Age, I took my future into my own hands. Instead of marrying some wealthy man, maybe a mayor’s son if I was lucky, I had the chance to really do something for my people.”

“And you got the chance to marry an alien,” I said, squeezing her briefly.

She giggled. “Yes, and that. It was certainly a big risk, but it was one I was willing to take. I’m just glad you’re handsome.” She held me tightly and moved her hips on me.

“If my body pumps any more blood to my crotch I think I might pass out,” I told her.

Lossia giggled again and slid her hand down the front of my pants. She took hold of my manhood and gave it a few long, gentle strokes. It made my head want to explode.

“We’ll be in York soon, and you can do your duty there,” she said, still stroking me. “We probably won’t see much of each other in the capital city. But when you’re done, maybe we can finally be together.”

There was a slight hesitation in her voice, and I realized she hadn’t mentioned children earlier when she was talking about her possible future.

“Lossia, do you want children?” I figured she would, on account of the service she was performing for her people, but

people could be strange sometimes. “I mean, I know you’re one of the Mothers, but do you actually *want* to have a child?”

She paused before answering. “I believe so. To be honest, I’m just scared, Andrew. Cirro is ready to be pregnant any minute now, and Thilli probably won’t hold out much longer. She does like you, you know. She’s just making sure you do your part before she gives in. I really want to be with you and of course I’m willing to do my duty for my people, but yes, I’m a bit scared.”

“I don’t blame you,” I said. “It’s a very serious, life-changing decision. But hey, if you’re not ready to get pregnant we can always do it other ways.” I grabbed her round bottom and squeezed it for emphasis, meaning it as a joke.

“Okay,” she said without hesitation. There was a hint of excitement in her voice.

Wait. Did Lossia really just tell me she would let me use the service entrance? I gave her butt another squeeze and she sighed happily against my chest. Well, that was certainly something to look forward to.

We fell asleep that way, with her head on my shoulder and my hand on her ass. It was the best night’s sleep I’d gotten in quite some time.

It was Sergeant Nerras's voice that pulled me from my slumber. He woke each of the soldiers quietly and had them form up, then began running them through pushup drills while the rest of the camp slept. I was a light sleeper and my eyes popped open at the subtle noise.

Lossia was still dead asleep on me. As carefully as possible, I slid out from beneath her, smiling when she muttered something in her sleep. I scooped her up into my arms, then walked over to her camp with the other women. With the sides of their tent tied up, it was easy to slip inside.

Thilli slept how I imagined, her face a perfect mask of beauty without a single hair out of place. Cirro was sprawled on her bedroll, one arm over her head and the other across her stomach.

I carefully laid Lossia down on her bedroll and covered her with her blanket, then quietly moved back to my own camp. Somehow, I managed to do it without waking any of them.

By the time I got back to my bedroll, Ulenor was just beginning to wake up. He sat up slowly and rubbed his eyes, then yawned loudly. He saw me standing there and gave me a bleary-eyed look.

“I’ve never been much of a morning person, you know,” he said.

“Do you have a spell for that?” I asked.

He chuckled, then pushed himself to his feet with a grunt. “No, but I have tea that helps. Would you give us a small fire?”

Our campfire had burned down to a few smoldering coals over the course of the night. I tapped into my well of power and pulled just a tiny bit of magic from within myself, then willed into existence a tiny flame, right on the hottest part of the coals. Or, as I had deduced, I increased the heat energy of the coals until they burst into flame.

Ulenor placed his kettle over the small fire while I set myself to packing up my bed roll. After a moment a young goblin worker hurried up to me and insisted that he do the work. I figured cleaning up after myself was just fine, but the young man told me that I was an honored person, and he would be glad to tidy up.

That would take some getting used to. While having a personal chef might be nice, in general I didn’t want servants. I liked taking care of myself.



As soon as the kettle was warm, Ulenor pulled it off the fire and poured the hot tea into two cups, one for him and one for me. I accepted it graciously, then decided to put the fire out.

Everything around me had water in it. The soil, the leaves, the trees. Technically, the people. While I wasn't planning on pulling water out of anyone's body, with some effort I would be able to pull water from the soil and use it to extinguish the fire.

After taking a sip of the tea—delicious as usual—I set it next to the wagon and focused. I opened myself to my well of power and drew heavily on it, then sent out my invisible tendrils deep into the ground. There was water there, deep in the damp soil, but pulling it to the surface wasn't easy. I pulled more magical power into myself and forced the water to rise. Slowly, one drop at a time, water reached the surface.

As soon as a puddle had formed, I pulled all the water into a ball in front of me, right above the fire, then slowly lowered it. The water hit the coals, sizzling as it turned to steam. I smothered the fire with the water, and in a matter of seconds it was completely out.

“Nicely done,” Ulenor said. He had been watching my every move.

“Thanks,” I replied. I reached over and grabbed onto the side of the wagon, then released all of my magical power.

Only my grip kept me standing upright.

A tidal wave of exhaustion crashed over me, nearly sending me to the ground. I had never in my life been this tired, even after staying up forty hours straight when I was in the army.

Ulenor quickly moved towards me with a hand raised, intending to give support, but I waved him away. The young goblin worker finished packing up my bedroll and set it in the back of the wagon, and I downed the rest of my tea in one gulp and followed.

I barely had the strength to pull myself up, but with a grunt of effort I heaved myself into the back of the wagon, right on top of those soft canvas sacks. They were more than sufficient for how tired I was.

“Wake me if anything happens,” I called out to Ulenor, and promptly fell asleep.

Some time later, Ulenor woke me by gently shaking my shoulder.

“Andrew, Andrew,” he said. “It’s time for lunch. You need to eat.”

Considering how exhausted I had been, I was surprised at how refreshed I felt after sleeping a handful of hours. It appeared that this magic-induced tiredness was more acute than regular exhaustion, and went awake quickly with a nap.

“Did I miss anything?” I asked as I stretched my arms and yawned.

“Only trees,” Ulenor said, settling back on his seat.

I made my way over to my seat and sat across from Ulenor. It had been a long time since I had taken a trip this long without modern devices and social media to keep me entertained. Fortunately, the old wizard was good company.

“So, back to our conversation yesterday about enchanting,” I said. “You’ve said it’s possible, just difficult. What exactly makes these things difficult?”

“Several aspects,” Ulenor replied. “First, you need a goblin that is strong enough in magic to enchant something. While we can all use magic to some degree, most are quite weak. Strong sorcerers or even wizards are rare. Some people have strength in different abilities, too. For example, you might be very strong with starting fires, but weak with controlling water or even healing.”

“So you need a person that’s not only strong overall, but strong in the specific thing we’re trying to enchant?” I asked, seeking confirmation.

“Exactly,” Ulenor said. “I believe there is a different way, a workaround if you will, where we could use three or four sorcerers channeling their power into an object with a wizard to cast the spell that actually makes the object enchanted. I just haven’t been able to try it myself.”

“I think it’s time we start testing your hypothesis out,” I said. “I’m also going to need something that burns. It’s a shame you guys haven’t invented gunpowder yet.” I thought on that statement for a minute. “Well, maybe that’s not such a bad thing. Gunpowder isn’t the most useful thing for pacifists.”

“I think you’re rambling, Andrew,” Ulenor said.

“Sorry.” I focused on my thoughts. “Do any goblins produce oil? Petroleum?” I tried to think of other names for it. “Bitumen? A thick, black oil that might seep from rocks in rare locations?”

Ulenor nodded slowly. “I believe I’ve heard of that. There are some oil sands near York where they harvest it. Some researchers have been using it for experiments with waterproofing and lamps. A few have used the tar on their ships.”

I clapped my hands, startling the wizard. “That’s perfect! If you have petroleum, we can make some nasty little presents for Vogrim and his soldiers. We’ll have to refine it, though. If you’re not already doing that, I think I can work out a crude way to do it.”

Ulenor nodded again, his face slowly turning grave. “I know these things are necessary, but I hope you don’t change us too much,” he said.

“Change is coming,” I replied. “There is no way to avoid it. But with this change comes hope, hope that your children will grow up in a world without a tyrant threatening to conquer everyone.”

“Yes, yes, you’re right,” Ulenor said. “Forgive an old man his fears, Andrew. I just don’t want war to change us.”

I reached across the wagon and put a hand on his shoulder. He felt like skin and bones. “Don’t worry, Ulenor. I promise you

that I'll do everything I can not to bring any negative changes to the goblin way of life. I like it here. I don't want things to change, either."

And that was the truth of it. The goblins valued education, beauty, cleanliness, their children, all sorts of wonderful things. They were an honest people, a hard-working people. I didn't want my actions to turn them into a warring people. Sometimes peace had to be fought for—the irony of which was never lost on me—so I just wanted to ensure they could properly defend themselves without losing what it was that made their society so special.

We ate our lunch mostly in silence while I thought about my future here. I was still enjoying life, doing the fun part of my duties. From what I had been told, when I got to York I would be sleeping with the most beautiful women in the country, pretty much non stop.

But all good things must come to an end. I only had one week of that particular heaven to enjoy, then I had to race back to Gillamoor to help them defend against an attacking force. They told me not to underestimate the enemy, but with archers and a stone wall I had no concerns at all. We would pincushion those bastards and improve the goblin soldiers' confidence, then start planning an assault strategy on Vogrim.

The rest of the day passed without issue. As the sun sank toward the horizon, Sergeant Nerras once again pulled the caravan onto the side of the road. It looked like this area had

been cleared for camp at some time in the past, so it only took a few seconds of work for the sorcerers to get it ready.

Being so deep in my thoughts had made the time fly. In short order I was sitting on my bedroll talking quietly with Ulenor.

Just as I pushed myself to my feet to go talk to my future wives, Sergeant Nerras approached. His face looked a bit more somber than usual.

“Nerras, good evening,” I said. “Everything alright?”

He waved a hand as if to say it was nothing. “I just don’t like being this far from home. I feel like I’m leaving Gillamoor unprotected.”

“Is there anyone at home?” I asked. “A girlfriend, a wife? Any family?”

He shook his head. “Women are sometimes uncomfortable around me, due to me being a military man. Remember, goblins are a peaceful folk. They generally don’t like fighting.”

“So I guess you’re an odd man indeed,” I said.

“Sometimes, yeah,” he said, looking down. “They understand and respect what I do but often like to keep their distance. They aren’t rude or anything, they just don’t understand why I enjoy fighting. I’ve had a few women in the past spend some time with me, but it never lasted long. What’s it like in your world?”

“We have a bit of everything back home,” I said. “Most people are generally respectful and appreciative. We do have some

pacifists, and on the other end we have some people that almost seem to worship me because I was in the military.”

“A bit of everything, eh?” he asked. He looked over my shoulder and sighed. “I like that we can’t see that damn mountain from here. Vogrim’s mountain, off in the distance, always peeking over the horizon, like a cruel reminder that death is coming.”

“That does sound pretty horrible,” I said.

“Sometimes the threat of Vogrim weighs heavily on my shoulders,” he said, his voice somber. “The regular people, the civilians, they don’t see it. They don’t understand the threat that we worry about. Colonel Chuleel might be an asshole, but he’s right to be concerned all the time. When you see the minotaurs in person, you’ll understand what I’m talking about better. They’re absolutely terrifying, Andrew.” He sighed and his shoulders slumped a fraction. “This threat.... It’s just so big and sometimes I don’t think I can take it,” he grumped.

I suddenly laughed, which drew an irritated look from Nerras.

“I’m sorry,” I explained, holding up both hands. “Your last comment reminded me of this dumb joke we had back in my world. Someone would describe a car or a tree or something completely unrelated and say ‘that’s really big’ and the other person would reply with ‘that’s what she said.’”

“Oh, like a woman describing that with a sexual meaning?” Nerras asked.

“Yeah,” I replied. “It was a fad for a while, then most people kind of forgot about it.” I shook my head. “Now that I think about it, the whole thing was just a big waste of time.”

“That’s what she said,” Nerras said with a grin.

“Nice one,” I said.

“Ready to spar?” Nerras said, pulling out two wooden knives. The blades had been wrapped in several layers of cloth.

“Do I have much choice?” I asked.

“Not if you want to survive this journey,” Nerras replied.

He had a point. I accepted one of the knives from him and gripped it in my right hand.

Nerras didn’t give me much time to prepare. The man moved like a striking cobra, his knife darting out toward my midsection. His second attack caught me along the inside of my right arm. I held up a hand and took a step back, letting him know he had won that round.

“This one’s going to be hard,” I told the smaller man. “You’re a lot faster than me. Speed matters more than strength with a knife.”

Nerras nodded in agreement. “Just remember that you don’t need to kill someone in one move. Slice them a few times, let them bleed out and get tired.” He made a few example stabs in the air, slowly, showing me how to slide the blade along a person’s body. “You can practice these moves with a stick against a tree, Andrew. What’s important is that your muscles are used to the motions.”



“Muscle memory,” I said. “Do it until it’s second nature.”

“Exactly,” he said, straightening up. “The truth is, it’s hard to train for a knife fight. In reality it’s more of a grapple, and both of you are going to get stuck. You just need to make sure you stick the other guy more than he sticks you. Expect to get wounded, and end it as quickly as possible. The throat, the face, those are prime targets. A slash on the inside of the arm can make them drop their weapon.”

“Alright,” I said. “Let’s go again.”

He raised his knife and this time I didn’t wait for him to attack first. I kept my eyes on his weapon and immediately reached out with my left hand, trying to grab his knife arm.

I missed.

His cloth-wrapped practice knife jabbed into my stomach twice, but on the second attack I managed to get a grip on his wrist. I twisted his arm away and brought my knife into his armpit, then across the side of his neck.

“Very good,” Nerras said. “Of course, you still got stabbed in the gut, but I would be dead in seconds from that. If you could find a healer, you might survive that one.” He gestured towards Ulenor. “Maybe consider keeping him with you,” he said with a chuckle and a grin.

“Oh, I’m too old to be fighting,” Ulenor said.

“Well, I’ll let you be for the day. I need to see to my men in the back.” Nerras took the practice knife from me, then left.

“You know that man’s a hero, right?” Ulenor asked after a contemplative pause.

“Nerras?”

Ulenor nodded. “I think you should hear the story.”

“It was about a year ago that it happened,” he began. “I believe that I’ve told you that Vogrim sometimes sends minions of his down south. Often they’re just scouts, but he has sent a few raiding parties before.”

“Why doesn’t he just send an army and wipe Gillamoor out?” I asked.

“He doesn’t have the numbers,” Ulenor explained. “Minotaurs live long lives and don’t tend to have many offspring, so it takes a very long time to build up a sizable population of them. The lizardfolk are plentiful, but the minotaurs, the real might of his army, are too valuable to throw away. I suspect Vogrim is trying alternate methods—like sterilizing the goblins—until his army is strong enough to sweep across the land.”

“Starting with the goblins,” I said.

Ulenor nodded. “Starting with the goblins. I hate to admit it, but we’re the easiest target. We’re small and prefer peace. The

elves would be much more difficult opponents, and the orcs won't stop fighting until the last one is dead."

"Hopefully I won't ever have to fight any orcs," I said. They sounded particularly nasty.

"Let's hope," Ulenor said. "But like I was saying, this happened roughly a year ago. We have scouts patrolling the area north of Gillamoor regularly, and one of them found a small raiding party."

"Was this Sergeant Nerras?" I asked.

"Yes, it was," Ulenor replied. "He intercepted a raiding party of a minotaur and a dozen lizardfolk. A force that large simply can't be fought by one goblin alone, but there was no time to send for backup. They were closing in on a farm."

I already knew where this was going, but I listened, fascinated, as Ulenor told the story.

"It's hard to get the story out of Nerras. If you ask him, he'll just mumble something about doing his job and change the subject. But, as it happens, Gus was flying about at that time, and I saw the whole thing through his eyes.

"To this day, I have never seen anything like it. As Vogrim's minions closed in on the farm, killing sheep and scattering chickens in the process, Nerras charged them. Using his horse as a weapon, he trampled several of the lizardfolk, then cut the rest down with his spear. All that was left was the minotaur.

"The minotaur killed his horse with a single blow and knocked Nerras to the ground with a broken leg. Unfazed, he pulled

himself across the bloody ground toward the minotaur.”

“Hold on, Nerras fought a minotaur while he had a broken leg?” I asked. That man truly was crazy. Although, when survival was at stake, extreme measures had to be taken.

Ulenor nodded. “It was painful to watch, Andrew. It gave me nightmares for a week. The minotaur walked over to Nerras, ready to crush him. Nerras responded with a spear thrust right into the minotaur’s groin. Bellowing loudly in pain, the minotaur stomped its hoof down, shattering Nerras’s other leg.”

I winced. “Jesus, that sounds awful.”

“It was,” Ulenor said. “But Nerras would not be stopped so easily. With the minotaur standing above him, he thrust his spear into the minotaur over and over, until the ground was soaked in blood. The giant beast crashed onto the ground, narrowly missing Nerras, and cried out in agony. Nerras cast his spear aside and pulled out his knife, then went to work.”

“Went to work? Ugh, somehow it just got more awful.”

Ulenor swallowed heavily. “I just hope speaking of it doesn’t bring back my nightmares. He stabbed the minotaur everywhere he could reach, then used the knife as a handle to pull himself on top of the huge monster. The minotaur struck Nerras with its massive fists, nearly knocking him unconscious, but Nerras never stopped stabbing and cutting. It was hard to discern what was going on with how much blood covered them both, but Nerras eventually rammed his knife into the minotaur’s neck, killing him.”

“Holy shit,” I said. “I knew he was a tough guy, but I never would have guessed that.”

“Well, there was still the family shuttered up in the farmhouse,” Ulenor said. “Nerras wanted to make sure they were okay, so he dragged himself, broken and bloody, a hundred yards across the dirt until he got to their front door, where he finally passed out.”

“What happened?” I asked.

“They opened the door and found him there, and the father of the family got on his horse and rode into town to find a healer. Nerras was brought back to Gillamoor and his wounds were healed. Colonel Chuleel and Mayor Beezle awarded him.... Well, I don’t understand military awards. They gave him a medal for his bravery.”

“So wait, why isn’t he a scout any longer?” I asked. Seems like that would be the best place for a guy like that.

“Oh, he wanted to remain a scout, but even after his injuries were healed they pained him for many months. He couldn’t move as quickly as he used to, so his commander pulled him back into Gillamoor and had him train the other soldiers. They tried to promote him further, but he flat-out refused.”

“Huh,” I said as I craned my neck to see the rear of the caravan. Nerras was back there, inspecting the soldiers’ camp. I looked at him with a newfound respect.

“If you plan on bringing people with you on your journey, Nerras would be one of the best men in all of Brovania to

accompany you,” Ulenor said.

“Yeah, sounds like it,” I said. “I haven’t planned that far into the future yet, although I need to. Right now, I’m focused on defending Gillamoor in about three weeks.”

“And I imagine you’re focused on some other things as well,” Ulenor said with a grin.

“Yeah, there’s that,” I said with a laugh. “I imagine my week in York will be pretty busy. But hey, that’s why you brought me to your world.”

A drop of rain struck me on the nose and I looked up. Dark clouds were passing over us. At first I thought Vogrim’s curse might be following our caravan, but then I remembered that his rain came from clouds that stayed over the cities. This looked like natural rain, that would pass soon.

Men at both ends of the caravan ordered workers to erect the tents with haste. Goblins scrambled about, pitching tents as quickly as possible, all of them smiling at the light rain. After years of poison, I supposed the notion of fresh, natural rain was quite nice. Truth be told, I even saw a few people laughing and dancing in the soft rain.

“Do your people dance?” Lossia asked.

I nearly leaped out of my skin at her sudden question. With me focusing on the celebration around me, I hadn’t heard her approach.

“Yeah, we dance. Some people even do it quite well,” I told her.

“And you?” she asked with a slight raise of her eyebrow.

“I, uh.... Well, I try my best,” I said and held out a hand.

She placed her slender hand in mine and I pulled her to me. With our bodies close I began moving in some imitation of the tango mixed with that generic side-to-side slow dance that most people do. Lossia was a feather in my arms, and swayed her hips along with her movements. She smiled up at me the entire time.

Several bystanders began clapping their hands and stomping their feet in what sounded suspiciously like a waltz. Soon after, an older woman—the one that had handed me apples the day before—began singing in a throaty voice, and the others took it up.

It was a happy song, about rich forests and clear rivers. A song about being one with nature. That’s about what I should have expected; it’s not like the goblins would be yelling Slayer lyrics at us.

Lossia laughed as she twirled around, her incredible skill at dancing making my two left feet look passably good. With a partner like this, I could probably get used to dancing on a regular basis.

When we were done I pulled her in for a tight hug, and she laid her head against my chest and laughed.

“Oh, that was fun, even though you’re not a good dancer. I haven’t done that in quite some time,” she said, then looked up



at me. “Maybe soon we can dance every day, after all this is done.”

“Soon, my love,” I said, looking into her big green eyes. I hadn’t intended to call her that; the words just slipped out. I guess I was really feeling the moment.

Either way, it had been the right thing to say. Lossia’s smile deepened and her cheeks colored slightly. She stretched up onto her toes and kissed me softly. The people that had been clapping and singing dispersed, probably thinking I was getting ready to impregnate her.

“How are things going in your camp?” I asked.

“Oh, fine,” she replied. “We have a lot to do, you know. We weren’t chosen just to breed with you; we’re actually helping to plan the future of the goblin people.”

Oh, how I wanted Vogrim to be dead already so I could just enjoy a peaceful life with my wives.

“There is a lot of planning,” she continued. “We use the talking glasses to go over details with my father, and with the mayor of Holmar as well as Mayor Beezle.” Her arms wrapped around my waist and she laid her head against my chest. “You’re doing well, but you’re only one man. You can only do so much.”

I wasn’t entirely sure what she meant. “You mean...”

“I mean you need to breed with women from every city and town,” Lossia continued, still holding me tightly. “You got a good start here in Gillamoor, which helps. More women from

Gillamoor left for York just a few days before us. Holmar is sending women as well, and most of the towns are sending a few. That way, your curse-resistant children will be spread all over Brovania.” She looked up at me again. “Makes a lot more sense than your children only being in one city.”

And then, right at that moment when I was holding Lossia in the rain, I realized exactly what I wanted. My body felt warm—I was a little chilly due to the rain, but inside my heart I was warm. This woman barely knew me but she was trying her hardest to love me. She knew we would spend our years together and she wanted them to be enjoyable.

I was happy. With Lossia in my arms, I was content.

I leaned down and kissed her softly, then folded her into a tight embrace. I didn’t know what to say to her, so I just held her. She sighed and squeezed me tightly. It was a simple moment but utterly satisfying.

That night, after everyone was settled on their bedrolls, she came to visit me again. As with the night before, she wore a sheer robe and rubbed her big tits all over me, then fell asleep in my arms. I kissed the top of her head and slept like a baby.

The days passed surprisingly quickly. Every morning, as soon as I woke, I used magic to extinguish the fire and help me with my chores. I felt the tiniest bit stronger than the day before, and Ulenor said my strength would continue to grow daily. Using it as often as I did, he said it would grow in leaps and bounds.

On day three we passed a large field of wildflowers. Spying some red ones, I tapped into my magical well and grabbed a handful, then brought them to me. Half of them didn't survive the journey—I was still a bit heavy-handed with magic, it seemed—but ultimately I was left with four bright red flowers that were relatively unharmed. Ulenor smiled the entire time I was doing it. He knew what I was up to.

Later that day I hopped off the wagon and walked next to the one behind me, the wagon containing my future wives. Well, I tried to walk. They were traveling at an odd pace that was somewhere between a fast walk and a slow jog, so I probably looked like an idiot as I hobbled along next to it.

“Thilli!” I called out.

The canvas side of the wagon raised, and Thilli watched me with wide eyes.

“What are you doing, Andrew? Get back in your wagon before you trip and fall,” she said, but her eyes drifted to the flowers with mild amusement.

I reached towards her and handed her the flowers. She accepted them and her face broke into a bright smile.

“I hope you like them,” I told her, giving her my best smile.

Cirro’s head popped into view. She looked at Thilli, then saw the flowers. Cirro looked at me and winked, then sat back down.

“I just wanted you to know that I’ve been thinking about you,” I told Thilli. I gave her another smile, then sped up and jogged back to my wagon.

I pulled myself into the wagon and crawled over the supplies in the back, then made my way to the seat.

“How did she take it?” Ulenor asked.

“I think she really liked them,” I said.

“That was a good idea,” Ulenor said. “Using magic for simple tasks like that can be a great way to improve your control.”

“I need to learn quickly, so I’m doing everything I can,” I told him. “I have two weeks until I’ll be back in Gillamoor to help defend the city.”

Ulenor sighed. “Yes, yes, don’t remind me. I looked through Gus’s eyes earlier. He’s still tracking Vogrim’s minions.”

“That reminds me,” I began. “How did minotaurs come to be? I can’t understand how something like that would evolve naturally.”

“That happened many years ago,” Ulenor said. “Thousands of years ago. You remember when I told you that gods were not allowed to directly interact with mortals?” I nodded, and Ulenor continued. “Well, one of them did exactly that.”

“So he created minotaurs and then got punished?”

“No,” Ulenor said, shaking his head. “He did something else and was punished. I do not remember exactly what he did to anger Selemis, but when he was told that he was to be punished, he sought revenge against the elder god. He took the crestalins, a tall, beautiful people, called hill giants by some, and blended them with their own livestock out of spite. He created an entirely new race, just to get revenge.”

I whistled. “So why didn’t Selemis change them back? I mean, he clearly has the power to do that.”

“Yes, yes, but then he would be breaking his own rules,” Ulenor explained. “Selemis is a stickler for rules. He wouldn’t even break them to save his favorite race, though it pained his heart to see them so horribly mutated. And so, the minotaurs were created.”

“Okay, so how did they become evil?”

“That took time,” Ulenor said, his voice turning grave. “In their early days they separated into tribes and often fought skirmishes and battles against each other. Sometimes one warrior would rise up and bind several tribes together in an attempt to create a kingdom. It never lasted long.”

“Until Vogrim, right?” I asked.

“Until Vogrim,” Ulenor confirmed. “Never before had there been a sorcerer with such raw magical strength, or one with such a lust for power. No one could stand against him. In less than a year, all minotaurs had pledged allegiance to him. There were several assassination attempts in those early days.”

I barked a laugh. “I’ll bet those ended poorly.”

Ulenor nodded. “The would-be assassins were blinded, their tongues cut out, and then they were crucified publicly. Since then, the minotaurs have followed Vogrim’s every command. He has gathered them into one nation, a strong nation, and one at his beck and call.”

“When I kill Vogrim, what do you think the chances are of liberating the minotaurs? Of keeping them together as a nation, but ruling themselves, and preferably in a peaceful manner.” They deserved at least that much. Everyone did.

Ulenor frowned. “Not very likely. From day one, war was all they knew. They’ve never known peace; even now, they train daily to invade other countries.”

Now it was my turn to frown. “We’re not setting me up to commit genocide, are we?”

“No, no, nothing like that,” Ulenor said. “When you defeat Vogrim, they’ll likely go back to their old ways. They’ll be too busy fighting each other to bother anyone else. When you take into consideration how slowly they breed, after the first few battles they’ll probably stop. They can’t afford to lose many bodies.”

“Man, that’s rough,” I said. “Killing Vogrim is obviously a good thing, but then we’re just basically abandoning the minotaurs afterwards. Not sure how I feel about that.”

“Perhaps you will understand better after dealing with them,” Ulenor replied. “No race is inherently evil, but the minotaurs come close. They clash and fight over everything. Only fear of Vogrim keeps them in line.”

“I guess we’ll have to see,” I said. I had dealt with bad people before; in fact, I had spent a year in the Middle East doing exactly that. I was a big believer in giving everyone a chance. But the reality was that some people simply didn’t want peace. People like that would never be happy.

I spent the rest of the day working on my magical powers. At that point in time my limiting factor was how little I could handle before I became exhausted, so I practiced exactly that. After pulling deeply on my magical well, as much power as I could hold, I created a great gust of wind that shook the trees and littered the forest floor with leaves.

As soon as I stopped pulling from my magical well, exhaustion washed over me. I curled up in the back of the

wagon and told Ulenor to wake me after an hour, then fell into a deep sleep.

I quickly learned that an hour wasn't quite enough sleep for how tired I was. When Ulenor woke me, I still had a grainy tiredness behind my eyes. Still, I forced myself to go back to my seat, then go through the motions again.

Tapping into my magical well when I was exhausted was notably more difficult. It was like trying to grab a wet fish that kept slipping out of my hands and splashing back into the lake. I took a firm hold on my magical power and pulled as much into me as I dared—there was an edge this time, almost painful. Ulenor must have noticed the look on my face, for he spoke up.

“You must be careful using magic when you are this tired, Andrew,” he warned. “If you overdo it, it's possible to actually burn the ability right out of you.”

“Well, shit,” I said, and reduced the amount of magic I held. I wanted to gain power as quickly as possible, but there was no sense in being risky.

I turned and faced the treeline. So far, I had worked more with water and air than anything else, but that was for safety's sake. While I was sure I could create a gout of flame that would incinerate a small tree, that simply wasn't safe when riding on a wooden wagon.

Instead, I focused on pulling water from the soil again. It was a simple task but required a great deal of effort; separating that many individual droplets of water and combining them taxed



my mental resources heavily. I managed to pull enough water from the ground to fill a small bucket, then released it with a splash.

“Give me two hours this time,” I told Ulenor, and went to sleep again.

When Ulenor woke me after two hours, I was still not but not as badly as before. I turned it into a cycle that I repeated all day; use my magic until I was exhausted, sleep until the exhaustion was mostly gone, wash, rise, repeat. It left little room for anything else, but it was the fastest way to attain my goal.

“I need to start practicing with fire,” I told Ulenor that evening. “Or electricity, perhaps; you would probably call that lightning, I suppose. I need something more offensive than just air and water.”

Ulenor studied me for a moment. “You can cripple an entire army with nothing but air and water if you know how to apply it,” he told me. “Imagine pulling the air out of a hundred men’s lungs, or pulling water from their body.”

“That’s possible?” I asked.

He nodded. “With enough power, and sufficient understanding of how things work, almost anything is possible.”

The wizard’s words rang clearly in my thoughts. I had already learned that I could control gravity. What else was possible? While I didn’t have a ton of spare time in my immediate future, I had to make sure I spent some time figuring that out.

The evenings became my favorite time. Each evening I used my powers to light a small fire, then I would talk with Ulenor over dinner. Once our food was finished, I would usually talk with the ladies for a bit before tiredness pulled me back to my bedroll. And then every night, like clockwork, a few minutes after I laid down, Lossia would slip under the covers with me. She would grab me and stroke me and I would kiss her and squeeze her juicy thick ass until we both fell asleep.

The day before we were supposed to arrive in York, something interesting happened.

As soon as we made camp I noticed my future wives arguing with each other. At least, that's what I initially thought. They were certainly debating something, although when they were done Cirro hugged the other two women tightly, and they were all smiles. Lossia even spent a few minutes kissing her.

Whatever they were talking about, I found myself wishing I had been there for it.

I crawled into my bedroll and pulled my blanket up to my chin, eagerly awaiting Lossia's curves. The sun had just set and everyone was in their tents or asleep in their bedrolls, so the camp was quiet. I was able to hear Lossia's soft footsteps as she padded across the grass towards me.

I couldn't help but smile as she knelt next to me. After a long day, holding her tightly was exactly what I needed.

Except it wasn't Lossia. It was Cirro.

She wore a thin robe, just as Lossia had, that gave more than a subtle peek at the treasures that lay beneath. Her robe fell to the ground with a swift gesture, and she slid beneath the blanket with me. I opened my mouth to ask why she was here instead of Lossia—not that I minded, certainly—and she kissed me.

Now, I had kissed plenty of women over the past week, but this was different. Cirro was hot, almost overwhelmed with desire. I could feel the heat from her crotch against my thigh. Her slender hand snaked down the front of my pants and grasped my manhood, which was already fully erect.

“Take this off,” she said, tugging at my pants. I happily obliged, and she helped pull my shirt off as well.

Only a few seconds after she had slipped into bed with me, we were lying naked with each other. Cirro looked up at me. A range of emotions were displayed in her big brown eyes.

“I want you to understand something, Andrew,” Cirro said as she reached down and took hold of my manhood. “I grew up very poor. I’ve never had much, and I’ve never been worth much. But now, I matter. This is important to me.” She continued stroking me.

“Are you,” I began. “Are we going to....” I had been so certain that I had to wait another few weeks before I could have any of them, so I was caught completely off guard.

“Yes, Andrew,” Cirro replied. “I want you to get me pregnant. Tonight.”

With that, she licked her fingertips, then wiped them between her legs. After that she threw a thigh over me so that she was straddling me. She reached behind herself and grabbed onto the base of my shaft, then lined it up with her wet opening and sank down on it.

I had been with my share of women and enjoyed each one. Over the past week, I had experienced the joys of goblin women, and they were quite wonderful. But I had never in my life felt anything as incredible as Cirro's wet pussy.

Her eyes were squeezed shut as she worked herself down to the base of my shaft. Once she got there, she took a deep breath and held herself in place for a moment.

“Sorry, you're just really big,” she said. “It's taking me a moment.”

I didn't mind. Being inside her was like being inside heaven itself.

My hands went to her curvy hips and I squeezed and caressed them while bending my neck down so I could kiss her. Cirro was a very passionate kisser, and that was on full display at the moment. Soon after, she began sliding up and down on my cock, a little bit at first, then longer strokes. She winced a few times, so I took it easy on her.

“Promise me you'll stay with us,” Cirro said, wrapping her arms around me. “I want you to stay here in Brovania, once everything is done.”

My hands slid down to her perfectly round ass and I gave it a hefty squeeze. I was moving a bit faster now, thrusting in and out of her with long, full strokes.

“I’m not going anywhere,” I told her between kisses. “And I’m not leaving any of you. It’ll be the four of us, forever.”

I felt her lips curve into a smile as they pressed against mine. I bent my knees and got a good grip on her ass, then started thrusting more aggressively into her. She gasped, then covered her mouth with a hand and looked around. No one seemed to have heard anything, and I was doing my best to be quiet.

My hands moved from her perfect ass up to her tiny waist, where I gripped her tightly while pumping myself in and out of her. Her breasts bounced up and down with each thrust, so I leaned forward and took one of her nipples in my mouth. She bit her lower lip and moaned softly while I licked and sucked on her dark green nipple.

As tight as she was, there was no way I could last long. I felt that familiar tingle as I passed the point of no return and started pounding her good and hard. Cirro must have realized that I was about to cum, as she grabbed my face with both hands and kissed me hard, almost aggressively. Her tongue flooded into my mouth just as I flooded her pussy with my cum. It had been a few days, so my load was massive; I squirted deep inside her again and again. Our sweat-slicked bodies pressed against each other, Cirro holding me tightly and my hands squeezing her bubble butt so hard I may have bruised it.

Cirro collapsed on top of me, breathing hard against my chest. One of her hands reached up and she twirled my hair with her slender fingers.

My hands went from her ass to her lower back as I wrapped my arms tightly around her. I could have stayed in that moment for hours and been happy.

“We have to learn to love each other,” Cirro said, straightening up just enough so that she could look me in the eye. “If we’re going to spend all these years together, then it has to be real. We have to put effort into it.”

I pulled her back to me and she tucked her head beneath my chin. One of my hands gently stroked her hair, while my other hand went straight to her ass like a magnet. My cock had gone soft, but it was still inside her.

“I have a feeling loving you is going to be easy,” I told her. “All of you, even Thilli.”

“She really likes you, you know,” Cirro said, snuggling against me. “I think she’s just concerned about our future, and about Vogrim. But you’re going to take care of all that for us, right?” She wiggled her hips slightly, and I squeezed her butt cheek in return.

“I’ll take care of everything,” I told her, and I meant it. “I’ll do whatever it takes.”

“Good,” Cirro replied. “Because right now what it’s going to take is you getting me pregnant.”

She leaned up and kissed me again, and after a few minutes my cock, still inside her, started to rise. With a smile, Cirro started riding me again.

I didn't sleep much that night, not that I'm complaining. Cirro insisted on draining every bit of sperm in my balls, so we made love two more times before she finally let me go to sleep, then she woke me twice in the middle of the night and early in the morning and demanded I fill her up again. She slept in my arms, much like Lossia had. Once again, I found myself incredibly happy, more than I ever had been.

The next morning when she went back to her wagon she walked a bit funny, but the other two women embraced her and held her tightly. Both Thilli and Lossia shot glances at me over Cirro's shoulders, suggesting they wanted their turns soon.

I was ready.

Six days into our journey, the forest ended and the road continued on a broad plain that stretched from horizon to horizon. I was excited to see York, and I told Ulenor that.

“Well, we still have a couple days so for now let’s focus on your magic,” he said.

“Hold on,” I said, raising my hands. “Aren’t we arriving in York tomorrow?”

“No,” Ulenor said, shaking his head. “In two days. The trip is a week long.”

“Exactly, it’s a week long.” I ran my fingers through my hair. “Shit, I should have guessed this. Ulenor, how many days are in a week here?”

He gave me an odd look. “Eight, of course.”

“And how many weeks in a month? Months in a year?”

“Four weeks in a month, eleven months in a year,” he replied.

“Is it not the same back in your world?”



I laughed. I couldn't help it, it just slipped right out. "No, not at all," I told him. "Back in my world, we have seven days in a week. Each month is either thirty or thirty-one days, except for February, which is twenty-eight days. Every four years, February is twenty-nine days. A year is three hundred and sixty-five days."

Ulenor blinked. "Who thought of that system? Were they trying to make it intentionally difficult?"

I shrugged. "Sometimes I think humans enjoy making things difficult. But in the end, I guess our orbital period is just slightly longer than yours."

Ulenor raised an eyebrow, so I explained further.

"Your planet orbits around the sun," I began, and Ulenor nodded his head.

"Yes, yes, I know this, although it's not yet widely taught. Many people still believe the sun revolves around our planet, but of course, that is not so. I've spoken with Mayor Beezle about it and explained it to him, and he has agreed that we should teach our children the truth. In fact, while we're in York I will be speaking with the king in an attempt to persuade him that this should be taught in all schools in Brovania. If something can be proven with evidence, then it's worth teaching; that's my opinion."

"When scientists discovered that in my world, no one believed them," I told him. "In fact, the guy that discovered that our Earth orbited the sun was seen as an enemy to the church at the time, and he was punished for it."

Ulenor nodded slowly. “The goblin people wouldn’t do that, but sometimes they’re resistant to change.” He smiled. “No one’s perfect, after all. Not even goblins.”

I chuckled and looked behind us. Back there sat three women that were about as close to perfect as women could be.

I wanted to spend the rest of my time improving my magical abilities, so I steered our conversation in that direction.

“Hey Ulenor. Now that we’re out of the forest, do you think I can safely practice with fire? Or do you think that needs a special area to work in?”

The old wizard stroked his beard for a moment. “I would generally recommend being out in the open for something such as that. Preferably with a healer nearby, and a water source. But I suppose we can try, as long as you’re careful.”

The canvas sides of the wagon were still tied up to let air pass through, so I leaned out and extended my hand, palm up. Tapping into my magical well, I drew just enough power into myself to make this work; I didn’t want to burn the wagon down, after all. I focused on the space above my hand and increased the energy until a tiny flame appeared. I immediately released it and pulled my hand back.

“Hot, isn’t it?” Ulenor asked. “Next time, make the flame start a few inches above your hand instead of right in your palm.”

I grabbed a nearby water skin and pressed the cool material against my red palm. “Perhaps today will be a good day for me to learn healing,” I said.

“I have a feeling you’ll need it,” Ulenor said with a grin. “Let’s get you safely making fire, first.”

I leaned back over the edge of the wagon and held my hand out. The skin of my palm was red and angry, but at least it wasn’t blistered. I began to focus on the space a few inches above my hand when Ulenor spoke again.

“You know,” he began. “There are different ways to do this. Some sorcerers essentially will the fire into existence, and feed their will with magical power. You might have more control over it this way. Imagine pulling the fire directly from your magical well, that works for some people as well.”

Willing fire into existence certainly seemed easier than willing more heat energy into an area until it burst into flame. Simple methods were often the best, so I did just that. I angled my palm until it was facing out, then tried to produce fire. I pulled power from my magical well and made myself feel fire coming from within, from my very soul.

My body almost seemed to heat up, and a gout of flame five feet long suddenly blasted from my palm. This time, my skin didn’t burn.

I released the fire and sat back, tired. Now, I felt more like a weapon, better able to handle the force approaching Gillamoor. It would take some time and lots of practice to be able to use it in combat, but I felt the first, most important step had been taken.

“That was good, good,” Ulenor said. “Splendid, in fact. Fire is a very dangerous thing to use, so I must preach caution.”

I turned around to face Ulenor. My palm still hurt from my first attempt at creating fire above my hand. “I want to heal this,” I told him.

“Feel free to try,” Ulenor replied. “Healing takes a lot of control and focus. You have to find the life force, the very essence of life itself, and use that. Force the wound to close. Make the blood stop leaking out. Order the skin to regrow.”

“Time to get bossy, I guess,” I said, still staring at my palm. “Here goes nothing.”

I tapped into my magical well and pulled as much power as I thought I’d need, then set my mind to searching. I tried to locate this life force that Ulenor spoke of. I was a bit more science-minded, so I mostly fumbled as I searched with my invisible tendrils. What was life, after all? Was it a force? Some kind of power? Or was life just an illusion created by our consciousness?

Whatever it was, I found something. It was within me, surging with every heartbeat, bright and strong. Grabbing onto this force was like trying to grip an oily piece of metal, so I encouraged it instead, and pushed it towards my hand.

The red, angry skin on my palm began to fade into pale, fresh skin. A thin layer peeled off, the translucent top layer that had been damaged. Beyond everything else, it itched something fierce. But most importantly, the skin on my hand looked fresh and new after only a few seconds.

“I should warn you that healing magic is especially tiring,” Ulenor began.

I released the power from my magical well and promptly fell to the floor of the wagon, barely catching myself before my head smashed into the floorboards. And just like that, I passed out.

When Ulenor shook me awake, I felt as if I had only been asleep for a few minutes. As I blinked the blurriness from my eyes, I saw that the sun was near its horizon. I had slept almost the entire day away. Fortunately, I was still tired enough to sleep that night.

“Why am I so tired?” I asked as I crawled into my seat in the wagon.

“Because you healed yourself,” Ulenor explained. “This is something new that you haven’t done before, and you’re still new to magic, so it’s natural that you’re exhausted from it. But it goes a step further than that. You were also the target of healing magic. Your body just regrew that skin on your hand, which took energy.”

“A double whammy,” I said.

“I’m not entirely sure what that means, but I think you’ve got it right,” Ulenor replied. “I don’t recommend you hurt yourself just for practice, but healing yourself is especially taxing. Our healers are some of our strongest magic users, specifically so they have the strength to heal critical injuries if need be. Even they would struggle to heal, let’s say a stab wound to their own stomach. They’d be asleep for an entire day afterward.”

“Noted,” I said. I needed to find a way to practice healing as much as possible; out of all the things I could do with magic,

being able to keep myself alive was at the top of my list. Considering that healing a small burn had put me out for hours, I had a long way to go.

That night started much like the rest. I talked with Ulenor about magic and the differences between wizards and sorcerers while we ate our dinner. I both lit and extinguished our small fire with magic, noting that I already felt a fraction stronger. Ulenor brewed some herbal tea afterwards, of which I enjoyed every drop.

When all that was done, we settled into our bedrolls. Ulenor fell asleep almost immediately, while I laid there for a few minutes with my hands behind my head. One of my future wives would be coming to spend the night with me in a few minutes.

I just didn't expect to see Thilli.

She walked differently than Lossia or Cirro, so I recognized her as she approached even before I could see her face. There was no mistaking that militant stride.

As she walked closer, I pushed myself up into a seated position. I expected to see the stern expression that she had worn so much lately, but she looked softer, more relaxed.

"Good evening, Thilli," I told her.

"Hi, Andrew," she said as she knelt next to me. "Are you doing okay? You were asleep in the back of your wagon most of the day."

“Yeah, I’m fine,” I said. “I’ve just been pushing myself to learn magic as quickly as possible, so when I return to Gillamoor in two weeks I’ll be ready to fight. Today I tried my hand at healing, which wore me out.”

A frown creased Thilli’s smooth forehead. “So you’re only staying in York for a week?”

I nodded. “There’s a dozen minotaurs, some orcs, and some lizardfolk marching for Gillamoor right now. I intend to be there to help defend the city.”

“If you’re only in York for a week, you won’t be able to accomplish much,” she said.

She was really dead-set on having me impregnate as many women as possible. I reminded myself that the future of the goblin race was at stake, and that was Thilli’s first priority.

“I’m sure everything will be fine,” I told her in a soothing voice. “Remember, I’m going to kill Vogrim.” I sighed. “Plus, to be honest, I’m looking forward to when it’s just us four, living a peaceful life somewhere.”

Thilli’s full lips twitched into a smile. “Are you really saying you’d rather be with us than have dozens or even hundreds of women throwing themselves at you?” She reached forward and placed her hand on my forehead. “No, no fever,” she said.

I chuckled. “Yeah I know, it sounds a bit crazy.” I reached out and took her hand, then pulled her to me. She let herself be pulled, and shuffled close to me so that our arms were around

each other. “I think we’re going to have a nice life together,” I said.

Thilli squeezed me tightly after hearing that. “Be careful,” she said. “You keep saying these nice things and I may actually start to believe you one day.”

“Soon,” I said, stroking her hair. I kissed her soft lips. “Soon, everything will be okay.”

She kissed me back, then pushed herself to her feet. “Have a good night and sleep well, Andrew,” she said, the corners of her mouth twitching into an amused smile.

As I watched her walk away, I wondered what was so funny. A few minutes later, Cirro arrived and slid into bed with me. I definitely didn’t sleep well, but I certainly had a good night.



I did my best to ignore the dull ache behind my eyes as I sat on the wagon seat, gently rocking side to side. I lost count of how many times Cirro and I had made love last night, but I'm pretty sure it was a new personal record. That woman was determined to get pregnant. Well, that and she just plain enjoyed sex. Either way, no complaints here.

"So, what are we learning today?" I asked.

"You had mentioned lightning, so I thought we might practice it a bit." Ulenor leaned his head out of the wagon and looked at the sky. "We've got a few clouds, so I think we can do it. Lightning is tricky, though. The weather needs to be right, and you need to be cautious of the distance. Like right now, you need to summon a lightning bolt as far away as possible, so you don't scare the horses too badly."

"So, is there a limit to the distance at which I can cast a spell?" I asked as I turned toward the outside and looked across the expansive grasslands that surrounded us.

“I am not aware of a specific distance to which you’re limited,” Ulenor replied. “You have to be able to see your target, that much I know. Try to focus on something far away. There, do you see that small tree out there? The one on that low hill.”

I squinted and saw a scraggly tree far off on the plain. It was far enough away that I could barely discern it, although I was able to clearly make out the cloud above it. With a nod to Ulenor, I tapped into my magical well and pulled power into myself. Working at that distance was incredibly difficult, but I focused on the tree and poured my power into the area, focusing on creating a lightning bolt. Nothing happened, so I pulled deeper on my magical well.

Finally, with a bright flash of light and a thunderous crack, the smallest bolt of lightning I had ever seen zapped right down the center of the tree, splitting it in two. The horses whinnied and people gasped as the rumbling thunder roared across our caravan.

Even from this distance I could see smoke rising from a small fire where the tree had once stood. Gathering more strength, I pulled water from the air surrounding us, forcing the humidity together until a ball of pure water appeared in the air. I pushed the water toward the site of the lightning strike and it steadily grew as I pulled more water into it.

Judging the exact location at that distance was beyond my capabilities, so I flattened the ball of water into a disc fifty feet in diameter, then dropped it on the flames. My aim had only

been off by a tiny bit, so the water extinguished the fire immediately.

“Disaster averted,” I said as I released my hold on my magical well. Immediately after, I staggered in my seat and had to grip the side of the wagon to keep from falling over. “Man, I’m getting tired of this happening,” I muttered as I lowered myself to the floor. Sleep overtook me the moment my head touched the floorboards.

Ulenor shook me awake some time later. I rubbed the sleep from my eyes and crawled into my seat. I was still a bit tired, but nothing major.

“Why was I so tired? That was almost as bad as healing myself,” I asked.

“Working at a distance like that is incredibly taxing,” Ulenor replied. “However, with you repeatedly pushing yourself to the limit, I think you’ll be able to use your magic in a few basic ways without being too tired in, oh, let’s say about two weeks.”

“Good timing,” I said wryly. “Although the last thing I want to do is cast a spell, then fall asleep with a sword in my hand.”

Ulenor chuckled. “You’ll have to choose your powers and your timing wisely. I think you being in a support role might be a better use of your powers than directly attacking.”

I shrugged. “Well, if I can set the lot of them on fire, then it won’t matter if I pass out afterwards. They’ll all be dead.”

“Yes, yes, I suppose that’s a good point,” Ulenor conceded. “I just want you to be careful, that’s all.” He leaned forward and looked over the driver’s shoulder, then turned back to me with a smile. “For now, you should save your strength. We’re approaching York, and I would hate for you to miss it.”

Gillamoor was somewhere between a large town and a small city and it was beautiful, so I fully expected to be blown away by York. We were still a few hours away, so the countryside was dotted with farms. A herd of cows silently chewed their cud while watching our caravan pass by, and a flock of black-faced sheep stared at us with interest.

This far out, the farms were vast, probably dozens of acres. Goblin farmers and their sons worked some of the fields, with oxen or horses pulling plows through the soil. Many of them stopped to watch us go by—we were clearly important, although there was no outward sign that the future of the goblin race was contained within the caravan.

As we got closer to the city, the farms grew smaller and more tightly packed. Many of them looked to be little more than an acre or two in size. A few large houses sat in the distance, made from brick and stone with tiled roofs at sharp angles visible over the walls and high fences that surrounded them.

“Some of the local lords have their houses out here,” Ulenor explained when he saw me staring at the mansions. “A peaceful home, away from the hustle and bustle of the city.”

More quiet farms filled the area, then small houses started to cover the land. Many of them were single-story, made from

brick or stone or heavy timbers but all made well with a small but tidy yard surrounding. A dog barked at us until its owner came forward and pulled him away.

I looked in front of our convoy and finally saw my first glimpse of York. Tall walls of stone surrounded it, just like I imagined some medieval city. Above the crenelated tops of the walls towering spires reached for the sky, and several banners streamed in the wind. I assumed those banners were of Brovania and the king himself.

“Ah yes, York,” Ulenor said, smiling. “Such a beautiful city. I’ve always loved coming here.”

As we drew closer, the yards became smaller and the houses taller. Most were two stories, with a few reaching three; no small feat considering the level of technology they possessed and that these houses were built by hand. Further away from the city walls many of the houses had thatch roofs, but as we drew closer tile roofs became more popular until they were all that I saw. Most were in a clay-brown color that I expected, but some roof tiles glittered in shades of blue and green.

A river had been paralleling the road for the last few hours, and it drew closer as we approached the city. Several houses were built near the banks of the river, usually with low walls in front to help protect from potential floods. Three large waterwheels sat in the river at broad intervals, turning slowly.

“Andrew,” Nerras called out, and I turned to find his horse riding next to our wagon.

“Hey Nerras, is everything okay?” I asked.

He nodded. “Everything’s fine. I just wanted to let you and Ulenor know that we’re heading straight for the keep and nowhere else.”

“Thank you, Nerras,” Ulenor said.

Nerras gave a brief nod, then slowed his horse to give the same message to my future wives in the wagon behind us.

I turned my gaze back to the city around us. The gatehouse was ahead, and the sight of it took my breath away.

I was used to things being nine-tenths scale due to goblins being a bit on the short side, so I wasn’t expecting the gatehouse to be so large. It was a massive thing made of heavy stone and was easily four or five stories tall. The gates themselves stood wide open, and were perhaps thirty feet tall and made of timbers a foot thick, banded with iron. They looked like they could withstand nearly anything.

From either side of the gatehouse, massive stone walls wrapped around the city. Archers peered at us between crenelations. Many people gave me odd stares, being the tall pale man that I was, but at least no one was rude about it.

As we entered the city, I gaped in wonder at the beauty of everything around me. Buildings made of pale stone soared into the sky, their roof tiles glittering in the sun. The road itself was stone, and smooth enough to make the ride pleasant, even on this wagon without suspension. People filled the streets, hurrying on errands or moving slowly around, and while they all had the green skin of goblins, their hair and eyes were as varied as a wildflower field. I saw green eyes and pink hair

and blue eyes and white hair and everything between. It was like a rainbow of people.

I twisted in my chair and looked behind me. As I expected, Lossia took it all in stride; having been raised here, none of this was new. Cirro's mouth hung open as she stared at the city around here.

Ulenor tapped my knee, so I turned to face him.

"Wait until you see the keep," the old wizard said, stroking his beard. He was smiling at me, amused at the wonder in my eyes.

"Hey, Ulenor," I began as something suddenly dawned on me. "I think you're the only goblin I've seen with a beard. Why is that?"

He shifted in his seat. "I suppose I'm just a bit strange, that's all," he replied. "It is true that most goblin men prefer to be clean shaven. A number of them can't grow beards at all." He combed his fingers through his beard again. "I guess this is just a sign of pride." He punctuated that with a chuckle.

The crowded streets parted for our caravan and we passed through the city with ease. At some point in time, someone recognized the ladies in the wagon behind me. A voice started calling out "the Mothers!" and soon everyone took it up.

"Are you the one that's here to save us?" a young woman called out to me.

"It's him! We're all going to have children because of him!" another woman said, pointing at me.

A third woman matched her pace with my wagon and undid the laces of her top, showing her round breasts. “Please, will you take me?” she begged. “I’ll do anything, just choose me!”

I didn’t even know how to respond to that.

“I’ll let you do whatever you want, as long as you get me pregnant!” another woman shouted as she, too, bared her breasts at me.

I turned to look at the wagon behind me and saw Thilli standing there with her fists on her hips and a stern expression on her face. She pointed at one of the women and nodded. From the look on her face, there was no question as to what she was demanding I do.

“Think you can spend a few minutes in another wagon?” I asked Ulenor. “Looks like Thilli wants me to get a head start.”

Ulenor leaned back his head and roared with laughter. “Yes, yes, that’s fine Andrew, just fine. I’ll leave you be until we reach the keep. It will be nice to spend some time with the Mothers and catch up.” He pulled his spellbook out and thumbed through the pages, then began muttering a spell under his breath.

With a wink and a grin, Ulenor levitated from his seat and floated out the back of the wagon. Once in the open, he flew to the wagon behind mine and landed gently on the back, then sat next to Lossia.

I turned back to the crowd, which had grown to several dozen women all calling out for me. Most had bared at least their



breasts, but a few had pulled their dresses entirely off and were waving them in the air, trying to catch my attention.

Not wanting to overthink things, I reached down and took the hand of the woman nearest to the rear of the wagon and pulled her up. Like all goblin women, she was a beautiful thing, with a slender body and round breasts. Her hair was a shade of golden yellow and tossed in the wind as I pulled her into the back of the wagon.

“Oh, thank you!” she said and immediately threw her arms around me. Before I could even get a word in, she leaned up and kissed me as her hands went to the laces at the front of my pants. Within seconds she had them undone and was pushing my pants down to my knees.

“Hold on, hold on,” I said, stumbling back and laughing. I pulled my shirt off over my head and then took my shoes off. “What’s your name?” I asked.

“Sheema,” she replied, moving towards me. Her eyes were a vivid shade of yellow, brighter than her hair. It gave her a slightly wolf-like gaze, especially considering the predatory way she stared at my penis.

“I’m Andrew,” I told her. I finished removing my pants and set them aside. Cheers arose from women surrounding the wagon as they saw what was about to happen.

“Can’t say I’ve ever done this before,” I said to myself, and Sheema’s eyebrows rose.

“You’ve never been with a woman?” she asked, reaching out and taking my prick in her hands.

“Oh, I’ve done that plenty of times,” I said. “Just never in the back of a wagon while people cheered me on.”

“Oh. Yes, I suppose that is a bit strange,” she said, gently stroking me. “You’re our only hope, though. Everyone knows about you, and what you’re here to do. Which, again, thank you for choosing me. It’s a great honor.” She leaned forward and kissed me again, this time not so rushed.

I reached out and lifted her by her small waist, then set her on my lap. We kissed each other thoroughly, her tongue pressing against mine, and I let my hands roam all over her body, from her firm breasts to her round bottom.

A few minutes of kissing was apparently enough foreplay for her, for she slid off my lap and laid on the soft canvas sacks. Placing her hands behind her knees, she pulled her legs wide open and smiled at me.

I crawled towards her and gave her hairless pussy a lick, for if there was one thing I had learned, it was that goblin pussy tasted amazing. I didn’t think she wanted me down there for too long though, so after a few licks I kissed my way up her flat stomach, across her puffy nipples, up her neck, and finally to her lips. While kissing her, I reached down and grabbed the base of my shaft, then worked it inside her.

The crowd certainly appreciated that. They cheered me on as I thrust inside Sheema, which made it more than just a little bit awkward. In fact, in any other situation I think I wouldn’t have

been able to finish, but her pussy was so incredibly wet and tight that it was easy.

She squeezed her eyes shut and moaned, and I reminded myself that I was a lot bigger than goblin men and I had to take it easy. I paused for a moment, then worked myself in and out, slowly.

“Don’t slow down,” she said breathily.

I placed my hands on her supple thighs and pushed them as far apart as I could, then gave her long, deep strokes. One of her hands reached up and tangled in my hair, pulling my face towards hers. We kissed deeply and passionately as I pumped my rod into her. While the kissing was wonderful, this wasn’t making love. This was me racing for the finish line, to give her exactly what she wanted. And, remembering the crowd, what everyone wanted.

My body tensed up as I neared orgasm and Sheema’s face brightened with excitement.

“Cum inside me, Andrew!” she called out.

I continued thrusting deep and hard, and finally erupted inside her with a roar. Realizing that I was cumming, the crowd of women around my wagon broke out into loud shouts and cheers. I kept thrusting into her until I had squirted every last drop of cum, then collapsed on top of her.

Sheema’s arms wrapped around me and she held me tightly, whispering thanks into my ear. I tried to catch my breath, all the while silently laughing at the cheering crowd.

I rolled off of Sheema and rested on the canvas sacks for a moment. Sheema leaned over and kissed my cheek.

“Thanks again, Andrew,” she said, then climbed out of the wagon, dress in hand.

I watched her go, not only to admire her round bottom, but to see how the crowd reacted. They all cheered and hugged her, and someone lifted her above them. Soon she was basically crowd surfing.

“What kind of world have I come to?” I wondered aloud, and laughed.

Hard to really criticize people that were celebrating their entire race being saved, though. Nude crowd surfing and all.

Once I finished pulling my clothes back on I moved back to my seat, then grabbed a water skin and drank my fill. The cheering crowd followed us a little while longer, then mostly faded in the distance, probably celebrating Sheema's impending pregnancy.

"Man, that was...weird," I muttered to myself.

Ulenor floated back to our wagon, a wide grin plastered on your face. He set down easily in the back of the wagon, then walked to his seat and plopped down.

"Before you even ask, yes that was strange," I said as he opened his mouth. "I've definitely never had a crowd cheer me on as I had sex."

"You've also probably never been the savior of an entire race before," Ulenor added with a wink.

"Okay, you got me there," I said. "I just wasn't expecting that crowd."

“Yes, yes, but how would you expect people to act towards their savior?” Ulenor asked. “I’m sure it will pass as they get used to you. But I imagine your time in York will be filled with more of the same.”

“Goblin world problems,” I said, although I knew Ulenor wouldn’t get the joke.

“Oh, you’ll want to see this,” the old wizard said, leaning over the side of the wagon.

I twisted in my seat and looked out the side so I could get a better view. The castle keep loomed ahead, and it was absolutely mindblowing.

Thick stone walls that looked like they could stop a tank towered into the sky, with crenelations on top and towers set at regular intervals. The gates to the keep were smaller than the main city gate, but made of equally thick timbers and banded with black iron. Goblin guards in plate and mail armor flanked the gates, standing like statues with pikes perfectly vertical at their sides.

We slowed as we approached the gate, for one armored man stepped forward and held a hand up. Sergeant Nerras, still on horseback, approached the man and saluted him, which the man returned. The two talked for a moment, and Nerras pointed back to my wagon at one point. Finally, the man nodded and waved us through, and Nerras took his place back at the head of our convoy.

As we passed through the gates, I looked up. A dozen murderholes dotted the ceiling in the gatehouse, ensuring that

anyone that got this far would have a hard time making it any further.

I got a good look at the soldiers. Their well-maintained armor gleamed in the sun, and every one of them stood exactly the same. Hard eyes followed our caravan, but their heads didn't move.

“For a bunch of pacifists, you guys seem to produce well-disciplined soldiers,” I said to Ulenor. “You keep telling me how violence is so foreign to goblins, but so far I've been quite impressed by your military.”

He nodded at my comments. “Our forces are very small, but they take their work seriously. The soldiers you see in the keep are our very best, so I'm not surprised that they have made an impression on you.”

Once inside the gates, things were much different than the tightly packed, almost European looking city. Inside these walls, our path wrapped around the courtyard, in which a field of flowers had been planted in the pattern of the flag of Brovania.

The royal palace itself was a marvel, made of pale gray stone with pointed towers and spires reaching for the heavens. Blue roof tiles glimmered in the afternoon sun, and planter boxes beneath many windows held flowers of every color. The style of the palace reminded me of the late-medieval French style, with its clean lines and detailed craftsmanship.

“You guys really seem to love flowers,” I found myself saying aloud.

“Of course we do. Are humans not this way?” Ulenor replied.

I laughed. “Ah, we like flowers I guess, but you guys really take the cake here.” I looked at the royal palace again. “With architecture, too.”

Our caravan circled around the courtyard and stopped directly in front of the palace. It was a massive building, and I couldn’t even imagine how many rooms it contained in its five stories.

Guards flanked the marble stairs that led to the arched doors of the palace. A dozen goblins in clothing that identified them as royal servants of some sort waited at the foot of the stairs for us.

I climbed out of the wagon and offered Ulenor a hand, but he used one of his spells to float in the air and land softly on the ground. I hurried over to the wagon behind us and got there in time to help Lossia down. Thilli and Cirro already stood there.

“At least I got one of you,” I quipped.

“Be on your best behavior for my father,” Lossia said, giving me a hug. “He’s stern, but kind. He’ll be expecting a lot of you, and he doesn’t like to be disappointed.”

“Thanks for the heads up,” I said, and leaned down and kissed her.

Lossia took a step toward Thilli and Cirro, the latter reaching out and taking her hand with a smile. I walked back to Ulenor.

The old wizard reached into his robe and dug through his pockets for a few moments before producing a vial.



“Here, Andrew,” he said, handing me the vial. “Drink this. I made it before we left for the trip, for a time like this. Trust me, you’ll need it over the next week.”

“Sure thing,” I said, taking the vial from him. “Let me just drink this strange potion without asking anything about it.” I raised an eyebrow at him.

He threw up his hands and huffed. “It goes with your blessing from Zozella. It will make you stronger.”

I flicked the cork out of the tip of the vial and downed it in one gulp. Other than a slight warming, this potion was incredibly bland when compared to the last one. But, if I understood what he was saying correctly, I just drank super Viagra.

“So, you’re the man we’ve all heard so much about!” A goblin man in scarlet robes said as he hurried toward me. Golden embroidery climbed up his sleeves and continued around his chest and shoulders. “We’re all so happy to have you here, Andrew. Please, allow me to introduce myself. I am Torm, the royal steward. I’m sure you’re seeking rest after your long trip here, but if you’ll follow me, King Freg is quite eager to meet you first.”

“Well, who am I to keep a king waiting?” I asked, spreading my hands. “Lead the way.”

“I’ll be coming with him,” Ulenor said, taking a step forward. “There are some matters I must speak with him about.”

Torm bowed his head deeply to the wizard. “Of course, Ulenor. You are always an honored guest here. Please, both of

you, follow me. Our servants will take care of your belongings and your people.”

I turned to look at my future wives. Lossia smiled encouragingly at me and Thilli made a shooing motion, then winked.

It was difficult not to stare as we walked through the marble halls. Elaborate tapestries covered the walls, mostly depicting scenes of nature and Zozella. The tapestries with the goddess’ face seemed unnaturally beautiful and realistic, and I found myself wondering if goblin weavers were that talented or if the goddess herself had altered the tapestry the same way she made the statue back in Gillamoor.

Long rugs covered the marble floors, so Torm’s slippers feet didn’t make a sound. He led us through a maze of hallways, checking over his shoulder regularly as if to ensure we still followed. We went up several spiraling staircases.

“I assume you’ve never spoken to a king,” Ulenor said.

“Your assumption is correct,” I told him. “Though I talked to a colonel a few times.”

Ulenor shot me a glance somewhere between amused and annoyed. “Respect is paramount when dealing with royalty. Bow when you greet him, and address him as ‘your majesty’ or ‘your grace.’ He might not understand your human jokes, so be careful with them.”

“No problem,” I replied.

We stopped in front of a set of tall wooden doors, intricately carved and heavily gilded. Two soldiers—knights, I guessed, or some kind of royal guard—stood on each side of the doors. At our arrival, one on each side grabbed a door handle and pulled them open for us.

“Alright,” I said to myself. “Time to meet the goblin king.”

Ulenor and I strode through the double doors with Torm leading the way. We went down a long rug just wide enough for Ulenor and I to walk side-by-side. The rug led to a four-stepped marble dais that held a set of elaborate thrones.

Seated atop the dais in the larger of the thrones was King Freg. He wore a close-cropped beard, a rarity among goblins, and both beard and hair were heavy with gray. His eyes were bright green, just like Lossia's, and had a look of kindness to them. From head to toe he was dressed in the finest that goblin tailors could make, rich purples and deep reds, all with gold and silver embroidery covering him from shoulder to knee. Even his boots were so chased with gold it was hard to see the leather.

Seated at his right hand in a slightly smaller throne was Queen Cinnai. Lossia's mother. It was immediately clear where Lossia got all her beauty from, as her mother was simply breathtaking, with the kind of figure no amount of clothing could hide. Her hair was a pale shade of lavender, the same as

Lossia's. I tore my eyes away from her low neckline and silently reminded myself that eye-fucking the queen wasn't the best way to make a good impression.

King Freg leaned forward on his throne when we stepped close. Torm dropped to a knee, and Ulenor did the same. Only a second later, I copied them and knelt as well. At least the rug was soft.

"My king, my queen, I have brought to you Andrew Jones of the planet Earth, and the honored wizard Ulenor," Torm intoned.

"Of course, please stand, please," King Freg said, sounding excited.

"He's tall," the queen murmured. "Tall and pink."

Torm bowed deeply and stepped away, leaving Ulenor and I with the king and queen. Well, and a dozen armed guards in the room. I stood and faced the king, not really knowing what to say.

"So, you're him," King Freg said, staring at me from up on his throne. "You're the one that's here to save us."

"Yes, your majesty," I replied, not really knowing what else to say. Best to get right to it. "I have a plan to defeat Vogrim," I began, but the king cut me off.

"Good, good, I'm glad to hear it," he said, hopping off his throne and walking down the steps of the dais. Several guards rushed forwards, but he waved them back.

King Freg stopped in front of me and looked me up and down. He was as tall as my shoulder, and handsome as far as goblin men went. Fine lines crinkled next to his eyes when he smiled, but his skin was otherwise smooth.

“This is absolutely fascinating,” King Freg said. “So you’re really from a different world? Ulenor assured us he could do this, but hearing about you through the talking glass and seeing you in person are two different things.” He reached a hand out to touch me, as if he were uncertain I was actually real, but pulled back at the last minute.

“Yeah,” I said with a shrug. “He brought me here through a portal—sorry, a gateway—and I’ve been here for nearly two weeks now.”

“How do you like it?” the king asked, raising his chin slightly.

“To be honest, I really like it here, your majesty. I’m planning on staying and building a life here.” As soon as the words were out of my mouth, I realized what I had said. He knew that I could take any woman I slept with as a wife, including his daughter. I swallowed heavily, hoping the king wouldn’t send me to my death because of the things I wanted to do to his daughter.

“So, you want to take a goblin woman as a wife and live among us?” he asked in carefully measured tones, raising a single eyebrow slightly. “Do you have this woman selected yet?”

I took a deep breath. “Yes, your majesty. Once I defeat Vogrim, I plan on marrying the Mothers of a New Age. All

three of them.”

The queen covered her mouth with a slim hand. King Freg nodded slowly, a battle of emotions playing out on his face. “Well, that is certainly your right, especially if you do, in fact, defeat Vogrim.” He began pacing in front of me, hands clasped behind his back.

“Uh, if it makes you feel any better, your majesty, I haven’t... You know, uh, mated with your daughter yet.”

His head snapped around at that. “Well, why not?” he demanded in sharp tones. “She’s the most beautiful woman in the entire kingdom! Is she somehow not good enough for you?”

“Because I want to marry her,” I fired back. “And I want to get to know her first. And Thilli and Cirro, as well. Don’t worry, though, I’ve been doing my duties in Gillamoor.”

“Well, I guess I wasn’t expecting that,” King Freg said. “I suppose I’ve been so focused on the finish line that I neglected the race itself, so to speak. Walk with me, Andrew.” He jerked his head to the side and I felt in step on his left side. Two guards immediately approached us and the king waved them off. “We’re fine, we’re fine. If I’m not safe with the savior of our species, I’m not safe with anyone.”

“So Ulenor,” the queen began. “Please, come here and tell me about...” Their voices faded away into murmurs as we walked out of the throne room onto a large balcony.

Once there, King Freg leaned on the heavy stone railing and looked onto the royal courtyard with a sigh.

“These are strange times we live in, Andrew. Strange times indeed. I suppose I don’t need to emphasize to you just how frustrating it is, what Vogrim has done to us.” He rubbed his hand across his bearded chin and made a noise of disgust in his throat. “What he did was cruel beyond words, and if you have a plan to kill Vogrim then you have my full support.”

“Perfect,” I said. “I’ll need a few things: some armor, weapons, things of that nature. Also, I wanted to ask you about oil.”

“Oil?” the king asked, turning towards me. “What kind of oil?”

“I’m not sure what you call it here, but it’s oil that you might find seeping from the earth. Thick, black oil. Ulenor said you had some.”

King Freg frowned. “Why yes, we do have some of that. We gather it from the oil sands about a day’s ride from here.”

“Perfect,” I said, clapping my hands and rubbing them together. “I need to speak with whoever processes that oil, or at least get a message to them. I can teach them to separate it into different chemicals. I’ll need some when I go back to Gillamoore.”

The king’s frown deepened. “Yes, Ulenor and Mayor Beezle both said you intend to stay here only a week, then return to



Gillamoor. I understand that Vogrim has dispatched a force to attack the town. A rather sizable force.”

“Well, it’s not many in number, but from how minotaurs have been described to be, a dozen of them is definitely an emergency. I want to be there to help defeat them.” I looked back out across the balcony, at the royal courtyard and the heavy wall surrounding the palace. “I need to fight a small force like this before I try anything against Vogrim. Crawl, walk, run.”

“I just don’t want to risk you,” King Freg replied. “You’re too important, and we need you to help repopulate. There are soldiers in Gillamoor that can fight.”

“I understand,” I told him. “And I give you my word I’ll do as much as possible while I’m here. But when I’m done with Vogrim, you won’t need my help repopulating. Your men will be able to lay with their wives as they should. Killing these bastards will be the first step towards killing Vogrim. This will show him that goblins will fight back.”

“Soldiers from Gillamoor have always fought back against Vogrim’s monsters,” King Freg said.

“Yes, but as I understand it, Vogrim hasn’t sent this many to attack in a long time, if ever. When they’re slaughtered, it’ll send a powerful message to that jerk.”

“And what is that message?” the king asked.

“Fuck with my people and I’ll kill you,” I said. “That’s the message.”

King Freg stared at me for a moment in shock at my harsh words, then broke out into laughter. His laughs grew until his belly shook and he slapped his thigh.

“Oh, I think I’m going to like you, Andrew,” he said as he reached up and slapped me on the back. “Yes indeed! Let’s get back to things now. You’ve got too much to do and not enough time to do it.” He turned and walked back into the throne room and I followed.

When we got back into the throne room, the queen was standing near Ulenor, nodding as he explained something with a plethora of hand gestures. Seeing us, the queen smiled and addressed her husband.

“My love, you must hear what Ulenor is saying,” she said. “It’s the most fascinating thing I’ve heard in a long time.”

“Of course, Cinnai, of course,” he said, then turned to me. “I’ll have my steward take you to your room, Andrew. He’ll get you settled in and started right away. We’ll talk soon. Torm!”

As soon as he said the man’s name, Torm entered through a side door and hurried to stand before the king.

“Here to serve, your majesty,” Torm said with a well-practiced bow.

“Take Andrew to his chambers and give him a few minutes to get settled. After that, put him to work.” King Freg gave me a smile and clapped me on the shoulder. “If I don’t talk to you this evening, I’ll see you tomorrow, Andrew. Actually…” His

smile deepened after a brief pause. “Yes, we’ll talk tomorrow. You’ll be too busy this evening.”

I bowed my head to him and let Torm lead me away.

“I assure you that you will be happy with your apartments,” Torm said as he led me through several hallways. “As you are such an honored guest, no expense has been spared in preparing for your arrival.”

After winding through several hallways and staircases, we stopped before a set of carved and gilded double doors. Torm bowed low and gestured towards the doors.

“I or one of my associates will be nearby in case you need anything,” Torm said, indicating a chair stationed next to the doors. “All you need to do is ask.”

“Thanks, Torm,” I told him. “I really appreciate the hospitality.”

And I said that before even seeing my room.

**W**ith a gracious nod to the royal steward, I pushed the door open. I walked into an expansive room with large, arched windows along the back wall that gave a view of the city and the river beyond. Panels of pale wood, intricately carved with fantastical animals and flowers, covered much of the walls along with a handful of detailed tapestries. Thick rugs covered the marble floors.

The furniture within my rooms was made of elaborately carved wood and polished until it gleamed. A crystal pitcher of wine sat on a table near me, so I poured some into a silver goblet and tried a taste while exploring.

After pulling my shoes off, I walked across the soft rugs to the tall windows at the back of the room. The warm sun beamed down on me as I enjoyed the view of lush gardens within the inner wall, and several towering buildings beyond. A wide river rushed by in the distance, taking with it a barge of grain.

Scanning around, I saw two doors on my right. I went to the farthest door first, assuming it would be some sort of bathroom

or washroom. A large copper tub in the corner proved me correct. A washstand stood next to it.

I moved back to the other door, which was nearest the outer wall. I had my suspicions about this room as well.

When I pushed the door open, I expected to see a four-post bed, tall windows, and wardrobes inlaid with precious stones and gold. All that was present, but what I hadn't been expecting was the dozen goblin women in the room.

Half of them were on the enormous bed, kicking up their feet while talking idly. Several sat in plush chairs scattered about the room, and two leaned against the heavy stone window frame. Every color of the rainbow was represented in their hair and eyes. More notably, not a single one of them wore any clothing. A dozen linen robes littered the floor.

As soon as I walked in, they all turned to face me with excited smiles. The women leaning against the window rushed to me. One of them took my goblet of wine from me and set it on a nearby table, while the other stretched up onto her toes and kissed me softly.

"We're so glad you're here," she said, tossing her blue hair over her shoulder. "As soon as you arrived in the city, we were gathered here in your room."

Another woman with coppery orange hair grabbed my hand and pulled me towards the bed. I allowed myself to be led while they pulled at my clothes. By the time I arrived at my bed, I was also fully nude.

I suddenly remembered that potion Ulenor had me drink earlier today. It would make me stronger, he had told me, and it went with my blessing from Zozella. With all these women in here, it would take superhuman stamina to make it through. I was up for the challenge.

If the sight of a dozen naked goblin women wasn't enough, their groping hands brought me fully erect within seconds. At the sight of me being hard, several of them gasped and reached for my member. Two women, one with white hair and the other with pitch-black hair, knelt in front of me and took turns sucking me.

Even with one of Ulenor's potions, I was going to have to pace myself to make it through this. After gently removing my cock from the woman's mouth, I placed a hand on the massive bed, ready to climb up. As soon as I did, two women immediately knelt on the edge of the bed, putting their asses right in my face.

"So much for pacing myself," I said with a laugh. I slapped my palms down on their luscious round asses and climbed the rest of the way onto the massive bed.

They swarmed over me like ants on a picnic. Hands grabbing, lips kissing, mouths sucking, they covered me. Three of them took turns sucking on me while another woman threw a leg over my head and straddled my face. I set myself to licking and sucking on her clitoris, but it was hard to concentrate with multiple women stroking and sucking me like their lives depended on it.

After a few minutes, I felt the unmistakable wet warmth of goblin pussy sliding down my cock. A pair of soft thighs straddled my waist, and two small hands rested on my chest for support. She rode me fast and hard, her soft buttocks slamming down on my thighs with each stroke. Her moans were loud and came often.

My hands gripped the hips of the woman riding my face, and soon her thighs quivered on either side of my head. Man, these women were absolutely on fire. Her fingers tangled in my hair as she orgasmed and her hips bucked, rubbing her pale green slit up and down across my tongue.

“My turn, Tarah,” said a tiny woman next to me. As soon as Tarah got off my face, this woman replaced her. She was the smallest goblin woman I had seen yet—probably four feet tall and slender of build, with small, perky breasts and vulpine features. Her hair was a vivid shade of sky blue.

I barely had a chance to catch my breath before this tiny woman straddled my mouth. My hands went straight to her perky ass and I gripped and squeezed it as I worked my tongue on her clitoris. I paused for a moment as I felt myself reach climax.

The woman riding me, seeing my muscles tense up and hearing my moans, slammed her hips down, taking every inch of me. She gyrated back and forth as I came deep inside her, moaning softly as I filled her up.

“Oh, by the gods,” the small woman riding my face moaned as she gripped my hair with both hands. She did half of the work

for me, rubbing her clit up and down my tongue as I tried to recover from my orgasm.

The woman was still perched on my cock, smiling and moaning happily. She finally pulled herself off and I sighed and went limp on the bed. I left my tongue out so the woman riding my face could still get herself off. After a moment of that, I laughed and went back to pleasing her properly. As soon as she orgasmed and moved off my face, another woman was ready to take her place but I waved her off.

“Hold on,” I panted. “Let me catch my breath for a few minutes.”

I stretched my arms over my head and relaxed on the bed for a moment. A few seconds later, one of the most beautiful women I’d ever seen approached me with a damp washrag in hand. She gently wiped the goblin pussy juice from my mouth and chin, then washed my cock for me as well. As soon as she was done, she took my soft cock in her mouth and started sucking on it. Talk about service with a smile.

The combination of Ulenor’s potion and Zozella’s blessing gave me a potent virility. I felt myself slowly get hard in this beautiful woman’s mouth, and within a few minutes I was ready to go again. Women crawled on the bed, surrounding me on all sides, rubbing their breasts on me, fingering themselves while they watched their companion suck me, all eager for a turn. A few women leaned down and took turns kissing me, which I appreciated. It helped to make things feel a bit more personal and less like a job.



After sucking me for a minute, she moved onto the bed next to me, lying on her back with her legs wide. With a grin, I got on top of her and slipped my member inside, then started pushing it in and out. We kissed deeply, our tongues pressing against each other's, and my hand went from her round breasts, down to her curvy hips before reaching beneath her and grabbing firmly on her ass.

I knew not to drag things out, so once she was good and warmed up I started giving it to her nice and hard. Her breasts shook with each thrust. I sat up and grabbed onto her thighs, holding them wide as I pounded in and out of her like a piston. A dozen hands from the women surrounding us reached out and massaged her breasts, caressed her neck, brushed her hair back from her face. One woman even slapped me on the ass, which made me laugh right in the middle of thrusting.

She moaned loudly, and I moaned with her. While normally it would take me a long time to reach orgasm after cumming earlier, that wasn't the case now. Thanks to Zozella's blessing and Ulenor's potion, I came just like it was my first time that day. I leaned my head back and roared as I squirted my seed deep inside her, and she moaned with me. Every woman in the room made sounds of approval, and several slid closer to me, hoping to be next.

"Holy shit," I said, practically collapsing on my side on the soft bed. I was quite winded after that, my breath coming in heaves, and my body was slick with sweat.

The tiny woman that had sat on my face earlier curled up around me and held my head in her arms. She leaned down and planted several soft kisses on me, looking at me with eyes filled with affection.

“Take a moment to rest,” she said quietly with a smile. “You’re working awfully hard here.”

I took her advice and relaxed for a moment while other women massaged my arms and legs. If there was a heaven, I think I had found it. It wouldn’t have surprised me if one of them started feeding me grapes.

“How old are you?” I asked the tiny woman. Considering her size, I needed to make sure.

“I’m twenty-two,” she said defensively. “I’m just a bit on the shorter side.”

The tiny woman held me tightly against her perky breasts, for which I was grateful, for obvious reasons. She weighed practically nothing, so I reached up and grabbed her by the waist, then pulled her to me. She curled up on top of me with her lips on my neck. I held her tightly like that for a moment, just enjoying a few minutes of peace with a pretty woman.

To be honest I could have taken a nap, but she suddenly started kissing her way up the side of my neck, along my jaw, and finally my lips. She positioned herself so that she was straddling me while we kissed, and I felt another woman’s mouth sucking me back to life.

Once again I became hard in a matter of seconds. I took my time, kissing her deeply and letting my hands roam across her hips and firm ass cheeks. With my grip on her bottom, I slowly lowered her towards my cock. Whoever had been sucking me took my cock and lined me up with this woman's soaking wet pussy, and soon we were going at it.

With her being so small I thought I was going to have to go easy on her, but she urged me on, telling me to go harder and faster. I grabbed her ass and held it tightly while ramming myself into her, each thrust causing her small breasts to bounce. Her moans turned into wails as I fucked her as hard and fast as I could.

Going that hard in a woman that tight had a predictable result, and within minutes I was cumming again, filling the tiny woman up and squirting my cum so hard I thought I pulled a muscle. As soon as I was done she collapsed on my chest, both of us covered in sweat and breathing hard. Several women surrounding us cheered us on.

I don't know how long it took, but I had finished with the last woman and then came a second time in that tiny woman when the sky outside my window turned vivid shades of orange and pink. I felt like I had run a marathon, but my cock apparently never got the message. After a dozen women—and one of them twice!—it was still ready to go.

I slid off the bed, my legs slightly wobbly, and made my way to the window. The orange of the sky reflected in the river, almost making it look like it was filled with fire instead of

water. Washed in the warm glow of the sunset, the city of York looked picturesque and radiant.

“Where should I live?” I asked, turning around.

Several of the women looked at me, then at each other, wondering who I had been addressing.

“I’m from Holmar,” said a woman with thick hips and bright yellow hair. “I suppose it’s a nice city, but it’s nothing like York. Also I don’t like living near the orcs. They don’t bother us, but the threat is always there.”

“I like York, but it’s busy,” said another woman with bright red hair and large breasts. Her eyes were the most vivid shade of green I had ever seen. “If you like the somewhat hectic nature of city life, York is wonderful. Anything you could ever want is here.”

“So, you’re staying?” asked the tiny woman as she walked up to me. “Staying in our world?” Desire filled her eyes; this woman likely wanted me to take her as a wife. I was so focused on my thoughts that I missed it.

“I like the goblin world,” I said, turning back to the window. “It’s better than my home world. Kinder, more peaceful. I can help you all invent a few things to make life easier here. I think it’ll be nice.” My thoughts went to Gillamoor. Being further north, it was a few degrees cooler than York. Somewhere between a large town and a small city, the size was right for me. Perhaps they would have room for a human there.

“Who’s hungry?” I asked, turning away from the window and walking to the bed. From their reactions, I think the women had been expecting to get impregnated and kicked out. That felt too impersonal for me. “Can you ask someone to bring enough food for us all?” I asked the woman nearest to me. “There should be someone right outside the door.”

**H**ad I not spoken up, another dozen women probably would have filled my room that night. Instead, we all ate and drank—they had wine, while I had water in an attempt to rehydrate myself—and talked until we were tired. And after all that sex, everyone was plenty tired.

Fortunately, they let me sleep. The bed was huge, so most of the women piled on there and grabbed a pillow, although some decided to use me as a pillow. That tiny woman—her name was Kless, by the way—she curled up next to me, her head on my shoulder, and we all passed out. She was so lightweight I barely noticed her.

Somewhere around the middle of the night my bladder woke me. I pulled myself out from beneath Kless and made my way to the bathroom to relieve myself. Once done, I washed my face and hands and tip-toed back into my bedroom.

I should have expected it, to be honest. One of the women—the yellow-haired woman from Holmar, I forgot her name—met me as soon as I entered the bedroom.

“Do you think you’re up for one more?” she whispered after stretching up and kissing me. She turned around and punctuated her question by rubbing her juicy thick ass against my crotch.

I chuckled quietly. “Sure, let’s go,” I said.

She bent over the nearest table and we made love as quietly as possible. I didn’t want to wake the rest of the women out of common decency, and I also didn’t want them to suddenly wake up and ask for their own round two.

Going slowly and gently took me an extra few minutes, but soon enough I was filling her up. Afterwards, we held each other for a moment, then I crawled back into bed. Kless wriggled back into position and I fell into a deep sleep with her nuzzled beneath my chin.

Waking to the morning sun in a bed filled with naked, eager women was probably one of the best ways possible to start the day. Practically before I even opened my eyes, Kless was riding me hard and fast, like a sprinter eager for the finish line. So I guess you could say I started the day with a bang.

That done, I made my way to the bathroom. Showers weren’t a thing in this day and age, so a hot bath would have to do.

Two steel handles protruded from the wall and were connected to pipes made of.... Well, I wasn’t sure. Brass? One of the handles had a flame engraved on it.

I grabbed it with a smile and started pumping. Water gushed out into my tub, cold at first, and then steaming hot. Honestly,

it was too hot, so I had to pump a bit of cold water in to balance out the temperature.

“I never would have guessed that goblins would have worked out indoor plumbing,” I said aloud. These little green people impressed me at every turn.

A set of small brushes and a jar of white paste sat next to the washstand, so I used it to brush my teeth. After that, I felt much better.

A noise behind me caused me to turn and see all the women leaving. I won't lie—I was sad to see them go, even though I knew they would be replaced with fresh women shortly. They were all so sweet and beautiful; every one of them was a perfect ten in every way.

The last woman to leave was Kless. I caught her eye and gave her a smile as she walked across the room. She hurried over to me and threw her arms around my neck, pulling me down into a deep kiss.

“Thank you so much,” she whispered in my ear. “Thank you for saving us. We will all love you forever, Andrew.” After one more kiss, she turned and walked away. The sight of her tight little body was almost enough for me to call her back in, but instead I hopped in the bathtub.

I had plans for today.

My plans were postponed a bit by my hot bath. Lying in that hot water with my eyes closed, I focused on letting my



muscles relax. I stayed in there until the water turned cool, then finally got out and dried myself off.

Sometime during the night, a servant had brought all my clothes in and arranged them in the heavy wooden wardrobe. I selected a dark gray pair of pants and another snowy white shirt, but didn't grab a jacket. It was too warm down here for that.

After a quick breakfast, I stamped my feet into my shoes and left my room. At least, I tried to; as soon as I grabbed my door handle, a man hurried into the room, his arms filled with material and tools.

“Can I help you?” I asked.

He was a skinny man with wire-framed glasses perched on his long nose. He squinted at me for a moment, then frowned at my feet.

“No, but it appears I can help you,” he said. “If you can sit for a moment, I'd like to measure you for the boots. The queen said she wouldn't stand for, well, whatever those are.” He pointed at my old running shoes.

I laughed and pulled my shoes off, then let the man measure my feet. He chewed his tongue while working, completely lost in thought. It only took him a few moments, then he gestured towards my shoes.

“You can put those back on if you'd like. I should have your boots ready by dinner.”

“Thanks,” I told the man, wishing I had a gold coin or something to tip him. I probably could have offered to impregnate his wife, but I avoided that. Instead, I left my room.

As expected, there was a servant posted right outside my door, relaxing in a chair. He bolted to his feet and bowed low when my door opened.

“Good morning, my lord. How may I help you today?” His tones were measured and perfectly respectful.

“I need to speak with whoever is in charge of processing your oil,” I told the goblin man.

He blinked a few times in confusion. “Um. I’m not sure I understand your request, my lord.”

I laughed. “It’s okay. If you can tell the king what I need, or perhaps the royal steward, they’ll be able to point you in the right direction.”

The servant bowed again and hurried away, and I sat on his chair to wait. I hoped they would at least give me my days to get things done and would keep the women to the evenings. Not that I minded—spending time with them was a wonderful way to enjoy an evening—but I had some things that needed to be handled as soon as possible.

Less than ten minutes had passed when the servant hurried back to my room. His eyes widened a bit at the sight of me seated in his place—he probably thought it was beneath my

station to sit in a servant's chair—but he covered it with another smooth bow.

“If you will follow me, my lord, I will take you to the royal chemist.” He seemed much happier, now that he knew exactly where to take me.

I followed the man through another maze of hallways and stairs. Servants passed by, arms filled with laundry and sheets or platters of food, many of them giving me a quick bow as I passed. They didn't know me personally, but I was the only human in York so it wasn't hard to figure out who I was. A few of the servants were older women and gave me sly smiles as they passed.

We went down several flights of stairs and I began to wonder if he was taking me into some dark room in the basement. All concerns were negated as he stopped before a heavy wooden door and knocked twice.

“Come in,” said a voice from behind the door.

The servant pushed the door open, then bowed and gestured for me to enter.

“I'll wait outside the door so I can escort you to your room, or wherever you need to go, when you're done,” he said.

“Don't worry about that,” I told him. I didn't want the man just standing there for half an hour. “Go on about your day, I'll find my way back to my room when I'm done.”

The man bowed again, then left. I pushed the door open and entered the room.

The room was large with a high ceiling, and the back wall was solid windows that stood open to allow a breeze. Tables filled the room, many with jars and vials, and some with open books filled with hastily scrawled notes. A pungent aroma filled the room, lessened by the opened windows but still bordering on unpleasant.

I decided to leave the door open to get some cross ventilation. I took a few steps in, toward the man in the room.

He set down his quill as I approached, and turned to me. He was of average height and weight for a goblin man, with gray stubble on his chin and turquoise eyes that watched me closely. Faint wrinkles creased his eyes and forehead, and he wore utilitarian clothing, with ink stains on his sleeves and a heavy waxed canvas apron covering his chest.

“Can I help you?” he asked as I approached. From his tone, he wasn’t pleased at having a visitor.

“I believe you can, or at least I hope so,” I replied, offering him my hand.

He looked me up and down for a moment, then stared at my hand before finally accepting the gesture. “What are you here for?” he asked. He sounded eager to get back to his work.

“I’m assuming you know who I am,” I began. He nodded impatiently. “Then you know that I’m supposed to kill Vogrim.” Another impatient nod. “Okay, I’ll get to the point,” I said. “I need to show you how to refine oil.”

“Oil?” he asked.

“Yeah, oil. The kind that seeps from the ground in some areas. Probably thick and black, or brown in color.”

He crossed his arms and his frown lessened. “Go on,” he said.

“We use it a lot in my world,” I explained. “If you carefully heat it, you can use it for a lot of things. Making roads, powering engines, even certain kinds of lamps. It pollutes a lot though, so you have to be cautious with it. And the fumes aren’t good to breathe.” I took a deep breath and tried to think of the best place to start with all this. “What should I call you?”

“Higgs,” the goblin man said after a moment. “My name is Higgs. I am the royal chemist.” He said it with pride.

“May I see your quill?” I asked. After a moment, he nodded.

I grabbed his quill, turned to a fresh page in his book, and sketched out a large hollow cylinder with tubes leading off the side at different heights. I then drew a small flame beneath it and turned to him.

“Okay, so if you fill this with oil, which is called crude oil,” I said, pointing at the hollow cylinder. “And then gently heat it, it will start to separate. Or I guess more accurately, different substances within it will boil off at different temperatures. At the top you’ll get.... Uhh, I can’t remember exactly what, but one of them is called gasoline. That stuff burns very hot and very fast. It’s a mostly clear liquid, and it stinks.”

Higgs moved closer to my shoulder to watch what I was sketching. I dipped my pen in the inkwell and kept going.

“Below that, you’ll get kerosene. You can use that for certain types of lamps and stoves, neither of which have been invented here yet. This stuff also burns dangerously well, but it’s not quite as bad as gasoline.”

“What do you mean not quite as bad?” Higgs asked.

“Throw a cup of gasoline on a fire and see what I mean,” I said with a chuckle. “Actually, don’t do that. You’ll lose your eyebrows and half the hair on your head. Anyways, below that and at a higher temperature, you’ll get diesel fuel and some oils you can use to lubricate machinery. I’ll need some of this stuff.”

“What’s below that?” Higgs asked, pointing to the bottom of the cylinder.

“The heaviest stuff in crude oil is called bitumen, if my memory serves me correctly.” I scribbled a few lines in the bottom of the container. “This stuff is thick, black, and sticky. You can use it for roads, roofing, and as tar on ships. It stinks, though. Actually, all of this stinks, and breathing the vapors can really harm you, and in some cases kill you.”

“Then why are you teaching me this?” Higgs asked.

“Because when used properly, it can revolutionize your society,” I told him. “And, more importantly, because I need some. Now, this is obviously just a crude drawing.” I sketched a couple lines inside the hollow cylinder. “This is called a fractionating column. It helps to separate the oil into different chemicals. I saw a TV show about it once. The main thing to remember is that these chemicals are extremely flammable, so

you have to keep them from ever touching the fire you're using to heat everything, or it'll blow up and you'll all die."

His eyes widened at that.

"And before you worry about the dangers, I'll remind you that this produces excellent fuel," I said. "Well, perhaps excellent is the wrong word. These fuels are incredibly energy dense. They'll burn like nothing you've ever seen before. But they're dirty, horribly dirty, and that's a path you don't really want to go down. So use with caution." The last thing I wanted to see was this beautiful paradise covered in oil and smoke. I purposely avoided telling Higgs that they could gather exponentially more oil by drilling into the ground.

"So what exactly do you need again?" Higgs asked, staring at my notes. "Just so I'm fully clear on this."

I turned the page and drew another simplified refinery. "Okay, so this is about as simple as you can make them, I think. This will basically separate the oil into two products. The lighter stuff will come out the top," I said as I indicated the top half of my drawing, "and the bottom half will be bitumen and thick tar-like sludge. Give me one barrel of the stuff that comes from the top."

"That doesn't look too difficult to build," Higgs said, studying my sketch. "I think we can modify something we already have and get started on this later today if I push for it. The tricky part will be keeping the fire from the product. How hot does this need to be for these substances to separate?"

I thought for a moment. They certainly had a method for measuring temperature, but I didn't know it. "About six hundred degrees," I said. "And for comparison, using that scale it's probably seventy-five or seventy-eight degrees in this room right now. Eighty at most."

Higgs frowned and rubbed his stubbly chin. "We'll need a fire beneath it then, with a barrier of metal to prevent any flames from coming through. Magic could be safely used, if we can find a caster strong enough. Boiling that much oil will be difficult, but if..." He trailed off into mumbles as he took his notepad back and began sketching a new design.

"I'll check with you tomorrow, I guess," I said, taking a step back.

"What? Oh, yes." He set his notes down for a moment so he could address me. "I'll send my man to find you when I'm done. I believe we can have this ready within a few days."

"Perfect!" I said. "Two barrels if you can, but I'll be more than happy with one." I went to shake his hand again, but Higgs was already focusing on his notes. With a laugh to myself, I walked towards the door. When I put my hand on the door handle, I turned around as something suddenly occurred to me.

"Oh, Higgs?"

He turned to look at me. "Yes?"

"If any of this stuff does catch on fire, don't try to put it out by pouring water on it. That'll just spread the fire around and make it worse. Smother it with sand."



He gave me a confused look for a moment, but eventually nodded. I left the room.

The first part of my plan was complete. Now it was time to outfit myself.

I strolled down the broad hallway, taking a moment to admire the colorful tapestries that decorated the walls, and enjoy the view through the arched windows. The royal mansion was quite a beautiful building, and avoided the cold starkness I often associated with castles. This reminded me of a castle that had been built specifically for beauty and comfort instead of defense.

It took me a few tries, but I managed to find my way back to my room. As expected, there was a servant waiting outside my door. I told him that I would need him in a moment, then slipped inside.

After rifling through my wardrobe for a few minutes, I found my dagger resting on the top shelf. I threaded a belt through the sheath, then buckled it around my waist. That done, I left my room.

“Okay,” I said to the goblin servant. “I need some armor and a weapon or two. Is there such a thing as a royal armorer?”

He thought on that for a moment. “Kruzz leads the team of armorers and weaponsmiths that outfit the royal guards. Will that work?”

“Perfect,” I said. “Take me to him.”

The servant bowed his head, then hurried away with me in tow. He led me out of the royal mansion, then apologized for the distance we would be walking. I waved it off.

Together, we exited the inner wall completely and made our way to another walled compound much further within the city. Within seconds I recognized what I saw; a field for training, several forges for producing equipment, tall barracks as well as warehouses. We were in some sort of military district.

“He’s right over here,” the servant said, bowing his head again before hurrying towards one of the nearest warehouses.

I followed him into the building. While it was indeed a warehouse of some sorts, right inside the front door was a large office. Within that office, a goblin man sat behind a large wooden desk which was covered with stacks of papers. He looked up when we entered.

“Can I help you?” he asked, eyeing me curiously. His voice was gruff, a voice used to barking orders. A voice used to being obeyed.

The servant bowed deeply. “Good morning, Kruzz. I am Jaard, a humble servant of our beloved King Freg, here with Andrew Jones, who—”

Kruzz bolted to his feet, his eyes focused on me. “So you’re him? You’re the guy that’s here to save us?”

I was starting to get used to that reaction, but it still felt a little odd at times. “Yeah,” I said. “I’m the guy that’s going to kill Vogrim.”

“And fuck all our wives and daughters on the way there, right?” Kruzz asked.

Talk about awkward. How was I supposed to reply to that? “Look, I was brought to your world specifically to help repopulate. As far as I know, I haven’t touched anyone’s wife.”

He waved a hand as if to brush away the discomfort in the air. “No, no, I meant no offense. I apologize for my comment. It’s just.... Really, you can’t imagine what this is like. If you’re going to kill Vogrim, I’ll help however I can. You just name what you need.”

“Armor,” I said without pause. “Something that won’t weigh me down or be too hot in this weather, but will still stop a spear or, uh, a minotaur horn. Also a sword.”

“The sword is easy, but armor is difficult,” Kruzz began. “Armor always involves a tradeoff. Do you want it to be lightweight and flexible? It might protect from a slashing attack, but a sharp spear or a hammer spike will penetrate it. Need to protect from those and everything else? Now your armor isn’t lightweight, and furthermore you’ll sweat your ass off wearing it. So, what’s more important to you?”

“I’m sure we can improve upon things,” I said, avoiding his question. “How about a, uh....” I gestured towards my torso.

“Gambeson?” Kruzz said.

“Gambeson! Thanks.” I continued. “A gambeson made of whatever cloth you have that’s strong but lightweight and breathable. If you have silk, let’s use that.” I turned to Jaard, the servant, who was still standing there, patiently waiting. “Jaard, can you go find Ulenor for me? Tell him I want to meet him back in the royal mansion in about an hour. His room will be fine.”

“Of course, my lord,” Jaard said, bowing low. After straightening, he hurried out the door and towards the royal mansion.

I turned back to Kruzz. “I have some ideas that we can incorporate into my armor. For now, let’s focus on making a thin, lightweight gambeson that will fit me.”

“I’ll need to measure you,” Kruzz said, rummaging through a drawer in his desk and withdrawing a measuring tape. “You’re a good bit larger than we are.”

I stood there for a while as Kruzz carefully measured me, just as a tailor would. He mumbled to himself the entire time, mostly about materials as he calculated how much cloth he would need. He mentioned linen several times, so I assumed that’s what it would be made of.

“Are we sewing steel plates into the gambeson?” Kruzz asked after dipping his quill into an inkwell. He scribbled several

notes on a paper on his desk.

“That’s where I’ll be changing things,” I said. “Let’s start with boiled leather plates. Once you get them shaped and ready to sew in, I’ll pick them up and harden them myself.”

Kruzz raised a bushy eyebrow at me. “I’m going to assume you know what you’re doing.”

“And you’ll be assuming correctly,” I said. “I’ll need a helmet as well. Gotta protect my noggin.”

“What are your plans for a helmet?” Kruzz asked, ready to write.

“Boiled leather, again,” I said. “With a suspension system inside so any blows to the head won’t transfer that impact directly to my skull. And plenty of soft padding.”

“And for your legs?” he asked, scratching down notes quickly on the paper. He dipped his quill in his inkwell and looked at me again.

“I need to be careful here,” I said. “This can get heavy rather quickly. If the gambeson goes to my knees I should be good. My boots can protect my lower legs. What’s most important is that I handle the hardening of the leather plates and pieces.”

“You mean you’ll harden them after one of my workers hardens them?” he asked with an eyebrow raised.

“Yes, I know.” I said. “Boiling the leather hardens it, I’m aware. I’m going to harden it beyond that, using magic. In fact, make sure to use the thinnest leather you can, to keep it as light as possible. Oh, and one more thing,” I said.

“Yes?” he asked, still looking at his notes.

“I need this as soon as possible. Can you have the leather plates ready in a day or two?”

He nearly dropped his quill in shock. “A day or two?” he asked. “Do you not understand how long it takes to make armor?”

“I do,” I replied. “But I don’t have time. I need this made as quickly as possible. I’m not sure how long it’ll take me to harden the leather plates, but as soon as I’m done I’ll bring them back so you can finish. And the sooner my armor is complete, the sooner I can start wearing it and learning how to fight in it. I’m leaving for Gillamoor in seven days, and I’ll be leading the fight against a raiding party from Vogrim there.”

Kruzz’s brows lowered. “Well, we’ll have it done. I’ll have my men work overnight if they must. Anything to stick it to that bastard Vogrim.” He muttered several curses under his breath before speaking up again. “You mentioned a sword?”

“Yes, a sword,” I said. “Eventually, I’ll be using a shield—you don’t need to make one, I’ll be getting it from someone else. So I need a sword I can wield with one hand, but preferably something with a long blade.”

Kruzz looked me up and down again. “You’re a foot taller than any of us, so that changes things. Follow me.” He set his quill down and walked out of the room.

The warehouse we were in was filled with mostly raw materials; bolts of canvas, piles of leather and hide, and spools

of thick thread. We left that building and walked to the next one, which was much smaller and contained several racks of assorted weapons. Most were spears, but I saw a handful of swords and warhammers in there as well.

Kruzz went to a rack filled with swords and selected one of the largest ones. It was elegant in its simplicity; a long, double-edged blade, slightly curved quillons, and a hilt made from coarse boar hide to provide a sure grip. The pommel was just a round ball of steel to help with balance, although I suppose smashing someone in the face with it would be devastating.

“Try this one,” he said, handing me the sword. “It’s a hand-and-a-half sword, but for you it’ll practically be an arming sword.”

I wasn’t entirely sure what those terms meant, but I could grasp his meaning. I pulled the blade from its scabbard and watched the light play across the steel. A thin groove ran down each side of the blade, to help lighten it as well as provide stiffness.

Gripping it in one hand, I went through a few basic attacks and a parrying move that Nerras had taught me. It wasn’t a particularly heavy sword, but I wasn’t used to swinging four pounds of steel.

“I do wish my arms were a bit stronger,” I said. “That would really help with swinging this thing around, but I suppose it’ll just take time. Unfortunately, I don’t have much time.”

I felt something strange in my upper arms, so I looked down at them. My upper arms—both biceps and triceps—grew about



an inch right before my eyes. I couldn't pull off a front double biceps pose like Arnold, but I now had some pretty muscular arms. My shoulders looked pretty jacked as well.

"Well, shit," I said. "It sure is nice having a goddess on my side."

Kruzz's eyes grew wide as he saw my arms increase in size. He immediately dropped to a knee and offered a lengthy prayer to Zozella.

I didn't feel like kneeling, so I simply looked up and whispered some thankful words to her. I got the unmistakable feeling she was smiling down at me. I was working hard to save her people, after all. It was great to have her help, but I just hoped she didn't do too much and find herself being punished like that Dulios guy did so many years ago.

"So, there's just the matter of this," I said as I slid the sword back into its scabbard. I held it next to my side, as if it were hanging from a sword belt. "I don't see any way to wear this thing where it won't be in the way."

"That is a concern, yes," Kruzz said. "Especially if you expect to move around a lot. You can get somewhat used to it with time, but most people would simply carry it over one shoulder. You wouldn't want the scabbard to get in your way during battle, after all."

"Good point," I said. I leaned the sword over my shoulder like it was an axe or a rifle. "How about crossbows? Can I get one of those as well as plenty of bolts?"

“Of course, whatever you need,” Kruzz said. After seeing Zozella increase my arm size, he was eager to help in any way he could.

Together we walked to the other end of the warehouse, where a rack filled with unstrung bows filled most of the wall. Next to that, a handful of crossbows hung from pegs.

Kruzz grabbed one and turned to me. “Bolt goes here,” he said, pointing to a groove in the center of the stock. “Then you take the cocking lever and pull the bowstring back, aim, and pull the trigger.”

“Well, I already see one way to improve this,” I said, taking the crossbow from him. “Instead of a cocking lever, put a metal loop in the front of the crossbow, for a boot.” I set the crossbow on top of my shoe to illustrate. “Your boot holds the crossbow in place,” I said as I grabbed the string with both hands. “And then you simply pull the string back.”

Kruzz nodded and scratched his jaw. “Can’t believe I never thought of that. We’ll try it out and see how it works. Is there anything else you need?”

“I think we’ve about covered it,” I said. “The most important part is that I get these as quickly as possible, so I can start learning to fight with them. And get me those leather pieces as soon as they’re done.”

Kruzz nodded. “I’ll have my men start right away, Andrew.” He suddenly held his hand out.

I took his hand with a smile and shook it. “Thanks for your help, Kruzz. I couldn’t do this without you.”

Kruzz bowed his head slightly. “On the contrary, thank you for what you’re doing. If you manage to pull this off, our entire race will be in debt to you.”

My confidence increased with every bit of preparation I did. Sure, there was a small army of monsters coming for Gillamoor, and a dozen of them were ten feet tall, but I wasn’t overly worried. Cautious, yes, but not worried. In my mind, there was no foe that was unbeatable. With proper preparation, nearly anyone could be defeated.

Even that bastard Vogrim.

Walking through the city of York wasn't like walking through Gillamoor. Sure, they were both goblin cities and York was ten times as large, but what I most noticed was that women weren't throwing themselves at me. Oh, I got a few propositions, but overall it seemed that the women had largely calmed down since my arrival, and gone about their daily lives. I guess the novelty of having a savior in their midst had worn off already.

Where the cities were most similar was in their style and beauty. Even as large as it was, York had parks and fountains at most intersections, and many people chose to grow flowers in window boxes. The goblin appreciation of nature and beauty was evident at every corner. The architecture was also spot-on, although here the houses tended to be closer together.

Finding my way back to the royal mansion was easy, as the inner wall was tall enough to be visible throughout the city. Fortunately, the guards recognized me and let me pass, even though I was carrying both a sword and a crossbow. I guess it

was hard to forget the only human in the city. Or the world, for that matter.

Sometimes that notion settled in my brain and refused to budge. I was the only human in the entire world. It left me feeling incredibly alone, until I remembered how the goblin people had readily adopted me.

Once I made it to the royal palace, I asked a few passing servants for directions, and eventually found my way back to my room. At least this time I remembered which floor I was on. My plans were coming along nicely; mostly I just needed to wait. Also, a nap wouldn't hurt.

I opened my door hesitantly, for I knew there would be women inside, waiting for me to pump rounds into them. I simply didn't have time for that at the moment, so I readied myself to deny them. To my utter surprise, I walked into an empty room. Well, there was furniture and decorations, but no naked women.

Not knowing where else to put my weapons, I went to my wardrobe and pulled the doors open. My knife went on the top shelf. My crossbow was too large for that, so I set it on top of the wardrobe. The sword stayed with me, as I had plans for it.

I hurried from my room and strode down the halls, putting my best smile on so the sword in my hand didn't startle anyone. I think my idea mostly worked; only a few servants eyed me nervously.

Ulenor's room only took me a few tries to find. It was on a different floor and towards the south of mine. I knocked twice

on his door and waited.

“Who is it?” Ulenor called out from within his room.

“It’s the human,” I replied, then quietly laughed to myself.

“Oh, yes,” Ulenor said. I heard something slide across the floor—a chair perhaps—then the sound of footsteps. The door opened and Ulenor’s bearded face was there to greet me, all smiles. “Andrew, it’s good to see you. Please, come in.” He looked down and noticed the sword in my hand and looked a question at me, but otherwise stepped back into the room.

I entered after him and pushed the door closed behind me. Ulenor walked to a padded chaise and reclined on it lazily.

“So, what did you need me for?” Ulenor asked. “I’m assuming it has something to do with that sword you’re carrying.”

“Yeah,” I said, taking the sword from my shoulder and holding it in both hands. “We’re going to enchant it.”

“Now?” Ulenor asked, sitting up.

“Now,” I said. “This is the best time. It’s early enough in the day that I can rest when we’re done, and the women haven’t arrived in my room yet.”

“And I imagine you’ll pester me until we do this, right?” Ulenor asked.

I grinned. “Yep.”

Ulenor sighed. “Andrew, you need to understand how difficult this is going to be. I can cast the spell, and I believe I can tap into your magical well for power, but it’s going to incapacitate

you for the rest of the day. Me too, for that matter. Even with all that, there's a chance you aren't yet powerful enough for this."

"Well, I'm willing to try," I said. "It has to be done, Ulenor. The sooner I can have all this stuff done, the sooner I can start training with it. I have to make sure I'm ready when I return to Gillamoor."

"Okay, okay," Ulenor said. He looked wistfully at a thick, leather-bound book lying on the chaise next to him, as if he would much rather return to reading than immerse himself into magical work. With a faint sigh, he pushed himself to his feet with a grunt. "I'll just need a moment to find the spell."

Ulenor pulled his small spellbook from his robe and began flipping through pages, muttering to himself all the while. I removed my sword from its scabbard and set it on a nearby table.

"Okay, now bring the sword here," Ulenor said, running his finger down a page in his book.

I retrieved the sword from the table and held it flat in both hands as I walked towards Ulenor. He saw how I held it and nodded in approval.

"Now, this is the tricky part. You'll need to tap into your magical well and open yourself up. Don't actually pull any power into yourself, just open yourself up for me to control you." Ulenor looked at his spellbook for another moment, then continued.

After a more thorough explanation, I swapped my grip to the hilt of the sword for safety and tapped into my magical well. It had grown over the past week, and felt like sticking the tip of my finger into an ocean. I held myself there, right at the brink of actually pulling power from my well, and waited. Being that close to drawing the power into myself without actually doing it was quite uncomfortable, and I began to sweat.

“I apologize in advance,” Ulenor said. “This might be disorienting.”

The wizard uttered a few words in his magical language and closed his right hand into a fist. A sickening feeling washed through me, like someone had just grabbed onto my very soul and snatched it out of me. My initial response was to resist, but instead I relaxed and let Ulenor take control. With a slight nod, he began pulling from my magical well, drawing the power from me directly into his spell. As he chanted his spell, he drew more and more power.

My arms shook as Ulenor pulled power from me. I closed my eyes and focused on remaining upright, which was incredibly difficult, as I felt like I was simultaneously on fire and buried in snow. My heart rate skyrocketed and sweat broke out over my entire body. I opened my eyes and saw Ulenor chanting something, but I couldn't hear him. The only thing I could hear was the blood rushing in my ears. I couldn't even feel the sword in my hands any longer; all I could feel was the enormous amount of power coming from me.



A flash of light skittered across the blade of my sword once, then again. I struggled to maintain my grip as it vibrated in my hands. Ulenor pulled even more magic from me, making it hard to focus on anything else. With the torrent of magical power rushing through me, I expected to look down and see my skin split and catch on fire.

Time seemed to slow, then come to a stop. I was intimately aware of every hair on my forearm, of the very grain in the steel of my sword. I felt a tiny flaw in the steel near the tip, and had to resist the urge to try to fix it. With this much power rushing through me I wondered if I could feel individual oxygen molecules in the air.

For a moment, I thought I really had caught on fire. The sensation of fire and ice that I was growing accustomed to when holding a large amount of magical power had faded, and in its place only the fire remained. I burned like the sun and had to grit my teeth against the pain.

The blade of my sword flashed again. Light began dancing along the length of the blade, flickering and turning yellow, then orange. A small tendril of flame formed near the crossguards, then raced up the blade. Another one formed, and soon the entire blade was sheathed in burning flame.

The sword burned in my hands for several moments like a torch, then the flames winked out. Ulenor sat hard on the chaise, his shoulders sagging, and released his hold on my magical power.

I fell to my hands and knees, blinking away stars in my vision. My sword clattered onto the marble floor, the blade showing no sign it had been encased in fire only seconds earlier. My heart galloped in my chest and I struggled to stay conscious. Shaking my head slowly side to side helped keep me awake.

“Is it done?” I had to force the words out.

“Yes, yes. It is done,” Ulenor said. He threw a tassled pillow at me, then fell backwards on the chaise and passed out.

The pillow landed next to me, so I reached out for it and pulled it beneath my head. I looked at the sword and my hand slowly crept towards it. I managed to touch the pommel before darkness took me.

“**A**ndrew! My lord, are you alright?”

The man’s voice sounded like it was coming through a layer of water on its way to my eardrums. Everything was murky and dark. I was at the bottom of a lake, struggling to swim through gel-thick water toward the surface that seemed a mile away. My mind fought for wakefulness, struggling against being pulled back into darkness.

“I’m okay,” I muttered, the words sounding thick with sleep. I forced my eyes open, and the blinding light immediately caused me to close them again. It was like being woken up a few hours after taking sleeping pills.

“Do you need me to get the healer?” the servant asked, gently shaking my shoulder.

I took a deep breath and pushed myself up to my hands and knees. No wonder this guy was worried about me, I had passed out face-down on the floor. My nose ached; I felt a bit of dried

blood crusted around my nostrils. I forced one eye open a sliver and looked at him.

He was a chubby goblin man with gray streaks in his short navy-blue hair. Bright blue eyes watched me with concern. He reached out for my shoulder again.

“I’m just very tired,” I told him. “We were working with magic, which can be exhausting.”

I looked over at Ulenor. He was still lying on his back on the chaise, mouth open, snoring softly. His spellbook had fallen from his hand and lay open on the floor.

“Sorry old guy,” I said. “But I have to wake you.” My yawn felt large enough to crack my jaw. “But maybe not quite yet.”

I sat back on my heels and rubbed my eyes with my palms. A heavy blanket of exhaustion still weighed me down, but I fought through it. The old servant reached for me again, presumably to help me up, but I waved him away.

“I’m fine, really. Thank you for checking on us.”

“Okay, my lord,” the servant said, bowing as he backed away.

“I will be right outside the door if you need anything.”

“Thanks,” I said, rubbing my eyes with the heels of my hands again. With a grunt, I pushed myself to my feet and swayed there for a moment. I had a feeling the servant would spread word of my exhaustion and within the hour I’d have people offering to massage my arms and legs and hold me while I slept. I was tired enough that it sounded appealing.

I stumbled over to Ulenor's bathroom and pumped some water into the sink. Splashing the cold water on my face helped to wake me fully. After drying my face, I walked back into the room.

Ulenor was sprawled on the chaise, so I sat down next to him and gently shook his shoulder. It took a few minutes, but he finally snorted and woke up.

"How long were we out?" he asked, his eyes bleary. He heaved a great sigh and pushed himself into a seated position with a loud grunt of effort. After yawning, he fixed me with a red-eyed look. "I told you it was tiring." His stomach growled loudly.

I walked over to where my sword had fallen and fetched it from the marble floor. Holding it in hand, I examined the blade. There were no signs it was different in any manner. The steel was cool to the touch, although I reminded myself I had been asleep for several hours.

"So how does this thing work?" I asked, gesturing with the sword.

"You simply need to speak a magical word to activate it, and the blade will ignite," Ulenor said, stifling another yawn.

"Is this thing going to set me on fire?" I asked, suddenly wary. Carrying a giant burning torch in my hand didn't sound very safe, suddenly.

"No, the fire will be completely harmless to the wielder," Ulenor replied. "You won't even feel its warmth. Here, let me

show you.”

Ulenor took the sword from me and held it in both hands. It was a bit large for his small goblin body. He spoke a single word in the language of magic and the blade burst into flame.

“Now, if you were to touch this, it would burn you,” Ulenor explained as he raised his left hand and placed it on the flat of the blade. “But as you can see, since I am the wielder of this blade, the flames do not harm me.” Flames flickered across his hand as they raced up the blade, but his skin was unharmed. “Here, you try.”

The flames winked out as Ulenor spoke the magic word again. He handed me the sword, hilt first, and I held it in my right hand.

“Here goes nothing,” I said, and spoke the magic word. Immediately, flames burst into existence along the full length of the blade. I brought my off-hand close to the blade and just like Ulenor said, I didn’t even feel heat from the flames.

“Impressive, isn’t it?” Ulenor asked.

I closed my mouth when I realized I had been gaping at the sword. Reddish-orange flames licked up the blade, as if I held a board that had been soaked in oil. No smoke rose from the top, which was a plus. While I couldn’t feel any heat from it, the sword did put out a large amount of light.

“This will make one hell of a torch,” I said, giving the blade a few test swings. The flames moved with the wind, but did not so much as flicker. I swung it as fast as I could and the flames

stayed strong. After speaking the magic word again, the flames disappeared in an instant. Carefully, I placed my hand near the blade, then touched it. It wasn't even warm.

"Amazing," I whispered, then looked over at Ulenor. "Shame it took so much out of us."

He chuckled at that. "Yes, we'll both sleep well tonight. I would suggest eating plenty, as well." He winced as he knuckled the small of his back. "Also, I wanted to talk to you about your magical pool."

"Is everything okay?" I asked. I walked over to where I had set the scabbard on the table and sheathed the blade.

"Everything is more than okay," Ulenor said. "I figured you would be strong, but I had no idea it would be like that. In all my years as a goblin, I don't think I've ever held that much power, or even seen anyone else do it. As such, that is a strong enchantment on your sword. It will burn hot and strong anywhere, even underwater."

I patted the sheathed blade. "Well, let's make sure we stay well-rested, because we'll be enchanting my armor in a few days."

Ulenor groaned, but eventually nodded. "Yes, yes, it will be done. I know these are requirements for fighting Vogrim."

"Do you think there's a way to enchant my crossbow?" I asked. "Something to flatten the trajectory and increase the range? Increase the power?"

Ulenor frowned. “Oftentimes, weapon enchantments affix an elemental quality to a weapon. I’m sure there is a way to do what you ask, but I’ll need to confer with others about it. The library might have something about it. Maybe the royal wizard.”

To be blunt, I needed a gun. Those were many years from being invented, and many more years from being accurate, but if I could enchant a crossbow and make it good enough, I would be in a good place. Being able to snipe people from a distance would give me a hefty advantage. After all, when dealing with ten-foot-tall walking cattle, one couldn’t be too careful.

“Well, thanks for this,” I said, hefting the sword. “This is a big help, Ulenor, on many levels. Obviously, being able to set people on fire will help me a lot, but if Vogrim’s watching, then he’ll see that I’m using powerful magic. Plus, the intimidation factor. If a dozen lizardfolk see me approach with a burning sword, they’ll shit themselves.”

“They don’t really feel fear,” Ulenor said.

“If a dozen orcs see me approach with a burning sword, they’ll shit themselves,” I corrected.

Ulenor frowned. “Orcs don’t scare easily, especially once they sense a fight. They’re savage and cruel.”

“If a dozen minotaurs see me approach with a burning sword they’ll shit themselves,” I said, then held up a hand when Ulenor opened his mouth again. “Ah, nevermind. I know they won’t scare easily. Well, either way, having a flaming



longsword is awesome, so thanks.” I struggled not to yawn after seeing Ulenor do so.

“I’m going to get some food and then call it an early night,” Ulenor said, standing and stretching his hands over his head.

“Not a bad idea,” I replied. I could go for some food myself, not to mention a good twelve hours of sleep.

“Well, thanks again,” I said as I walked towards the door. I pulled it open and left.

The servant outside the door bolted to his feet as I exited.

“Do you need anything, my lord?” he asked, eager to serve.

“Yeah,” I told him. “I need you to take it easy.” I clapped him on the shoulder. “I’m good, man. Life is great. Just relax a bit, okay?” I laughed as I strolled down the broad hallway.

Having servants wasn’t all bad, I suppose, it just wasn’t what I was used to. Although to be honest, the bowing and scraping wasn’t my thing; it annoyed me at times. Back in my army days, I used to hate it when talking to some smug captain that got pissy when I didn’t address him by his rank every other sentence. In the end, we were all flesh and blood, just the same. My world held no room for egos.

As soon as that thought flew through my mind, I reminded myself I was planning on marrying a princess. While King Freg seemed like a nice guy, I would certainly have to put up with my own share of that when I was around him.

After this trip, I was starting to get used to the layout of the royal palace. I found my way back to my room, and waved off

the servant outside.

“My lord, I must inform you that the—” he began, but I cut him off.

“Whatever it is, it’s fine,” I said. “I’m just going to wash up and get a quick bite to eat.”

I pushed the door open and strode into the room, holding my sword by its scabbard in one hand. As soon as I had taken three steps into the room, my eyes went to the figure of a woman leaning on her elbows, looking out the window. I reached back and closed the door, then turned to the woman.

She wore a dress of fine silk that was cut to emphasize her womanly figure. Her legs looked toned, visible as the silk was stretched against them, and ended in an impressively round ass. Long hair cascaded down her back, most of which was bared by her dress. Hearing me enter, she straightened.

I adjusted myself quickly, as my sudden erection was pulling at my pants almost painfully. I was looking forward to this one. She turned and, seeing me, smiled.

“Hello, Andrew,” Queen Cinnai said.

**M**y boner deflated like a leaky balloon. I held the sword in front of me to hide it.

“Oh, your highness! What a pleasant surprise!” I tried my hand at a clumsy bow, then turned and walked to the pitcher set on a table. At least that way she wouldn’t see the fading bulge in my pants. “Can I get you a glass of water?” I asked as I picked up a crystal goblet and filled it from the pitcher.

She chuckled behind me, her voice low and musical. “If you had any wine I would gladly accept, but we’ve all heard of your strange propensity towards drinking water. No, I’m fine, Andrew. Thank you for asking.”

I tossed back half the goblet of water in a single gulp and took a deep breath to relax the remainder of my erection. Finally feeling decent, I turned back to the queen. *My queen*, I reminded myself.

“How can I help you today, my queen?” I asked, trying not to blush. I really, *really* hoped the queen wasn’t here for me to

impregnate her. Talk about awkward.

She studied me for a moment, tapping her full lips with a slender forefinger. Her beauty was like that of her daughter's, but in full bloom. If this was what Lossia was going to look like in the future, I was a lucky man indeed. I made it a point to avoid the low neckline of her dress. It wasn't easy, future mother-in-law or not.

"I just wanted to speak with you for a moment," Queen Cinnai said, still watching me. With her piercing green gaze, I felt like I was being measured, weighed, and judged. "My daughter has told me quite a bit about you."

Such an open-ended statement. Of course I hoped Lossia was saying good things about me, but I didn't want to come out and say that. I remained silent.

"She's quite taken with you," the queen continued. "All three of them are, for that matter. I wanted to know what sort of man you were. What kind of man does it take to win over women such as they?"

Time to impress. I took a deep breath. "Well, I'm from a different world, of course. One that's much more violent and polluted than yours, unfortunately. I spent a tour in the army, so I know how to fight—that'll help me defeat Vogrim. I'm confident I can do it. Ulenor says he hasn't seen a sorcerer as powerful as me in many years."

She waved my words away. "That's all great, but what kind of man are you?" She stepped closer and poked me in the chest. "In here, I mean. What do you value? You just mentioned that

you're from a violent world; I won't have my daughter with a violent man. You should know that my reach extends as far as the borders in Brovania, and if any harm should befall her, you won't be safe."

I broke out into a cold sweat. "No, no, nothing like that," I stammered, not wanting to anger my future mother-in-law. "I know how to fight, but I'm not a violent person. In fact, I've come to love the peaceful way of life that the goblins value."

The queen raised a single eyebrow a fraction, and I quickly continued.

"You have a wonderful daughter," I said. "Although I'm sure you know that. But really, she is beautiful, inside and out, and has such an incredibly sweet personality. Honestly, I think growing to love her will be one of the easiest things I'll ever do."

"And how will you treat my daughter?" Queen Cinnai asked. "What is she worth to you?"

"Everything," I replied. "I believe that old saying is true: 'Happy wife, happy life.' I'll do what it takes to keep her happy." I took a deep breath. "And Thilli and Cirro as well. All of them."

"Yes," the queen said, wrinkling her nose delicately. "I am definitely aware of your arrangement. One man with three wives?" She scoffed. "But I suppose these aren't normal times we live in. And you were promised any women you'd like as a reward for saving us. I am told you are doing well with the women we send you. You're doing your duty and treating

them well afterwards, not like pieces of meat. Every single woman has practically sung your praises. That is good.”

That time, I did blush. Knowing that my future mother-in-law was checking in on how I was impregnating women was uncomfortable at best. I tried to change the subject.

“Ulenor and I just enchanted my sword with fire,” I said, pointing at the weapon. “I’m having armor made as well, and we’ll be enchanting that soon. I’m taking my training very seriously. I must leave York in a handful of days and travel back to Gillamoor to help defend the city against a raiding party sent by Vogrim.”

“Yes, we are all aware of your plans,” she said. “It is honorable that you wish to help the city defend itself, but do you really think one extra man will make a difference?”

That comment was like a knife right into the heart of my ego. While I wasn’t an overly prideful person, I suddenly felt an overwhelming urge to stand up for myself, and perhaps boast a bit.

“When that one man is me, it makes all the difference,” I told her, my voice hardening. “Your people know peace, but my people know war, and I’ll be *damned* if I’m going to let some walking livestock threaten what I’ve grown to love so dearly. I’ll slaughter every single minotaur myself if that’s what it takes!” I realized I was almost shouting and quickly closed my mouth.

Queen Cinnai grunted. “Well, at least you have a spine,” she said, not at all impressed. She gave me another head-to-toe

look, then swept by me and walked towards the door. “I just hope you’re strong enough to back up those words. It would be a shame to lose such a promising young man.”

I opened my mouth to say something, but closed it after a second. I had no idea what to say to this woman, and I had a feeling words didn’t matter. Actions mattered to Queen Cinnai. For now I would simply do my duties and prepare. Once I had killed Vogrim’s soldiers, we would talk again.

“Oh, and Andrew?” she said, turning as she reached the door.

“Yes ma’am,” I said, immediately realizing that was the wrong thing to call her.

“I do hope you succeed, Andrew,” she said, giving me a smile. “Just remember that my daughter deserves only the best. Oh, and that I prefer poison.” Her smile deepened. “Have a good day, dear.”

And just like that, she was gone.

“The queen just threatened to poison me if I ever mistreat her daughter,” I said to the empty room. “And an hour from now, she’ll send a dozen women here for me to impregnate. What a fucking weird world I’m in.”

A knock sounded at the door a few minutes later and I pulled the door open. The royal cobbler stood there, boots in hand, and hurried past me into the room.

“I worked as hard as I could, my lord,” he said as he stood in the middle of the room and held the boots up. “Had both my

apprentices working as well. I think this is the fastest I've ever completed a set of boots. Please, try them on."

Eager to be rid of my old running shoes, I kicked those off and accepted the boots from the cobbler. I stamped my feet into them, marveling at the fit. The supple leather was a dark brown, nearly black, and moved with me as I bent my ankle back and forth a few times. They fit like I had already worn them for a month.

"You're a master at your craft," I said with a smile. "These feel great. I can't thank you enough for getting me out of my old shoes."

"Yes, well..." he trailed off as he looked down at my worn, stained running shoes. He laughed softly, then shook his head. "I'm sure the entire kingdom will be grateful they don't have to see those old things any longer," he said, chuckling.

After that, he bowed and left the room. The servant waiting outside peeked his head in and looked around.

"Is everything okay, my lord? Do you need anything?" he asked.

"Actually, can I get some food? I'm starving." Using all that magic had built up a huge appetite.

"Right away, my lord." He hurried away to fetch some food.

I walked over to the nearest chair and sat down, then rubbed my temples. After a moment, I sat back and laughed.

"Goblin world problems," I said, and kept laughing.



**W**hen a dozen women came to my room later that day, I briefly thought of telling them that I only had the energy for half of them, and even that would be a stretch. Working with magic had left me too exhausted.

The moment I saw them, the words died in my throat. Every time I saw these goblin beauties, I felt like I was in a dream. There was no way women could be this beautiful. The feeling of awe and wonder never seemed to fade.

But they were that beautiful, and they all wanted me.

So we took our time. I did my best to stay hydrated, and devoted plenty of time to each woman, making sure to treat her like she was the only woman in the room while we were doing the deed.

My exhaustion got the better of me and I almost didn't finish. Zozella's blessing was a hell of a thing though, so once again I managed to satisfy a dozen women. As soon as I was done, I

grabbed the nearest woman, held her tightly, and promptly fell asleep.

Goblins didn't get morning breath. That was something I learned over these days spent with so many women. I brought it up to Ulenor the next day and he scratched his head in confusion when I asked him about it. The very notion of morning breath was completely foreign to him. Apparently goblin saliva was naturally antibacterial. They didn't get cavities, either.

Being a human, I still got it though, so as soon as I woke up I went to the bathroom to brush my teeth. I didn't want any part of me to be unpleasant to these ladies.

Back in the bed, one of them had woken up. As soon as I climbed back under the sheets, she was on top of me, her breasts bouncing with every thrust of mine. Something interesting happened as my hands held her waist tightly and I pounded her good and hard. I began to see Cirro's face, or sometimes Thilli's or Lossia's. I missed them, and I realized I couldn't wait until all this was done and it was just us four. I imagined that it was Cirro riding me and that we were making love in our own house.

I should have expected what came next. As I was smiling up at this woman, near orgasm and imagining she was Cirro, I found myself overwhelmed with emotion in that way that happens sometimes in bed. And so, as I came inside her, I told her that I loved her.

She straightened up and gasped, covering her mouth with both hands. I felt like a complete moron.

“But—but Andrew, you don’t even know me!” she exclaimed.

She wasn’t wrong. I didn’t even know her name.

“Not like that, I’m sorry,” I said, quickly trying to cover. “But, I *do* love you,” I said. “Each and every one of you.”

Several more women had awakened during our lovemaking, and now listened to me intently.

“You’re all so beautiful and so special,” I continued. “And you’re here to save your people. I have nothing but love and respect for women like you. All of you.”

A dozen faces smiled at me, and soon I found myself at the bottom of a group hug that included breasts pressed against my face. No complaints here. When they moved off of me, I grabbed the two nearest women and held them close and just relaxed for a minute. I breathed in the scent of their skin and their hair and just existed in the moment.

It bothered me only a little bit that I gave up even trying to learn their names. They deserved the respect of being called by their names, but there were just so many. My days became a blur of naked goblin skin. I did some quick mental math and realized that if they continued sending women at the current rate during my week here, I would suck on one hundred and ninety-two nipples. I would grab ninety-six asses and cum in ninety-six pussies. Those numbers bothered me slightly and I

wanted to make them an even one hundred and two hundred. Perhaps during my daily walks I could find four more women.

The next night, something happened that further skewed those numbers, though. To be more specific, Kless happened.

The tiny woman managed to sneak into the group that came to see me that night, even though I had seen her two days earlier. I guess I had made a good impression.

Upon seeing me that evening, she jumped into my arms. I held her tightly against my chest and we kissed each other deeply as I stumbled over to the bed. Her hands fumbled at the laces in front of my pants and pulled her own robe open, and soon I had her back against the bed, pumping myself into her.

With all these women coming through my room, I was grateful to see a familiar face, even if that familiar face was just a woman I had previously slept with. Kless was a sweetheart, though. A passionate, kind woman that loved good sex, and apparently often.

She held my face to hers, and we kissed the entire time, moaning into each other's mouths as I came. Her arms went around me and she held me tightly after that, a look of pure bliss on her face. I heard some of the women whispering around the room.

"I hope he does me like that," one woman said.

"I hear he likes to grab butts, so try that," another woman.

"Especially you, you've got a big one."

"Why are you back?" I whispered into Kless's ear.

“Because this feels amazing,” she replied, working her hips back and forth while I was still inside her. “They say you’re going to kill Vogrim. I guess I’m attracted to dangerous men. I like men that can fight.”

Considering most goblins were pacifists, that made her rather unique. I didn’t want to lead her on though, so I decided to be truthful with her right then and there.

“I’ve already promised myself to the Mothers of a New Age,” I said quietly. “I’ll be marrying them as soon as I’ve defeated that horned bastard.”

She pouted slightly, but nodded. “I figured. I knew you wouldn’t choose me out of the most beautiful women in the nation, but it was worth a try. I’m still proud to do my part, though.” She leaned forwards and kissed me again.

“Oh, hold on,” I said, straightening up. “Stand up, Kless,” I said, pulling her off the bed and positioning her so she was standing in front of me. “Now, you’re one of the most beautiful women I’ve ever seen, and that’s just the plain truth. Ladies, can you help me out here?”

The goblin women weren’t shy with their compliments. In fact, since we were all in here specifically for the purposes of having sex, they got quite familiar with the things they said.

“Your eyes are beautiful like a clear day,” one woman said. “And your hair matches perfectly.”

“I love your fit body. It’s damn near perfect.”

“Your face is simply gorgeous!”

“Your breasts are the perfect size.”

“I wish I had a butt like yours.”

One woman of average goblin height and with bright yellow hair and dark eyes that reminded me of a sunflower approached Kless with a hesitant look. She smiled suddenly, and with her beauty it was like the sun shining down.

“What do you think of me?” she asked, blushing slightly.

Kless threw her hands up as if unsure what to say. “You’re as beautiful as they come,” she replied.

The woman reached forwards and took Kless’s hand, then stepped closer to her. Very close. They looked into each other’s eyes for a moment, then the taller woman leaned down and kissed Kless.

“Was that okay?” she asked, her voice quiet.

Kless smiled. “I think so.” She leaned forwards and kissed the woman back.

Several of the other women in the room cheered as the two wrapped their arms around each other and continued kissing.

“I guess I’m a good matchmaker, right?” I asked, and a few of them laughed.

They finally stopped kissing, and the taller woman smiled at Kless. “My name is Ozee. I’ve never—” She looked up at me suddenly and gave me an apologetic smile. “I’ve never really been attracted to men. No offense, Andrew. I’m here to help my people, but I.... Well, that is....”

I knew what she was trying to say, so I decided to help out.

After pulling off the rest of my clothes, I had the rest of the women help undress both Kless and Ozee. Then, I told the two of them to hop on the bed and have their fun.

And they did exactly that. Within seconds, their mouths were locked together and their hands were grabbing and caressing each other's bodies. Ozee had ignited a spark of lesbian love inside Kless and the two were focused completely on each other.

I climbed onto the bed next to them, and Ozee tensed up briefly. She stopped kissing Kless and put on a forced smile.

“Go ahead,” Ozee said. “I know you have to do your duty, and so do I. I'm ready.” There was a hint of fear in her eyes, but also determination.

“Don't worry,” I said with a smile.

Ozee was on her back, with Kless straddling her. Kless leaned down and the two began kissing again. I moved between Ozee's thighs and another woman spoke up.

“Come on, girls, let's make it fun for her.”

Half of the women climbed on the bed and swarmed over Kless and Ozee. One of them gently pushed me out of the way—although she was nice enough to plant a kiss on the head of my cock first—and buried her face between Ozee's thighs, bringing immediate moans from the woman. Other women kissed and caressed both Kless and Ozee and let their hands

grab and their breasts rub all over the women. Ozee looked like she was in heaven.

“She’s ready for you,” the woman in front of me said with a wink. She reached down and grabbed my cock, then guided me into Ozee’s hot, wet pussy.

Ozee’s moan was loud and strong, and immediately muffled by first a set of massive breasts from a nearby woman, then by Kless’s lips. They held each other tightly and kissed deeply and passionately while I thrust in and out of her. Instead of holding onto Ozee, I reached up and grabbed Kless by the waist. As she was sitting on Ozee’s lap, her pussy was right on top of the other woman’s. Their clits were practically touching.

I couldn’t help it. I pulled out of Ozee and thrust into Kless several times, then went back. Both of them moaned loudly as I went back and forth between them. One of the women finally pushed Kless up so she was seated upright, and latched herself onto one of Ozee’s nipples. Another woman took her other nipple, and her hands caressed Ozee’s stomach.

“I suppose there’s a first time for everything,” another woman said as she lowered herself right onto Ozee’s face.

Ozee’s eyes widened with surprise, then excitement. I watched her tongue rub against the woman’s labia before the woman sat down and I lost my view. I just busied myself with thrusting in and out of her.

I had experienced a lot of things in my life, especially since arriving in this beautiful world. But I had never been part of a lesbian orgy before. I have to say, my first time was amazing. I



continued thrusting for a few seconds into Ozee, then switching to Kless until both women were moaning and shaking. Another woman was busying herself with kissing Kless, and that woman reached back and grabbed onto Kless's perky backside, encouraging me to pound her harder. So I did.

I was initially hesitant about how hard I was thrusting into Ozee, but all concerns were assuaged when she yelled "harder" from beneath another woman's thighs. I gave it to her good and hard, fucking her with long, deep strokes. Soon I reached my limit and blew inside of her tight pussy.

The women surrounding us smiled, laughed, and cheered as I came. The woman that had been sitting on Ozee's face moaned loudly as she reached orgasm, and Kless rolled over onto her side, breathing heavily. With no one else between us, I realized it was just Ozee, lying on her back, and me, on top of her, still buried to the hilt inside her.

Our eyes met and her shy smile melted a little. She reached a hand towards me and I took it, using it to pull her to me. She wrapped her luscious thighs around my waist and I held her against me.

"I think I could get used to a man," Ozee said, holding me tightly. "Thank you," she whispered into my ear.

I kissed her forehead, then laid her back down on the bed and pulled myself out of her. Kless curled up next to Ozee, and then two women held each other tightly.

"Two down, ten to go," I said as I walked towards the pitcher of water and tried to rehydrate myself. I needed a better way to

choose which woman was next. Something fair, and something fun.

“Let’s play rock, scissors, paper,” I said, turning to the women.

**E**xcitement filled me as I strode through the crowded city streets the next morning. I tried some of the street food on the way there; I didn't have any money so I had to ask Ulenor for some. Up until that point I hadn't needed any money. Hopefully Vogrim would have some treasure room to loot, or else I'd have to find myself a job.

The small, puffy pastries reminded me of mini donuts, but they were on a stick. Next came some kind of thin sausage wrapped in dough and cooked over a fire. It too was served on a stick. I realized that most goblin street food was served that way. It made for easy consumption while walking.

My stomach was full of delicious treats by the time I made it to the military compound inside York. Most of the soldiers within ignored me and continued about their business, but a few of them gave me appreciative nods or waved. I hurried towards the building where I had met Kruzz only a few days earlier.

“Hello?” I called out as I entered the building.

“What do you want?” a gruff voice replied.

I grinned and stepped into Kruzz’s office. The goblin’s glare melted into a smile when he saw me.

“Andrew, good to see you,” Kruzz said as he stepped out from behind his desk. “Come, come, I have your armor partially done. We can do some fitting while you’re here.” He hurried out the door and I followed.

Together, we walked to a nearby building where several goblins were busy crafting and mending armor. One of them was studiously pulling a needle and thread through a gambeson made from many layers of what looked like linen.

“Here, let’s go ahead and test the fit,” Kruzz said. He barked a few orders at the goblin sewing the gambeson, and the worker hurried to comply. Together, he and Kruzz brought me the gambeson and helped settle it on my shoulders.

It was surprisingly lightweight; about as heavy as a light jacket. It covered my arms down to the elbow, and my legs down to mid-thigh. I could already see where the leather plates were intended to go. They had also built a heavy leather belt that would buckle around the waist of the gambeson, in case I ever chose to wear my sword there.

“It fits great,” I said, twisting one way then the other. “I don’t think I could have asked for anything better than this. Do you have the leather ready?”

Kruzz nodded and scooped up a pile of paper-thin leather pieces that were lying upon the table. “After boiling the

leather, we scraped them down as thin as we could. I sure hope you know what you're doing."

"I don't, but Ulenor does," I said with a grin. I unclasped the gambeson and handed it back to the worker. Kruzz handed me the leather pieces, and I remarked on just how thin they were. "These will work great."

"I put two extra ones in there," Kruzz explained. "Once you do your magical hardening, it's important that you test the extra leather pieces to complete failure. You need to know what the limits are."

"Good thinking," I told him as I hefted the handful of leather. "Well, good day to you. I'll bring these back as soon as we're done." I paused and thought for a moment. "Actually, scratch that. I'll be unconscious. I'll have someone bring them back to you."

"I look forward to it," Kruzz said with a bow of his head.

I hurried away from the military compound, excited to see what we could do with the leather. With my power and Ulenor's capabilities, I imagined we could make these paper-thin pieces of stiff leather damn near impenetrable.

The guards at the entrance to the royal palace waved me through with a smile. I had mentioned to one of them on my way out that I was having armor made so I could fight Vogrim. They were nearly as excited as I was. And I couldn't blame them, considering what Vogrim had taken from them.

Several people looked quizzically at me as I rushed through the hallways with an armload of what looked like leather scraps. This time, I managed to get lost, and had to ask for directions to Ulenor's room.

"You're on the wrong floor, my lord," a young servant said with a bow of his head. "If you'll follow me, I'll take you to him right away."

He took me down a winding staircase, and soon we were at Ulenor's door.

"Is there anything else I can get you, my lord?" the young servant asked.

"Actually, yes," I told him. "If you can wait here about ten minutes or so, I'll need you to take all this somewhere," I said, hefting the pile of leather in my hands to indicate it.

"You'll call for me?" he asked.

I thought on that for a minute. "Actually, scratch that. I'll be unconscious. Just come in about ten minutes from now, and if Ulenor and I are both passed out, take all of these leather scraps to Kruzz. He's the guy in charge of all the weaponsmiths and armorers. He'll know what to do with them."

"You'll be unconscious?" he asked.

"Yeah," I said. "We're working with magic so we'll be exhausted. Just let us sleep. Maybe tuck a pillow under me," I added with a chuckle.

“Of course, my lord,” the goblin said with another bow. He took his place next to the door while I went inside the room.

“Andrew, good to see you,” Ulenor said upon my entrance. “I trust you are well?”

“Never better,” I said. “Well-rested and I just ate, so this should be a good time to enchant this stuff for my armor.”

Ulenor stared at the small pile of leather in my hands. “And your goal is to strengthen these?”

“Yes,” I said with a nod. “I want to make these as tough as possible. They’re going to be sewn into my gambeson.”

“Yes, yes,” Ulenor said. “Well, I have just the spell for that. Found it in the royal library yesterday.” He pulled his spellbook from a pocket inside his robe and thumbed through the pages.

“Do I need to hold them like I held the sword?” I asked.

“No,” Ulenor replied. “You can stand right there if you’d like. You could even sit down.”

“Well, shit. You mean I could have sat down the entire time we enchanted the sword?” That certainly would have made the whole thing easier.

Ulenor grinned. “Each enchantment is different. For most of them, you should be able to relax. At least, I believe so. No one has enchanted things before in the way we are doing it. Ordinarily, it is done by a single person.”

“Well, let’s get this done, then,” I said. “Should I lay them all out on the floor?”

Ulenor nodded. “Yes, so that I can see the face of each one. That is, the side you want to be strengthened.”

I carefully placed each piece of leather on the marble floor, face-up. Each piece had small holes around the edge, which I assumed was how they would be attached to the gambeson. Once I was done, I sat behind them and crossed my legs. I tried my best to clear my mind and just relax.

“Okay, I’m ready,” I said. I took a few deep breaths and readied myself. “Wait, am I going to feel like I’m on fire again?”

Ulenor shrugged. “Hard to say. That feeling is common among the strongest of sorcerers, or so I’m told. Wielding that much power is not easy on the body or mind. Since today’s enchantment is so different, I imagine you’ll feel something other than that. I suppose we’ll see.”

“Yeah, I suppose,” I said. After another deep breath, I nodded to him. “Okay, I’m ready.”

Once again, Ulenor reached out and grabbed onto my magical power. The feeling was just as uncomfortable as the first time, but at least I knew what to expect. I shivered as Ulenor pulled deeply from my magical well.

The wizard fixed his gaze on the pieces of leather and chanted in the magical language. The words tugged at my mind, like a language I could nearly understand. As his words grew in



volume, I felt more and more power being drawn from me. My skin tingled, not like the fire and ice I felt a few days earlier, but something completely different. The hair on my firearms stood on end, and my skin felt like it was hardening, becoming a shell.

In fact, it was. I tried to move my arm, but found it stiff. I was frozen in place; my head wouldn't turn to either side. I struggled to breathe. This was far, far worse than the fire and ice sensation.

And just like that, it was gone. I was tired, but not exhausted like I had been with the sword. My skin had returned to normal, and I flexed the remaining stiffness out of my hands.

“That wasn't so bad,” I said.

Ulenor sat on the chaise and held his spellbook tightly. He looked up at me.

“That's one piece. Only about twenty to go.”

I blinked as a bead of sweat rolled into my eye and tried my best to ignore it. My practice sword came up just in time to parry a devastating blow that would have otherwise cracked me on the side of the helmet. I followed it up with a simple lunge, a move I had practiced countless times by now.

Sergeant Nerras twisted to the side and my attack found nothing but air. He moved back into a fighting stance so quickly it almost seemed like he had never moved.

“That was good,” he said. “Not nearly fast enough, but you’re learning quickly.”

“Think I’m ready to challenge a minotaur to a duel?” I asked with a laugh.

“You might be able to take one of the lizardfolk,” Nerras said, shifting his grip on his sword. “A sick one, that is.” He rushed forwards, his practice sword a blur as it arced towards my ribs.

I moved my sword to parry, but Nerras changed his attack mid-swing. My sword kept moving to my left as Nerras’s

wooden sword slammed into my side. I grunted from the impact, but felt no pain.

“That armor of yours really is something,” Nerras said, taking a step back and leaning on his practice sword. “I’m sure you could tell I put some force into that one.”

I tapped my finger on my chest, right where one of the enchanted leather plates had been sewn into my gambeson. “Yeah, these turned out better than I expected, although making them knocked me out for twelve hours.”

“I need something like that,” Nerras said.

I chuckled at the man. If he had armor like mine, he would probably try to fight Vogrim himself.

“I’ve noticed you keep turning so that the sun is in my eyes,” I told him. “A nasty trick. I like it.”

“Always do what you can to give yourself an advantage,” Nerras explained. “Any advantage, no matter how small, is something to consider. Put the sun in your opponent’s eyes. Move around so that they step on something wet. Throw sand in their eyes.”

“They should have you in charge of Gillamoor’s defenses,” I said. “Sounds like your mind is in the right place.

He waved off my comment. “Eh, I don’t like being in charge. Not like that. I’d rather be with the men, fighting.”

“I can respect that,” I told him. “So, any more for today?” I spun my sword in a circle, still trying to get used to the weight.

“I think an hour per day is enough,” Nerras said. He reached up and pulled off his helmet and I did the same.

I blinked up at the sky for a moment, right as a small cloud passed in front of the sun. “You know what I just noticed? It hasn’t rained since I’ve been here.”

Nerras stopped in the middle of removing his gambeson and nodded. “You’re right. It rained on us once as we were traveling, but that was a natural rain. I don’t think any of that poison has touched me in two weeks, now.”

“Perhaps Vogrim is busy working on his army,” I wondered aloud. “Though I imagine it’ll rain here again soon. There’s no way he gave up or forgot. Us traveling definitely helped though. Maybe with enough travel, we’ll see how long it takes his curse to fade.”

Nerras set his gambeson on a nearby rack and paused as if choosing his words carefully. “I wasn’t going to bring this up, as no man is comfortable talking about it, but I’ve started to see a change.” He looked at me. “I woke up this morning with an erection. A weak one, but the first in years. As I’ve said, I seemed to have a weaker reaction to his curse than other men. Perhaps it’s wearing off, at least for me.”

“Well, shit,” I said. “If that’s not a reason to celebrate, then I don’t know what is. Come on, let’s go get a drink.” I held my gambeson in one arm. “Well, let me put this stuff up first.”

“Ah, that’s fine, although I appreciate it,” Nerras said. “I have too much to do today. They’re having me train a bunch of new

recruits while I'm down here. Apparently, word spread that I know how to use a spear."

Together we walked from the practice yard, across the grass within the military compound. We spoke of several things, mostly subjects pertaining to the goblin lifestyle. I still had a lot to learn.

"That reminds me," I began. "I've been meaning to ask you. All these women they're having me sleep with, I'm sure not every one of them is single. Are any of the goblin men going to resent me because I got their wife pregnant?" I felt awkward even asking the question.

"I don't see why they would," Nerras replied. "In normal times, perhaps. I like to think we're a very practical people, though. In these dark days, with our survival at stake, a lot of goblins have changed how they think about things. Personally, I would love to have a family." He reached up and clapped me on the shoulder. "Even if our eldest kid was half human. In fact, I would be proud to raise such a child."

That comment planted a seed in my mind, and that thought grew until I had an idea. A wonderful idea.

"Hey Nerras, I have an idea," I told him. "I need you to come to my room tonight, around sunset." I remember it was summer—or at least I thought it was—and corrected myself. "Make it a little before sunset. Wear something nice. Just trust me on this one."

He gave me a narrow-eyed look. "What are you trying to do?"

“You wouldn’t believe me if I told you,” I replied with a laugh. “I’m just going to ask you to trust me.”

“Fine,” Nerras said with an exaggerated huff. “We’ll part ways here, though. As I said, they’re working me pretty hard here.”

I shook the man’s hand. “Always a pleasure, Sergeant Nerras.”

He gave me an odd look, the one he always did when I referred to him by his rank, but nodded and thanked me.

I hurried through the crowded streets of York, making my way to the royal palace. By this time the path was a familiar one, so I was able to make it there and to my room without getting lost. I hurriedly dropped my gambeson and helmet on a chair, then put on a fresh shirt. No sense in walking around sweaty.

After that, I left my room and walked towards the other side of the palace, where the royal family stayed. I grabbed the first servant I found and asked to see Torm, the royal steward. The man nodded and hurried away.

Only minutes later, Torm was rushing down the hallway towards me.

“Andrew, my lord. How can I be of service?” he asked, only slightly out of breath.

“I need to speak with the queen,” I told him.

“Right now?” he asked.

I nodded. “It’s very important.”

He gave me a slight bow. “Then I shall bring you to her, though I cannot guarantee she’ll see you. If you’ll follow me,

my lord.”

I had never been in the part of the royal mansion where the king and queen lived. It was much like the rest of the royal mansion, with colorful tapestries on the walls, broad windows, and rich carpets covering the marble floor.

We eventually stopped in front of a set of large double doors. Torm turned to me and motioned for me to wait.

“I’ll only be a moment, my lord,” he said. He knocked three times on the door. At the queen’s command, he entered and closed it behind him.

“Well, fingers crossed,” I said, tapping my fingers on my leg as I waited.

A few minutes later, Torm pulled the door open and slipped back into the hallway. He stood straight and addressed me in a much more formal tone than before.

“The queen will see you now, Andrew,” he said. Then, he added in a whisper. “You’re in luck. She’s in a good mood today.”

“Well, hopefully I don’t ruin that,” I said with a chuckle.

Torm pulled the door open for me and I entered the queen’s chamber. Or perhaps the king and queen’s chamber. I didn’t know how this stuff worked. Judging by the decorations and the tapestries, this was a shared room.

The queen herself was standing in the center of the room, regal as ever with her hands clasped neatly at her waist. Her dark red dress had a high neckline, but the silk clung to her every

curve in a way that made me focus extra hard on her face. I once again found myself grateful that Lossia had this woman's genetics.

"Torm informed me that you have some important news for me," Queen Cinnai said.

"Yes ma'am," I said, then cleared my throat. "Uh, I mean your highness."

She smiled at my slip, then walked over to a table that held a silver pitcher. "Would you like some wine?" she asked, pouring a small glass for herself.

"Actually, yes," I said. "I would love some wine. Ulenor gave me a glass back in Gillamoor and it was some of the best wine I'd ever had."

The queen poured a second glass and held it towards me. I approached her and took the glass from her, then tried a sip of the ruby red liquid. As expected, it was excellent.

"So," she said, taking a sip of her wine. "What is it you have to tell me?"

"It's about Vogrim's curse," I began. "Of course it goes without saying that I'm going to kill him and end this once and for all, but I believe that a few weeks away from the poison is enough time for some men to start to see the negative effects wear off."

She raised one perfectly manicured eyebrow a fraction. "And how do you know this?"



“Because I just spoke to a man, one of my companions that traveled from Gillamoor with me. It’s been more than two weeks since he’s experienced any of the cursed rain, and he said he could feel, uh, differences.”

“Feel differences?” the queen asked.

I didn’t want to talk about dicks with the queen, but there was no way to avoid it. “Certain parts of his body are starting to work again.”

Her eyebrows shot up at that. “Really? Are you sure?”

“He’s not a man I would expect to lie,” I told her. “This gives me hope that things will turn back to normal once all of this is done.”

She set her goblet of wine down. “Some of us had suspected as much, but it’s a hard notion to test. This is good news, Andrew. Thank you.”

“Of course,” I said. “Oh, and there was something else. Can I make a request? You know, for tonight?”

Again, the slight raise of her eyebrow. “You can make a request,” she said.

I explained in detail what I wanted, and did my best to also tell her why I was making that request. Her reaction was first mild suspicion, which changed to surprise and then a smile.

“I would be glad to help with that,” the queen said. “I’ll get Torm on it right away. This is a kind thing you’re doing, Andrew.”

I shrugged. “Just trying my best to be decent,” I said. “Well, thank you, your highness. I’ll head back to my room now.”

“I’ll see you soon, Andrew,” Queen Cinnai said, taking another sip of her wine.

With that, I left and went back to my room.

I was tired. Not only had I been working with magic every day—often until I passed out—but I was training with Nerras each afternoon and then doing my duties each night. I both ate and slept well, but it was a lot of activity for a guy to do. It was only a matter of time before exhaustion caught up to me.

Perhaps I should have tried to take it easy on myself, but I only knew how to give a hundred and ten percent. If they wanted me to fight a giant sorcerer, then I was going to train every day for it. If they wanted me to save their species, then I would breed with every woman possible, no matter how exhausting it was.

On this particular day though, I was taking a moment to myself. I figured I had earned that much.

I ate my dinner in my room instead of the dining hall. Relaxing on a large, overstuffed chair, I enjoyed the view from my windows while filling up on goblin food. It was, as

expected, delicious. The goblins were as good at making comfortable chairs as they were at cooking awesome food.

When the women came in that evening, I remained in my chair, relaxing. They immediately approached me, all of them ready to go and clearly having thoughts of banging me right there on the chair, but I simply stayed in place. I was going to try to take it easy tonight.

Well, as easy as they would let me.

“Hello Andrew,” Kless said, laying her fingers on my arm as she came near. Ozee stood next to her, holding Kless’s other hand. “Having second thoughts about me?” She looked over at Ozee. “Or about us?”

“Yes, but not like you think,” I replied, shifting in my chair so that I was facing her. I gave her my full attention. “You said you like dangerous men, right?”

“Yes,” Kless said with a slight blush. “My mother always used to joke that I was part wild animal when I would stare at the royal guards all the time.”

I took a deep breath. Time to shoot my shot. “A friend of mine will be here soon, and I want you to meet him. He’s just the kind of man you’d like.”

Kless looked at Ozee, then back at me. “Are you—wait, what?”

“He won’t talk about it, but the man’s a hero,” I told her. “Ulenor, the wizard, told me the story about a week ago. Nerras was a scout and came across a small force of Vogrim’s

minions—a minotaur and a dozen lizardfolk—and Nerras killed all of them himself, with no backup. Nearly gave his life, all to save one farm.”

Ozee swallowed. “Nerras? I’ve heard that name. I think everyone has heard his story. The way some people talk about him, you’d expect him to be seven feet tall.”

Kless’s look of concern changed to a slight smile of disbelief. “Are you serious, Andrew? Nerras? *The Nerras?*”

“Yes, I am,” I told her. I took her hand in mine, and then grabbed Ozee’s hand as well. “He’s just the kind of man you’d like, Kless, and he would love to have someone close to him. And since I’m guessing you two are now a package deal, I hope you’ll like him as well, Ozee.”

The two women looked at each other and shared a smile.

“Plus, you’d have someone to help you raise your children, if you two are pregnant,” I continued. I still didn’t know just how compatible I was with goblins, but hopefully my seed was taking root, so to speak.

“Andrew, we’re saving our entire race with these children,” Ozee explained. “I think most men would fight for the chance to take one of us as a bride.”

“Well, that’s perfect,” I said with a laugh. “Because Nerras would definitely win that fight.” A knock came at the door, firm and loud. “I’ll bet that’s him. Come on.”

I pushed myself to my feet and walked to the door, still holding onto Kless and Ozee’s hands. When we got there, I

turned to face them for a moment.

“How does my hair look?” Kless asked, patting her sky-blue waves.

“Beautiful as always,” Ozee replied, leaning forwards and kissing her girlfriend.

“Ready?” I asked.

They both nodded.

I pulled the door open and saw Nerras standing there with his hand up, getting ready to knock a second time. He quickly lowered his hand when he saw me, and his eyes widened a fraction when he saw the two beautiful women behind me.

Sergeant Nerras’s face was freshly shaved, and his short black hair had been neatly styled. His clothes, dark green and utilitarian as usual, were clean and pressed. The collar of a snowy white shirt peeked out from beneath his jacket, which was something I wasn’t used to seeing on him. The leather of his boots gleamed.

“Good to see you,” I said, offering him my hand. He returned the handshake with a firm grip. “Come on in, Nerras.”

“Okay,” he said cautiously as he stepped into the room. “So, what did you call me here for?”

“Because I wanted you to meet someone,” I said. “Two someones, to be exact.” I turned and gestured towards Kless and Ozee, who were holding hands and standing right by us. “Nerras, allow me to introduce Kless and Ozee.”

“Hi,” Kless said shyly, and Ozee waved.

Oh, this was awkward.

“Why don’t you three go over there,” I said, gently nudging them to the far side of the room where a massive sofa and a matching chaise filled a corner. A set of massive windows there offered a splendid view of the royal gardens. I leaned down and whispered into Nerras’s ear. “She likes military men.”

“Which one?” he whispered back.

“The short one,” I said. “Kless. Be gentle with the other one.”

He gave me an uncertain grin and followed the two beauties to the far side of the room. On a whim, I stuck my head outside the front door and found a servant there.

“Hey, can you bring a small pitcher of wine and three glasses?”

“Of course, my lord,” the servant said, leaping to his feet.

“Go ahead and bring it in when you get back. There’s a man and two women sitting over there,” I said as I pointed towards Nerras and the ladies. “It’s for them.”

“Right away, my lord,” the servant said, and hurried away.

I smiled as I watched the servant jog down the hall. It felt good to do something nice. Hopefully Nerras would get along well with them. Ozee suddenly laughed softly, and Kless hid a giggle behind her delicate hand. So, Nerras had jokes. Good.

“Okay, ladies,” I said, speaking to the other ten women in the room. “We’re going to give them some space.” I pulled open the door to my bedchamber and waved them through. I looked back before entering, and Nerras caught my eye. He gave me a quick smile, then went back to making Kless and Ozee laugh.



And so the day finally came. My last day in York.

The last eight days had been filled with more women than most men experience in their entire lifetimes, something for which I was eternally grateful. Each one of them had been a true gem. I had also experienced the hospitality of a king, something that was unmatched. And the food!

I strolled down the hallways of the royal palace in my best clothes, while two servants behind me carried the rest of my things. Granted, that wasn't much. I only owned a handful of clothing, some armor, and a few weapons. I still didn't have any money, although fortunately I didn't need it as everything was provided for me.

As I exited the massive front doors of the palace, I couldn't help but feel a pang of sadness. I was excited for my future, but I would always remember this time.

"Good morning, Andrew," Ulenor said to me. He was standing on the front steps of the palace, apparently waiting for me.

“Ulenor, good to see you,” I said, clapping the small man on the shoulder. “Ready for the trip back home?”

The small man gave me a smile. “Yes, yes, I certainly am. As much as I enjoy York, I can only take so much of this hectic place. I prefer a calm life. Plus, I need to keep training you so you can reach your full potential, and the sooner the better.”

Together, we walked down the broad steps of the palace. A convoy of wagons and horses waited for us, although this one was much smaller than what we had ridden into York. Nerras was at the front, giving orders and checking horses. The first wagon was the one I had ridden in previously, so I directed the servants to place my things in the rear of it. To my surprise, I saw three familiar faces next to the wagon behind mine.

I hurried down the last of the stairs and approached the wagon. Lossia turned and smiled when she saw me. I pulled her into a hug, savoring the feeling of her large breasts pressed against me, and kissed the top of her head. Cirro smiled at me as well. Thilli tried to fix me with her customary stern gaze, fists on hips, but a smile kept breaking through.

“I missed you,” I told them, and meant it. It really was great to see them again. I could have stood there holding Lossia all day and been happy. “I thought you three would stay here in York, considering how important you are.”

“Well, *someone* decided to tell the king that he hadn’t slept with us yet,” Thilli said. “It’s important that you do your duties, Andrew. And perhaps we wanted to keep an eye on you.”

“Oh, is that your reasoning?” I asked wryly.

“Of course,” Thilli replied, crossing her arms beneath her breasts.

I released Lossia, then reached out and grabbed Thilli by her tiny waist. As light as she was, and with Zozella having recently blessed me with increased strength, I hefted her into the air easily, and spun in a circle.

“Are you sure you aren’t coming because you’re madly in love with me?” I asked, slowly lowering Thilli until I could kiss her.

“Put me down this instant!” Thilli said, but she couldn’t stop smiling.

I set her on the ground and held her tightly. She returned the hug fiercely. Ah, I had missed her. She was a wildcat, but she was going to be *my* wildcat.

“I’m not entirely sure what you said, but you made a great impression on my mother,” Lossia said when I had released Thilli. “Yesterday she came to me and told me she approves of me marrying you. Of all three of us marrying you, even.”

“I guess I just have my way with people sometimes,” I said with a shrug, then reached out and took Cirro’s hand. “Oh, by the way,” I said to Lossia. “Could you tell your mother not to poison me?”

Thilli and Cirro looked briefly horrified, but Lossia barked a laugh.

“I should have expected as much from my mother,” the princess said, shaking her head. “Ever the protective one. Although she’s also the one that encouraged me to become a Mother of a New Age. With me being the princess, it’s only right that I help save my people, she told me.” She finished that thought with a shrug. “Leading by example, she called it. I’m just glad it led me to you, Andrew.”

“We leave in five minutes!” Nerras called out from the front.

“Here, let me help you all into your wagon,” I said. Cirro was the closest, so after a kiss I helped her up first.

“I’m perfectly capable of climbing into the wagon on my own,” Thilli protested.

“And I’m perfectly capable of throwing you in there,” I told her with a grin. “Let me help you.”

She pouted for a moment, then smiled at me and let me help her up. After that, I helped Lossia into the wagon, making sure to slap her on the ass as she climbed up.

I caught an unmistakable glimpse of sky-blue hair as I peered into the wagon. I smiled to myself and stepped to the side, so I could see the entire caravan. After waiting a moment, I finally caught Nerras’s eye. I looked a question at him and gave him a thumbs-up, to which he responded with a grin and a shrug.

“Looks like their date went well, indeed,” I said to myself with a laugh.

Ulenor struggled to climb into the wagon so I hurried over to him and helped.

“Thank you, Andrew,” he said. “Lately I feel like my joints are aging more with every passing day. Oh, I just need to take better care of myself.” He shuffled around in the back of the wagon, stepping over our things, and made his way to his seat while I climbed up. “I sit around and read all day, so it’s no wonder my body aches whenever I try to use it. Perhaps you can help me walk each evening, when we go over your magic lesson. That’ll teach you to use magic while moving, as well.”

I stepped over the sacks of clothing and my belongings and made my way to my seat, all the while thinking a good suitcase would be nice. My situation had been somewhat last minute, but still. I made a mental note to see if anyone had one of those, and if not, to invent it.

“Think we can make better time on our trip back to Gillamoor?” I asked Ulenor as I settled into my seat. The padded bench wasn’t the best, but it was better than I was expecting from a covered wagon. I looked behind us, to the wagon where my future wives rode. I saw them, over the shoulder of the driver. We exchanged smiles, and I laughed again as I once again saw a glimpse of sky blue hair. Kless and Ozee were doing a bad job of hiding, but I didn’t think anyone really minded. In fact, I wasn’t even sure who they were hiding from. Perhaps they just felt like they were sneaking off on a grand adventure. In such a peaceful world, I couldn’t blame them.

“We might be able to shave off a day,” Ulenor replied. “You’ll have to confer with Nerras and ensure he’s okay pushing the

animals harder. We'll have to start our days earlier and end them later, as well."

"That's fine," I said, looking off to the horizon. "If it gives me one extra day before the fighting, it's worth it.

"Move out!" Nerras called out from the front. The way he barked orders temporarily took my mind back to my army days.

And with no further fanfare, we were off. Our caravan of wagons and horses slowly started moving down the broad stone street in the opposite direction it had a week prior. Some of the guards watched us leave, and several of them offered me a salute. I was happy to return their salutes.

"I wonder if at any other time in history, people have been so glad that a man had sex," Ulenor said, punctuating his quip with a laugh. "What odd times we live in," he added.

"I'm just glad I'm here to experience them," I said with a smile.

I looked back and managed to catch Cirro's eye. She smiled at me, a smile filled with affection.

I also found myself grateful to be leaving York, so I could begin my future. It felt like blasphemy to say or even think, but after nearly a hundred women in eight days, I was looking forward to settling down with Lossia, Thilli, and Cirro. Just us for the rest of my years. And with the type of lifestyle the goblins lived, hopefully my life would be long and peaceful.

“What are you thinking about?” Ulenor asked. “I can tell by the way you’re staring off into nothing.”

“I’m just thinking about my future,” I told him. I decided at that moment that I was done with my breeding duties. All I wanted was my wives.

Several people in the crowd recognized me and raised a cheer. I smiled and waved at them. I don’t think I would ever get used to being cheered everywhere I went. But then again, I’d never saved an entire race before.

I turned back to Ulenor. “So, let’s talk about healing.”

The next few days passed quickly and without incident. When we stopped for lunch the first day, I spoke with Nerras and asked him if we could cut a day off the journey. He nodded and said he was already planning on that.

“You’ve been practicing with magic so much that I figured you’d want to use it against those minotaurs,” he told me. “Best plan is to have some extra time to prepare before they arrive. Besides, I want to make sure I get the chance to stick a few arrows in those bastards, and I won’t risk them arriving a day early.”

I knew I liked that guy for a reason.

Ulenor scanned the area around Gillamoor through Gus’s eyes every evening and kept a close watch on Vogrim’s minions. They hadn’t slowed down their march, and looked as if they would arrive exactly when expected. Ulenor made some comments about their armor, and how substantial it looked.



“You’ll need to plan for that,” he warned me. “Especially the minotaurs. I don’t believe arrows will do much to them. The orcs carry large shields with them. I don’t like this, Andrew.” The old man combed his fingers through his beard. “I don’t like this one bit.” His eyes glossed over again as he transferred his focus back to Gus.

“Who needs satellites when you have a bird spy?” I said with a chuckle of appreciation. Having Gus gave Ulenor and the goblins a huge advantage. Being able to watch your enemies was invaluable.

Ulenor suddenly shook his head. “Ugh!” he spat, then scrubbed his hands across his face. He looked like he was struggling not to vomit.

“Are you okay?” I asked, leaning towards him.

Ulenor took a deep breath and cleared his throat roughly. “Yes, yes, I’m fine. Gus was keeping an eye on our attackers, but suddenly saw some bugs and started eating them. I know he’s a bird, but I detest when he does that while I’m looking through his eyes.”

I laughed out loud. I couldn’t help it. The thought of this old man spying through a bird’s point of view and then suddenly gagging because the bird ate a worm had me cackling. As far as side effects went, that was a pretty small price to pay for the advantage of Gus’s sight.

Each night I practiced magic with Ulenor. We would walk a lap or two around the caravan while I worked on casting something basic; I preferred to work on fire magic. It surprised

me how much more difficult it was to use magic while moving around. The practice helped me split my attention, and the walking helped Ulenor keep his joints happy.

We also practice healing magic. Being a sorcerer, healing was naturally more difficult for me, but I had an advanced understanding of the human body compared to the goblins. It made it a lot easier when I had the knowledge to direct the body to heal properly. I practiced by using my knife to make a few small cuts on the back of my forearm, then healed them. I directed my blood to clot, then for my body to send granulation tissue to the area. The cuts healed right before my eyes, and the amount of magical energy I expended was small enough that I could still function afterwards. Slow progress, but still progress.

After that, Nerras would arrive and we would spar. I focused on controlling my sword with one hand, so my left hand was free to hold a shield or use magic. Obviously, I didn't want to set Nerras on fire, so I sometimes sent gusts of wind at him in the middle of our sword fights. It was barely enough wind to ruffle his clothes and push him back a few inches, but it gave me valuable experience in using magic during combat. It wasn't easy, that was for certain.

After two weeks of hard practice, I didn't get nearly as tired after using magic. Anything powerful would still drain me, though. I had enough strength to throw a bit of elemental magic at my opponent during a fight and maybe heal a small wound. Much beyond that and exhaustion set in. Ulenor remarked at how quickly I progressed, but admitted it would

be months before I could use it regularly without nearly passing out afterwards.

Each night when I finished with all my practice, I always went to see my wives around their campfire. I loved being around them; from Cirro's sassiness to Lossia's sweetness to Thilli's sternness, I enjoyed every minute in their company.

Nerras also spent this time with Kless and Ozee. Kless usually sat on his lap while they all talked and laughed. It was nice to see Nerras, a hardened soldier, laugh so often and freely.

When I was with my future wives, we discussed all sorts of things, from personal stories to brainstorming what our future house would look like. I was a simple man and said I'd be happy with a basic house. Cirro, perhaps because she grew up poor, wanted a mansion. What Thilli described as an ideal home sounded more like a fortress to me. Lossia wanted a small cottage in the country, with fields of flowers on every side.

When we were done I always spent a few minutes holding each of them and telling them how much I cared. I would go back to my blanket roll afterwards, and as soon as I got comfortable and everyone in the camp went to sleep, Cirro would show up, ready to keep me warm, as she put it.

It was rare that even five minutes passed before we were making love. Cirro enjoyed being on top, so I let her ride me each night. Sometimes after we finished she would fall asleep like that, with me still inside her. When that happened, she

always woke me up in the middle of the night for a second round.

On the fourth night, something different happened. I was lying on my bedroll, fully nude with my blanket pulled up to my chest, thinking about how much I was looking forward to Cirro arriving. Life was great. I still had to fight some monsters, but I was up for that. Everything else made it worthwhile.

A set of slender green legs stepped close and I pulled my blanket aside so Cirro could climb in with me. She removed her diaphanous robe and slid in next to me, her skin soft against mine. When she pulled her jet-black hair over one shoulder, I started. Cirro's hair wasn't black.

"Thilli?" I asked.

She looked up at me, her big violet eyes intent on mine. "Hi, Andrew," she said to me softly. "Surprised to see me?"

"Yeah, but in a good way," I said, recovering from my initial shock. I wrapped both arms around her and held her tightly.

"Is everything okay?"

"Everything's fine," she said, snuggling against me. "Cirro and Lossia won't shut up about how much they love sleeping on you, so I decided to give it a try. I must say, you're not the most comfortable pillow I've ever owned."

She moved her head around, making a real point of showing I wasn't as soft as the goose down she was probably used to.

After an exaggerated huff, she finally laid her head on my chest and sighed.

“Better now?” I asked, barely containing my laughter.

“What are you really planning on doing with us?” she asked after a few minutes of silence. “You agreed to take us as wives, so we basically belong to you. What are you going to do?”

“Right to the heavy stuff, I see,” I said quietly. “Don’t worry, Thilli. I don’t have anything crazy planned for our future. Just the four of us in a little house with a few kids running around. Something peaceful and quiet. Well, as peaceful and quiet as things can be with a few kids in the house.”

“Where?” she asked.

“Hard to say,” I replied. “I haven’t seen much of Brovania yet. York is neat; I like cities. There’s so much to do there, and if you need something, you know you can get it. But I also like the peace and quiet of smaller places like Gillamoor. The weather is also a few degrees cooler up there, which is something I can appreciate after a lifetime in Florida.”

She nodded against my chest. “I spoke with my father in York and he said something similar. He always enjoyed the times when he traveled to Gillamoor, for much the same reasons.”

“He sounds like a man of taste,” I quipped.

“Do you love me, Andrew?” she asked after another long pause, her voice quiet.

“I’ll put it this way,” I told her. “You’re my favorite woman named Thilli within ten feet of here.”

“Oh, you rascal,” she said, slapping me on the chest. Her hand lingered on me for a moment, then slid down to my stomach, then slightly lower. My blood boiled at Thilli’s touch. She left her hand there, just below my navel, driving me insane. I could feel the desire in her fingers, the way she touched me.

She finally removed her hand and brought it up to my face, pulling me down for a long kiss.

“Hey,” I said quietly.

“Yes?” she asked, turning her head to look me in the eye.

“It’s just us now. I’ve done my duty, and I want my wives and no one else.” I held her gaze as I told her the words.

“Goodnight, Andrew,” she said with a smile, then snuggled against my chest.

“Goodnight, my dear,” I whispered back.

The next day I awoke feeling incredibly refreshed. That had been the first night in a long time where someone didn't wake me up for midnight sex. While I enjoyed a romp in the small hours, getting a full night's sleep felt fantastic. I felt ready to take on the day.

We ate our breakfast in the wagon while the soldiers ate in the saddle. Nerras was pushing us to move as quickly as possible, without overly stressing the animals or making our trip miserable.

"Hey Ulenor," I began, twisting from side to side in my wagon seat to stretch my back. "Another question about healing magic. Can it only be used for recent injuries or can it fix things that healed on their own already?"

The old wizard brushed his fingers through his long beard as he thought. "It's not so black and white," he finally said. "Healing magic is used to heal, simply put. If you had a finger cut off, it would not restore your finger, no matter how powerful you were. However, it would close the wound. If you

cut your leg and somehow kept the wound open for a month without letting it heal, then healing magic would close it up, although I imagine there would be scarring.”

“So as long as there’s something to heal, it’ll work?” I asked, seeking confirmation.

Ulenor nodded. “Why do I get the feeling you’re going to try something?” he asked.

“Because I am,” I replied with a grin.

Ulenor sighed and shook his head, but he wore a smile. “Okay, what is it this time?”

“Just watch,” I told him.

I spread a thick blanket onto my seat next to me and got comfortable, as I knew I’d probably pass out after this. Then, I opened myself to my magical well and pulled deeply, drawing as much magical power into myself as I could hold.

From there, I directed my healing energies into my mouth. I sorted through my blood, focusing on the minerals dissolved within.

“The enamel of our teeth is made from calcium and phosphorus,” I said. My voice sounded hollow and distant to my ears. I pulled the minerals from my blood, directing them to my mouth, right to my upper left molar. A porcelain crown had covered that tooth for the last few years after a root canal, and the idiot dentist had put it on slightly crooked. The damn thing bothered me every time I ate.



Cracks formed in the porcelain crown and it split in my mouth. I spat the broken pieces into my hand and continued forcing my body to heal. Minerals oozed into my mouth, rebuilding the dentin and enamel on my molar.

“What have you done?” Ulenor asked, his eyes wide in shock at seeing the broken porcelain crown in my hand.

“I fixed some bad dental work from a few years ago,” I said. I still held on tightly to my magical power, for as soon as I released it I would collapse. Waves of exhaustion crashed through me and threatened to pull me under. “I can explain it in a bit. You know what’s coming next.”

I tongued my freshly healed tooth, smiling at the perfectly smooth enamel I felt. I laid down on top of the thick blanket I had set on my bench seat and released my hold on my magical well. Only a few seconds later, I was in a deep sleep.

Several hours later the gentle rocking of the wagon woke me. I rubbed my eyes with my palms and sat up, then stifled a yawn.

“Well if I’m ever having trouble sleeping, at least I know what I can do to put me out,” I said.

“You said you were going to explain what you did,” Ulenor began.

“Yeah. Hold on,” I said, stretching both arms over my head. “So back in my world, if you have a problem with a tooth, like a cavity, what they basically do is grind down the outside of your tooth and put a crown on it.”

Ulenor's face scrunched in confusion at the word "crown" so I explained further.

"I'm not sure why they call it a crown, to be honest. But it's like a fake tooth that goes over what's left of your damaged one. They're made of really tough material so they don't break, and generally once it's done you won't even know it's there."

"Fascinating," Ulenor said, leaning forward with interest.

"The problem is, I had one that had been installed slightly crooked," I told him. "It wasn't a huge issue, but sometimes food got caught there and it drove me nuts. While we were talking about healing, it dawned on me that teeth don't really heal. So if my body saw my tooth as an unhealed wound, perhaps magical healing would be possible." I spread my hands. "And here we are, and now I have a perfectly healthy tooth again."

"So what do your people do when you break an arm?" Ulenor asked, only half serious. "Do they cut your arm off and put a fake one on?" He wiggled an eyebrow at me.

"No," I laughed. "That's just for teeth. Sometimes I forget that you goblins don't get cavities." Ulenor raised an eyebrow so I continued. "Bacteria in your mouth that leads to decay. It can eat a hole right through your tooth. Pretty awful stuff, really."

Ulenor placed a hand over his mouth at my description. "That sounds horrible. How do you deal with it?"

I shrugged. “We brush and floss our teeth and try not to eat too much sugar. If you wind up with a problem, like a cavity, you go to see a dentist, which is just a doctor that specializes in teeth. He injects you with something that numbs your mouth, then drills out the decayed part, then fills the hole with something that hardens and acts like your normal tooth material.”

Ulenor’s eyes widened at my description of modern dentistry. “How barbaric!” he exclaimed. “I don’t know how people survived your world. From how you described it, it sounds like a nightmare. I mean no offense, of course.”

“None taken,” I said. He had a point. My world was a tough, cruel place that rewarded people that stabbed others in the back on their way to climbing the corporate ladder. But then again, we didn’t have magic. We had to do everything the hard way.

Granted, if we had magic we would probably just fight our wars with it.

“It’s not all bad,” I said. “I mean sure, there’s a lot of war compared to your world, and violence and crime as well. But we also have centuries of scientific discovery. We sent people to the moon.”

Ulenor stared at me for a moment in disbelief. “What?” He pointed up, indicating the sky. “The moon? You mean, just like the moon in our world, up in the sky?”

I nodded. “Yeah, roughly fifty years ago we made it there. No magic, just science and technology. We built a rocket, a huge

one, and sent it into space. In fact, we even have what's called a space station in orbit around the Earth at all times, with people living in it. Think of it as a little house in space, orbiting the planet just like a small moon. It's about, uhh, I think two hundred and fifty miles up in the sky."

"How is that even possible?" Ulenor asked, his voice incredulous. "You say you don't have magic, but what you describe to me certainly sounds like magic. How else could you do these things?"

"Advanced technology often looks like magic," I responded with a shrug. "Look, I'll do what I can to help you guys out. I can't tell you how to split atoms, but I can tell you that they can be split. Does that make sense?"

"What's an atom?" Ulenor asked.

I laughed. "I guess part of the challenge will be figuring out where to start. Of course, that's assuming your world follows the same laws of physics as mine." It had to, though. Things simply wouldn't work otherwise. Planets wouldn't form if gravity were too weak or strong, for example.

But then again they had gods in this world. Real deities that could make physical changes to the planet. So who knew.

"I guess one of the first things we can do is build better tools, so your scientists can discover more about your own world," I told him. "If it's like mine, I can help confirm or deny things, at least to the best of my knowledge. I'm no genius but I've taken a few science classes and seen a documentary or three. I still think a railroad should be the first thing you guys build."

We talked about that for a while. I had told King Freg about my idea for a railroad while I was in York, and he seemed delighted at the idea. He immediately saw the benefit of fast travel between the cities.

Once again, I found myself concerned that I was going to ruin their pacifist way of life. I didn't want to do that. Back on Earth, a lot of inventions had come as a product of war. The thought of bringing that to the goblins made me want to vomit. Perhaps due to all the war and death I had seen during my years in the army, I wanted to believe that there could be peace. The goblins would have their peace, whatever it took.

“Do you think things will be peaceful once Vogrim is dead?” I asked.

Ulenor rubbed his hand over the top of his head and frowned. “Hard to say. We're pretty good at avoiding conflict—even with the elves, may they rot—but Vogrim brought this to us. We're just the first step in his desire to conquer the world, remember. If he were gone? Hmmm.” Ulenor combed his fingers through his beard. “I can't say I enjoy thinking about this, Andrew.”

“Yeah, neither do I,” I said. “But it's important. We need to plan for the future of the goblin people.”

“Yes, yes, I understand,” Ulenor said. He breathed a heavy sigh. “To answer your question, no we would not be fully at peace if Vogrim were dead. We still have the orcs to our west, and sometimes I believe fear of Vogrim is the only thing that keeps them from attacking. The same might be true for the

elves to our east, although perhaps they simply lost their taste for war when we burned their cities during our escape. I don't think we have to worry about the south. Barely anything can survive in the swamps down there."

"For a bunch of pacifists, you have some excellent soldiers," I told him. "I don't want to change your way of life, but each city will need to ensure they have enough soldiers to defend against attacks. As I understand it, right now each city has a bare bones defense force that is barely adequate. They're mostly for show."

Ulenor looked at me for a moment, then nodded his head with a frown. "We don't like fighting, Andrew. It's not in our nature."

"I know, and I want to keep things that way," I said. "But at the same time, I want to make sure you guys stay safe. The attacking force approaching Gillamoor will be a good test. After that we'll bolster the city's defenses. I have a few ideas."

Ulenor sighed and shook his head. "There is no way to avoid it, is there?"

"No," I said, stretching out and placing a hand on his shoulder. "I'm sorry, but there isn't. War is coming, whether you like it or not. And I'm going to make sure we survive."

After that, I instructed Nerras to have all of his soldiers spar each evening after the caravan stopped. Even just running them through drills, focusing on basic attacks until they were so familiar the soldiers could do them in their sleep. I spoke with him at length about how we had to bolster the goblin military without altering the peaceful nature of goblin society. He nodded in agreement.

Lossia watched with wide eyes and I did my best to explain to her that the goblin people had to learn to fight in order to ensure a peaceful future. I could tell from the way she looked at me she didn't like it, but she saw the truth in it.

"Things are changing," I told them. "And I didn't get pulled into a new world just to lose a fight."

Images were important; that was something I learned early on in my stint in the army. It suddenly dawned on me that if I was talking a big game about fighting back and building up their military power, I didn't want to be seen riding in a wagon. If I was supposed to be a leader, I needed to look like one.

“What now?” Ulenor asked as I got up from my seat.

I shuffled towards the back of the wagon and put my hand on the side. “Time to do this the right way,” I told him.

I carefully hopped over the side and only stumbled slightly when I hit the ground. As soon as I got my footing, I jogged alongside the caravan until I reached the front. Several of the goblin soldiers turned and looked at me, surprised. One of them called out for Nerras and directed his attention at me.

“Andrew?” Nerras asked, moving his horse to the side of the dirt path. “Did you suddenly feel like a bit of exercise, or is there a reason for this?”

“Mind if I swap with one of your soldiers and finish this trip in a saddle?” I asked. “I’d much rather be at the front of this train than sleeping in a wagon.”

“Wilz, ride in the wagon with the wizard,” Nerras said to the nearest soldier, who immediately bowed his head, then steered his horse to the side of the path. He quickly dismounted and hurried to the wagon, catching the edge with a gauntleted hand as it passed by. He hoisted himself into the wagon and settled onto my seat.

I stood next to the horse for a minute, staring at the majestic beast. The only experience I had with horses was at petting zoos as a kid, and all I remember from that was that you had to feed them with your hand flat, or else they’d bite the shit out of you. Oh, and sometimes they would just slam their head into you and knock you over. Ornery bastards.



Riding a horse couldn't be too hard, though. I placed my left boot in the stirrup, grabbed the pommel, and pulled myself up. The saddle was a bit too small, but otherwise more comfortable than I had expected. Cirro leaned out of her wagon and watched me as they wheeled by.

"What are you doing, Andrew?" Thilli called out, her head next to Cirro. Lossia turned and watched me as well.

"Alright, buddy," I said to the horse. "You had better not embarrass me in front of them." I gave the three beauties my best smile and sat straight in the saddle. I clicked my tongue and tapped the horse's flanks with my heels and the horse began walking. Another click and it sped up some, moving slightly faster than the caravan.

After a few minutes I found myself at the front, riding next to Nerras. Riding a walking horse, at least, was quite easy. The animal seemed placid enough that I only paid half a mind to it and focused on Nerras.

"I was just thinking," I told the sergeant. "If I'm supposed to be some savior and defeat the bad guys, I should probably ride up front instead of lounging in a wagon. I should look the part, you know?"

"Good thing you came to this conclusion on the last day of our trip," he said with a grin.

"Hey, better late than never," I replied. "So, looking forward to not being so lonely?"

Nerras barked a laugh. “Kless insisted on coming, and where she goes, Ozee goes. I think even those two are surprised at how quickly they fell in love with each other. Sometimes I feel like all I have to do is just be there and smile and they’ll handle the rest of the relationship.”

“And there you are, able to enjoy them both,” I added with a smile.

“Yeah,” he said. “It’s not a bad situation, that’s for certain. Ozee will take a bit of time to grow accustomed to a man, but Kless is practically ready to marry me already. Thank you,” he said, giving me a look that was suddenly very serious. “I mean it. As I’ve told you before, most women shy away from us military types. Kless loves it.”

“I’m glad you guys are happy,” I told him with a smile. I tried to avoid thinking about the giant pink elephant in the room; that the only reason Nerras had been able to meet them was because I had banged them first, and that his future wives might be pregnant with my children. Awkward didn’t even begin to describe it.

“I see that look in your eyes,” Nerras said. “I know what you’re thinking. It’s okay, Andrew. You were doing your duty. You’re saving our people. If one or both of them are pregnant from their time with you, then I would be proud to help raise one of the first goblin children in five years. Those children will be a beacon of hope to everyone, a reason to go on. They’ll be living proof that we have a future.”

“I just don’t want anything to be weird between us,” I said.

He waved it off. “Nothing is weird unless you make it so. What’s more important is that I build a new house. Mine is small, and.... Well, let’s just say it’s no place for two beautiful women. I’ll need to start working on a new one as soon as I have the time and money. I’m glad they’ve agreed to be patient.”

His words reminded me of what Ulenor had told me, what seemed like so long ago. As I understood it, a man usually built his own house, and offered it to his wife as a wedding gift. Something like that. Either way, Nerras was going to have his hands full. Both with two women, and with his need for a new house.

“Give plenty of flowers to Ozee,” I told him. “I get the feeling she’s that type of woman. Also, if you need any help building something, let me know. I owe you, so I’ll be the first one to help. I don’t really know how to build a house, but at least I can carry stuff.”

“Thanks,” he replied. “I will definitely take you up on that. As soon as we win this battle I’m going to start drawing up plans for it.”

Around the middle of the day, the trees on either side of the road started to thin out slightly, and I knew we were getting close. I sat straight in the saddle, even though the thing was beginning to chafe. Up ahead I could see a clearing, and I smiled.

“Almost home,” I said to myself.

“Eh?” Nerras asked.

“Nothing,” I said.

The trees continued to thin until we found ourselves flanked by only tall grass and wildflowers. Up ahead, the town of Gillamoor stood, its tall stone walls stoic yet inviting. Nerras suddenly called for the caravan to come to a halt and we sat there, waiting. It took me a minute to realize why. My eyes went to a single cloud, hovering over the town.

It was raining.

“I’m not about to lose what I’m just starting to get back,” Nerras grumbled. “We’ll wait until that blows over. If luck is with us, we’ll at least get a few more days before we have to worry about it again.”

“And in a few days we’ll be preparing to leave again,” I said, watching the soft rain fall upon Gillamoor. It was quite beautiful, as long as I forgot the rain was filled with poison. “As soon as I’m done here, I have to get ready to fight Vogrim. There are a few things I need to get on the way, so I’ll be preparing for those trips. And if you’re free, I’d like to have you with me. There aren’t many people I trust with a sword more than you, Nerras.”

He gave me a grim look and nodded. “I’ll be there the whole time, mark my words,” he said.

We waited there a good thirty minutes before the rain finally abated. Nerras scowled as he watched the rain and several soldiers behind us grumbled. I couldn’t blame them.

“There will be a mist in the air for a while, but that’ll be gone by the time we arrive,” Nerras said, his voice still grim. He looked over his shoulder. “Alright, move out!”

We continued down the dirt road towards the city. I was glad to see Gillamoor. Not only was it a beautiful city, but I felt I had made several good memories there already. I liked the feel of Gillamoor, although I wasn’t certain I wanted to live within the confines of the city wall. Oh well. I could think about that some other time, though. I had more important things to worry about.

As we drew closer to the walled town—I still couldn’t figure out if it was a large town or a small city—I noticed the massive front gates. They usually stood wide open, but now were firmly closed.

“Good,” Nerras said when I pointed it out. “They’re preparing. We’ll arrive just in time to help.” He turned to me. “I hope this plan of yours works, or else a lot of blood will be shed.”

“I’m hoping that the only blood shed will be theirs,” I told him.

When we came within a few hundred yards of the gates, Nerras spurred his horse forwards while motioning for us to remain at a walk. I heard him shout something to the guards above the gatehouse, but it was too far away for me to make out the exact words. After a few minutes, Nerras turned and hurried back to the caravan while the gates slowly opened.

“They’re ready for us,” he said. “For you, especially. I told them you would be helping with the defense of the city and

that you had a plan.”

“What would they have done had I not shown up?” I asked.

Nerras frowned in thought. “Fired arrows until the bastards quit moving. We don’t have much, but thick walls and a pile of arrows will stop most things. This is new, though. Ulenor told me how many minotaurs are coming.”

“Plus lizardfolk and orcs,” I added.

Nerras waved it away. “Yeah, but I don’t care about them. Sure, the orcs fight like cornered rats, but they go down easily enough. A dozen minotaurs? They’ll ignore most of the arrows and break the gates down.”

“They’re that bad, eh?” I asked. Nerras just gave me a flat look in reply.

When we passed through the gates, several soldiers shouted greetings and cheers. Me being in the city seemed to give them a bit of hope in the face of possible death.

I frowned as I looked around me, even twisting in my saddle to look behind me.

“What is it?” Nerras asked.

“I’m gonna need your help building a house as well,” I told him. “Can’t expect three women to move in with me when all I have is a room in the temple.”

Nerras laughed.

**A**s soon as I got settled, I began focusing on preparations for the attack. Goblins were peaceful people, not fighters. Even the ranks of their military were mostly filled with pacifists. I not only had to prepare the city for the attack, but the soldiers as well. Teaching people to kill others wasn't the easiest process, and we were short on time. I had my work cut out for me.

I spent a day going over supplies, inspecting weapons, and explaining my attack plans to the leaders. Colonel Chuleel was there, watching me with his arms crossed and a frown on his face. The man still disliked me, but after seeing me work with his soldiers and hearing my plans, he began to show me a bit of respect. He even offered a few suggestions, for which I was grateful.

The weaponsmiths and fletchers got my attention as well. When I told them how many arrows I wanted them to make in a single day I thought their eyes were going to pop out of their heads, but at a barked order from Chuleel they got right to

work. I had the weaponsmiths affix extra-long handles to as many spears as they could, also.

Ulenor came to me and told me that the attack would come soon. He still watched them through Gus's eyes and followed their every move.

The day of the attack finally came.

Late in the morning, I found myself standing in front of a platoon-sized element of goblin archers. Each of them stood at attention with their bow held to their side. I wore my magical gambeson, with my sword belted at my waist. My dagger hung from the opposite side.

“At ease,” I told them, and they widened their stance and moved their right hands behind their backs. “Our plan is simple. Thanks to Ulenor, we know the direction they're coming from, and we know they'll come to the gate to try to break into the city.” I paced in front of the archers, giving them all a hard look. “Lizardfolk die easily. The first volley of arrows should take most of them. The orcs will be next, although I've been told they're carrying heavy shields. Don't worry, I have a plan for that. Something they can't fight against.”

I paused in front of one archer, a young man of maybe twenty years. He was scared shitless, but doing a good job of keeping it tightly reined. The muscles on each side of his jaw clenched and unclenched as he watched me.

“We're all going to make it through this,” I told him, then continued pacing in front of the archers. “Because we have



something they don't." I tapped my thumb against my chest. "Me. I've been to war. I trained for it, and spent a year in a desert, fighting against men that hid in caves and attacked at night. I've seen death like you wouldn't believe, and survived it all."

One man raised a quick cheer, but I held up a hand to stop them from taking it up.

"As soon as the orcs are dealt with, we'll focus all our efforts on the minotaurs. I know a dozen of them is a serious threat, but we'll meet them head-on and show them what we're made of." I sucked at this. Motivational speeches weren't my forte, not by a long shot. I tried to think of something to really pump the men up.

"Remember what you're fighting for. Look at the man to your left, and the man to your right. Think of your families in their houses. Their survival depends on your bravery. I will be fighting there with you," I added. "I'll be the first one in the fight and the last one to leave. Don't forget, men: there is no such thing as a civilized war. Things are going to get nasty today, but I'll be with you every step of the way."

I nodded to myself. It wasn't a great speech, but it was probably the best I could have done. A quote from an old war movie suddenly popped into my head, so I went with it.

"Oh, and if any of you even think you're going to die out there on that wall, remember this: no one ever won a war by dying for his country."

That got several grins from the men.

The goblin men were not an elite fighting force. To be honest, half of them would probably piss themselves the moment things got hairy. But their arrows were sharp and they knew they were defending their homes. It would have to be enough.

We took our places atop the city walls and watched the countryside through the crenelations. I had the majority of the men concentrated near the gate, where we expected the attack. The rest of the archers were spread out equally around the city wall, ensuring all sides were covered. Each man had his bow along with a quiver strapped to his hip, with barrels of loose arrows at ten-foot intervals. A few men, including me, held crossbows.

“Where do you want the barrels?” A duo of goblin workers, sweating under the strain of carrying a small wooden barrel, waited next to me for a reply.

“Right there is fine,” I said, pointing to the rear of the battlements, behind where I stood. “Close at hand but out of the way. Put both of them there.”

The men set the small barrels where I pointed, then hurried away to grab the second one. I put the barrels out of my mind for the moment. They would come into play later, but right now I focused on the men.

“Watch where you point that thing,” I snapped at a soldier with a loaded crossbow. “Only point it at something you intend to kill.” His face colored, and he nodded. I kept moving down the line, inspecting soldiers for the third time. Everyone was ready, but going through these routine actions helped ease my

mind. Ensuring high discipline on simple things, like uniforms and weapon maintenance, could go a long way toward improving battle readiness.

“You asked for us, Andrew?” an old, scratchy voice from behind me asked.

I turned and saw three older men, two with short gray beards, waiting patiently. They wore robes in subdued shades of blue and gray and had a peaceful demeanor about them.

“You must be the healers,” I said. “If things go well today, we won’t need you, but it’s best to stay prepared. I need you three to position yourselves in the safest place you can, where you still have access to our soldiers. Hiding behind the crenelations is probably a decent idea.” I pointed to the foot-thick stone jutting up from the wall, and they nodded. “Stay near the gate,” I added. “This is where we expect the fight.”

There was no substitute for being prepared. Giant monsters or not, my confidence soared. We had a thick stone wall, we had dozens of skilled archers, and we had my little surprise. This battle would be over in a matter of minutes.

“I see them!” one of the archers shouted. He held a looking glass to his eye and kept his attention on the treeline far in the distance. “They’re coming out from the trees now.”

“Get ready!” I shouted.

All around me, archers held their bows ready and nocked arrows to their strings, ready to draw in an instant. It would be

some time before our targets were in range, but I wanted them ready and waiting.

“What are they doing?” I asked the soldier with the looking glass.

“Preparing something, my lord,” he said. A few of the goblins in Gillamoor had taken to calling me that and it was starting to spread. “I’m assuming they brought supplies to make camp with them, and they’re dropping them off. They seem to be doing something else, I just can’t quite make it out yet.”

“Hey,” I told the soldier. “Remind me when this is done; I want looking glasses like that all around the wall from now on. I can’t believe you guys haven’t used them like this before.”

He looked at me for a moment before speaking. “The city has never really been attacked before, my lord. Vogrim has sent a few beasts to scare us, but nothing was an actual threat. Not until now.” He swallowed heavily, then went back to keeping watch. “By the gods, those bastards are huge,” he said shakily under his breath.

“Let me know the moment anything changes,” I said, then turned my attention back to the archers around me. They were ready, and so was I. I gripped my crossbow tightly and patted the small quiver on my hip.

“Bring one of those barrels to me,” I said. Behind me, feet scrambled across stone and two men set a small barrel right next to me.

The butt of my crossbow split the top of the barrel, revealing thick, black oil inside.

“You,” I said to the man behind me, who straightened when I addressed him. “Take these arrows,” I said, pointing to a nearby barrel filled with them. “Soak the tip of each one in this oil, and pass them out to all of the men nearby.”

He nodded and rushed to comply with my orders.

“Do you think that’ll do much, my lord?” the man with the looking glass asked.

“The arrows probably won’t set them on fire, if that’s what you’re asking,” I replied. “Although if we’re lucky, a few of them will catch. This is more psychological. Being pelted with burning arrows should put a dent in their morale, at least the smaller ones. I have something special planned for the minotaurs.”

The soldier grinned at me, but his smile faltered. These men weren’t used to violence. It sickened them, and I didn’t fault them one bit for that. Today, we were saving the city.

But it would live on in their nightmares for years to come.

“They’re moving towards us now,” the man with the looking glass said. “There’s something around them that’s hard to make out.”

“Probably a shield wall, if they’re smart,” I said. “Shame you guys don’t have catapults or trebuchets. Although I suppose magic will substitute just fine.”

From the shadows of the treeline, they finally emerged. They were too far away for me to make out for quite some time. Slowly, they approached the city, a dark patch on the otherwise pleasant field. A breeze blew and I lifted my arms, getting some air through my armor. I had a brief memory of doing the same thing in Afghanistan, where the oven-like breeze blowing through my body armor was a welcomed respite from the intense daytime heat.

I shouted a few more motivational lines, mostly stolen from old war movies. Fear ran thick in the archers, but so did excitement. War did that to men; made them scared enough to piss themselves, but their hearts would nearly burst with the thrill of the fight. It was a hell of a thing to experience.

I asked the soldier for the looking glass, and he handed it over. After putting it to my eye, our attackers leaped into view. My heart sank.

**H**eavy shields covered most of them, but I got plenty of glimpses at our attackers as they hadn't fully formed their shield wall yet. At first, it almost looked like men running behind a group of toddlers. The reality of just how massive the minotaurs were didn't fully sink in until I saw them through the looking glass.

I blinked several times, ensuring I was seeing things correctly. These monsters were such different sizes that it was hard to wrap my head around, so I focused on the orcs first. I reminded myself that they were roughly my height. From what I saw around their shields, they looked a bit heavy in the shoulders, although their blackened mail armor hid their build well. Their skin was a ruddy gray-green that would have made Tolkien proud.

Scurrying around in front of them were the lizardfolk. The lizardfolk were around chest-high on the orcs, so a little smaller than goblins, and scampered around in a chaotic manner. Their faces were nightmarish; like a human-sized

iguana head, but narrower. They snarled and snapped their teeth as they ran in front, eager for blood. They were clearly meant to be cannon fodder, but I don't think they knew it.

Behind them all lumbered a dozen minotaurs, each wearing heavy armor, with weapons at their waists or on their backs.

Seeing them reminded me of those massive redwood trees in California. Describing them wasn't enough, even a picture wasn't sufficient; you had to see them in person to really get the full effect. When Ulenor had told me the minotaurs were ten feet tall I was shocked, but seeing it in person was much different. The orcs, being roughly my size, came up to the minotaurs' belts. The creatures were enormous, with legs thicker than my waist and horns jutting from each side of their massive heads. How the hell had Nerras killed one of these things himself? They were absolute giants.

One of the minotaurs raised a fist and bellowed a command that caused their whole party to stop. The dozen horned monsters had been carrying large objects in their hands, and they now lined up to assemble the pieces. Without even seeing what they were doing, I knew what it was.

A battering ram.

"They're going to try to break down the gate!" I shouted, keeping my eye glued to the looking glass. More curses came from the soldiers, but I ignored them.

The minotaurs formed into two lines of half a dozen each and bent down to pick up the battering ram between them. After another bellowed command, they started marching forwards at



a steady pace. The orcs formed up in front of them, shields held to cover their bodies, and the lizardfolk filled in the sides, mostly hiding behind the shields.

One goblin archer a few feet down the line suddenly raised his bow, aiming high in the sky.

“Hold!” I shouted. “You won’t hit anything but dirt from this distance. Save your arrows until I say loose.”

The archer sheepishly lowered his bow, but continued nervously tapping his foot. I turned my attention back to the looking glass.

The minotaurs were steadily marching towards us, their long legs devouring the ground quickly. The orcs jogged in front of them, still holding their shields up. The lizardfolk scampered around like wild animals.

“Archers on my left!” I called out. “Ready!”

A dozen archers pulled their bowstrings back to their cheeks.

“Aim high!” I shouted. “Try to hit them from above! Light the arrows!”

The goblin affinity for magic came in handy at a time like this. I felt several of them tap into their magical wells, and each of the oil-soaked, cloth-wrapped broadheads suddenly burst into flame. Thin tendrils of oily black smoke rose from the burning arrows.

The minotaurs picked up their pace, causing the orcs to run to keep up. Behind them, some of the lizardfolk fell behind. I got the feeling the minotaurs didn’t care.

“Loose!” I shouted.

A dozen bowstrings slapped and as many burning arrows rocketed through the sky. A few of them landed harmlessly in the dirt, but most struck the shields at the front of the attackers. One arrow buried itself in the shoulder armor of a minotaur. He ignored it. Several of the orcs tried shaking their shields to dislodge the arrows, but kept running. If they slowed, they would be trampled beneath the hooves of the minotaurs.

I could tell from the way the orcs moved that the burning arrows frazzled their nerves.

“Fire at will!” I shouted. “Look for openings in their shield wall and armor!”

I tapped into my own magical well and pulled a moderate amount of power from it as I watched the monsters. Although they were within arrow range, they slowed their pace considerably. The orcs moved, half of them lifting their shields over their heads. They layered their shields over those of their comrades, and formed an angled wall of tower shields ten feet high. It was going to take more than some arrows to get through that.

Fortunately, I had a nasty trick up my sleeve.

Using my magical power, I adjusted the gravitational pull on the barrel of oil, just as Ulenor had shown me. I continued, and it slowly rose into the air. A slight gust of wind sent the barrel over the edge of the gatehouse, where I held it for a moment.

“Aim for their feet!” I shouted, noticing that some of the orcs held their shields high enough that a substantial gap was visible beneath them. Arrows continued peppering their shields, and two went beneath one, causing an orc on the side of their formation to stumble and fall.

I hadn't yet figured out how to change the direction of gravity other than up and down, so I used a powerful gust of wind to launch the opened barrel of oil at them.

“Archers on my right!” I shouted. “Ready! Light the arrows!”

Another dozen oil-soaked arrowheads burst into flame. I pushed as hard as I could on the barrel of oil, sending a hurricane-force wind to drive it forwards.

The barrel slammed into the orcs, crumpling two shields like they were empty soda cans. The orcs holding the shields stood no chance against a force like that; what was left of their broken bodies was trampled by the minotaurs, who didn't even slow down.

Thick oil splattered in every direction, covering the party. It soaked into the ground beneath their feet and hooves as well. They didn't have time to react to what came next.

“Loose!” I shouted.

The arrows struck shields, armor and dirt, and where they landed, tendrils of black smoke grew. One of the arrows flew into the gap made by the downed orcs and struck a minotaur in the thigh. He bellowed and tore the arrow out, still not slowing.

Working at that distance was hard, but I brought forth fire from within myself and sent a bolt of flame straight into the oil spill.

“Fire at will!” I roared as I poured more magical power into the fire.

Poorly refined oil didn’t ignite that easily, but magic took care of that. I pumped so much fire magic into the oil that it turned into an inferno in a matter of seconds, sending a cloud of thick black smoke to the sky.

The orcs broke, flinging their burning shields away and slapping at fires that raged on their armor and skin. My archers were there, sending their arrows at every orc the moment his shield was lowered. Half of them rolled on the ground, trying to extinguish burning limbs, and arrows found them in seconds.

The oil had caught some of the minotaurs as well, although only one of them broke formation. He had been at the front, and as such had been covered with oil. He rolled on the ground, howling in rage and agony as he burned. The rest of the minotaurs continued their charge, though the two at the front tore shields from nearby orcs and held them in front of their bodies. Most of them had bits of smoldering armor, and they slapped at it without slowing their pace.

“Now it gets interesting,” Nerras said, suddenly appearing beside me. “That trick with the oil worked great. You think it’ll work a second time?” He leaned a long-hafted spear

against his shoulder and watched the burning orcs without emotion.

“I was wondering when you were going to join the party,” I said to him as I handed the looking glass back to the soldier that had been using it. “Best to exchange this looking glass for a bow now,” I added, then turned back to Nerras.

“Still feel so confident now that you’ve seen a minotaur in person?” Nerras asked, still as calm as if he were sipping tea for breakfast.

I had to pause before answering, and I chose my words carefully. “They’ll die like the rest of them,” I said, loud enough that my voice carried. “No one is getting through this gate today.” Several of the archers nodded at me between firing arrows.

The wry look Nerras gave me said “bullshit” as if he had voiced the word. He turned his gaze back to the minotaurs, who looked to be speeding up. “You had better get ready,” Nerras said quietly, his knuckles going white on the haft of his spear.

Still holding tightly to my magical power, I lifted the second barrel into the air. It hovered for a moment in place, and I heard one of the minotaurs bark another order. They continued their charge, only a hundred or so feet from the gate. The lizardfolk had fallen behind, and without the protection of the shields and minotaurs in front of them, only a few had escaped my archers.

I sent another powerful gust of wind to drive the barrel forwards, and it rocket through the air as if fired from a gun. Right on its tail, I sent a gout of flame through the air to burn them all to a crisp. It was the first time I had sent a fireball flying through the air instead of simply increasing the heat energy until an object burst into flame.

The same minotaur that had been barking orders shouted again, and all of them dropped the battering ram and rolled away from it, surprisingly quick for such large creatures.

The barrel of oil slammed into the ground right next to the battering ram and my fireball crashed into both, setting them aflame.

The minotaurs, ten feet from the fires, began to scramble into a formation in front of the wreckage. Ignoring the arrows that bounced off their thick armor, they pulled four tower shields from the straggling orcs and set them in front while kneeling behind them. The remaining minotaurs pulled out heavy bows and drew black arrows from quivers on their backs.

“Ah shit,” I said.

Nerras laughed. Did nothing faze the man?

“Watch out for their arrows!” I shouted, and ducked behind the crenelations right as an arrow the size of a spear flew through the air where my head had been. I looked behind me and saw five-foot-long arrows crash into houses and dislodge roof tiles. The citizens of Gillamoor had been warned of the attack and the streets were empty, for which I was grateful. Even at this

distance, those arrows would skewer three goblins before slowing.

An archer next to me glanced between the crenelations and an arrow took him in the head, nearly tearing it off and spraying blood everywhere. One of the healers scrambled up to the man, but I waved him away.

“There’s nothing you can do for him now,” I told the healer, then directed another archer to pull the man’s body out of the way. I thought of telling the healers to send fireballs over the wall, but Ulenor had warned me that they only trained in healing magic. They were not battlemages.

The minotaurs continued firing arrows just often enough to keep the goblin archers hunkered down. Arrows coming from the city wall had greatly slowed under the assault and I watched in horror as the men’s morale slowly crumbled. I risked another quick glance over the wall and saw two minotaurs kicking sand over the burning battering ram, smothering the fire.

“Shit!” I yelled. This was not going as planned. But then again, no plan survives first contact, as they say.

I looked over the edge of the wall again and saw the minotaurs lifting the battering ram, with two of them holding four orc shields in front. Another two minotaurs continued firing arrows at us as they started progressing towards the city gate again.

A lot can happen in a minute's time. Ten-foot-tall monsters can cover a hundred foot distance. Four-foot-tall goblins can become crippled with fear. And all hope can die.

The terror that swept over the archers was like a tidal wave, and I couldn't blame them for it. Faced with beasts that were more than twice their height, their courage fled like the color from their faces. Some of them became gripped with fear, unable to draw their bows. One man shook uncontrollably and stared at nothing.

The reality of this situation dawned on me as I watched our hopes dwindle in a matter of seconds. These archers were brave volunteers from a pacifist society. I had done a pretty decent job of pumping them up, but they probably expected to send a flurry of arrows downrange and be done with this whole deal. To be honest, I had been hoping for something of that nature. These guys weren't ready for a real fight. A real, bloody, drawn-out fight.



But I was.

The minotaurs were only a few steps from the gates. The minotaur archers threw down their massive bows and added their strength to the battering ram.

Nerras tossed me a spear and I roared at the men on either side of us. “Grab your spears!” I shouted. “Kill these bastards where they stand!”

Nerras and I leaned between crenelations along with a handful of goblin men and thrust our spears towards the oncoming minotaurs. Earlier, I had the weaponsmiths affix ten-foot handles to these spearheads for this very reason.

Black mail covered the minotaurs’ heads, preventing our spears from doing the damage I had hoped for, but Nerras’s spear caught one of the bastards right in the eye, sending him reeling. The minotaurs in the back of their formation continued their forward momentum, and the battering ram slammed into the massive city gates. The entire gatehouse shook from the force of the blow, but the gates miraculously held.

I savagely rammed my spear into the face of the nearest minotaur, then pulled it back before the monster could snatch the spear from my hand. The goblin on my right wasn’t quick enough and he was yanked over the edge of the wall as the minotaur pulled on his spear. He crashed to the ground in a heap and was trampled beneath their hooves, reduced to little more than a red smear in a matter of seconds. A minotaur bellowed in triumph, like an impossibly loud, savage roar.

Nerras and I stabbed the same minotaur, who finally released both hands from the battering ram to swipe at our spears. We were relentless in our attack, forcing the sharp points against the mail armor, hoping it would break through. The battering ram slammed into the gate again and the motion sent me tumbling forwards, adding weight behind my thrust. My spear broke through several links and plunged into the minotaur's flesh, slicing down his cheek and penetrating deeply into his neck.

The minotaur bellowed loudly enough to make my ears ring and snatched both of our spears. I immediately released my grip, otherwise I would have been pulled over like that poor goblin bastard. The minotaur snapped one of the spears in half, throwing the pieces at us, then rammed the point of the other spear between the crenelations, trying to catch anyone he could. The spearpoint snagged the shoulder armor of one goblin and sent him flying. One of the healers hurried after him.

The minotaurs continued their assault with the battering ram, rocking the gate back and forth. I was amazed it had lasted this long, but I knew it wouldn't last forever. I also realized these weapons weren't going to work. It was time to get nasty.

The sound of the gate splintering was loud in my ears, but the collective shout of triumph from the minotaurs was deafening. It was only a matter of time before it happened, but I had hopes that the massive, iron-bound timbers would have lasted longer. Then again, the amount of force generated by ten minotaurs had to be damn near astronomical.

While initially I had scoffed at the notion of just a dozen minotaurs being sent to take over a city, now I realized how easily they could do it.

The arrows were useless. They couldn't get through the minotaurs' armor, and their skin was thick and tough as well. Our spears were only marginally better. There was only one thing that would take these guys down, and that was magic.

Ulenor had asked to join the fight but he was too valuable to risk. Plus, I remembered the threat Zozella had lobbed at me once, so I decided the wizard would be safest in the back, only offering support as a final resort.

It would take a lot of magic to kill these minotaurs, and I was hesitant, as I knew it would knock me out. If I fell, the whole thing would be on Nerras's shoulders. He was the only one with the courage to take these giants head-on.

I pulled deeply from my magical well, filling myself with power until it felt as if my skin would split. Several other goblins, sensing how much power I held, looked over at me with amazement. The gatehouse shook and the gate itself split further. One or two more hits and they would be inside the city. I had to stop them, and now.

Fire wouldn't work. Sure, it would burn the shit out of them, but I needed to stop them in their tracks. I did the first thing that popped into my mind.

As I had done what seemed so long ago, I pulled moisture from the air and concentrated it around the minotaurs. I pulled as hard as I could on every single microscopic droplet of

water, creating a breeze as humidity rushed in and water suddenly appeared around them. Within seconds they were standing in an orb of water, thrashing around for breath.

I then pulled all the heat energy from the water, sending the temperature crashing down. A few gurgling roars came from the mound of water as ice crystals formed and it solidified into a giant block of ice.

I leaned on the crenelations, breathing hard and struggling to stay upright. My grip on my magical well was all that kept me conscious. Below, the minotaurs were frozen solid, unable to move. One of them, the one I had stabbed earlier, managed to get an arm free and beat at the ice, trying to break it. Nerras was there, along with another goblin. Their spears tore at his arm until it was a mass of red. Nerras managed to get his spearpoint in the minotaur's armpit and rammed it home. After a few minutes, the giant slumped against the ice as he bled out.

"You need to finish them off!" Nerras shouted. "We can't do anything with all that ice in the way."

But what could I do? Setting them on fire would simply melt the ice and set them free. I wasn't sure how a lightning strike would affect them, but it was too close to risk. They were far too heavy for me to lift into the air and smash.

So I made them colder.

I continued pulling heat energy from the ice, driving the temperature ever downward. The ice cracked at the front of the block, but I kept stealing warmth from it. Cold enough, and they would freeze to death in seconds.

A loud crack split the air, followed by a terrifying roar as the frontmost minotaur broke free of the ice. He was beneath the gatehouse so no one could get to him with their spears, and I couldn't see him. He beat at the gates relentlessly, slamming his hooves and fists against the wood.

The men around me shouted in fear and from the excitement of battle, but I did my best to ignore them. I made the ice still colder, until the flesh of the minotaurs became ice as well.

Satisfied with my work, I staggered against the stone. Nerras reached out and grabbed my arm, stabilizing me. I barely heard the terrified shouts of the men around me over the blood rushing in my ears. Power pulsed inside me, begging for release, yet I barely had the strength to stay upright.

A horrible groan of tortured metal and splintering wood caught my ears and broke through my mental fog and I realized one minotaur had made it through the gate. I turned and ran to the back of the battlements right as the giant pushed his way through the shattered metal and iron of the city gate.

Once inside the city the minotaur took a deep breath and roared, a sound that seemed too loud to come from a living being. He held his arms wide as if daring anyone to attack him. He knew goblins couldn't harm him. This one single minotaur could kill dozens, hundreds of goblins with ease. The soldiers that had been posted in the area fled, and I couldn't blame them.

My wives were in Gillamoor. My future was in this small city. I couldn't let him harm that.

I pulled my dagger and backed up, then raced to the rear edge of the battlements. Adrenaline gave me strength as I placed my booted foot on a crenellation and leaped into the air, flying for a moment with cold rage keeping my absolute terror at bay.

The minotaur faced away from me and lowered his massive arms. I crashed into the back of his head and wrapped my left arm around his enormous neck. My hand grabbed the bottom edge of his mail coif and pulled.

The Fairbairn-Sykes fighting knife was a very specialized design, and I had been ecstatic to find something very similar to it here. The blade is long and thin, with razor-sharp edges, and was designed for the purpose of stabbing.

My blade slid into the minotaur's neck, all the way to the hilt. He screamed in rage and threw his head back, slamming one of his massive horns against my face and shattering my nose and cheekbone. I pulled the blade out and rammed it back in over and over, perforating the creature's massive neck and spraying hot blood in every direction.

A hand the size of my torso shot up and grabbed me, then pulled me away. As several of my ribs shattered from the force of the minotaur's grip, I rammed my dagger into him one last time, straight into his ear canal.

The minotaur roared and threw me to the ground like a child's doll. My left collarbone snapped in half as I crashed into the paving stones. Adrenaline kept me alert and I quickly turned back to the minotaur. I was barely conscious, but he was still a

threat to all that I loved. I had enough strength for one last burst of magic, so I had to make it count.

I raised my hand towards the minotaur and pulled deeply from my magical well, until I could hold no more. The giant pulled my dagger from its ear and staggered, barely remaining upright. He knew that was a death blow, but he looked at me like he wanted to take me with him. From the corner of my eye I saw a blur of motion that interrupted my magical use.

Nerras.

He charged the minotaur from behind, his face a mask of fury and determination. While the giant beast wore thick armor, Nerras attacked with a savagery and precision that belied his small form. His spear slipped between the plates of the minotaur's armor over and over, covering the ground with blood.

The huge minotaur was severely injured, but spun on his hoof and swung a massive fist at Nerras. The goblin man dodged the blow and stabbed upward, his spear slipping beneath the mail coif and catching the minotaur in the throat. Nerras twisted and tore his spear to the side, opening a vicious wound.

The minotaur fell to his hands and knees, spilling blood everywhere. Wearily, he lifted his great head to regard Nerras, but the goblin wasn't done. Nerras placed the tip of his spear at the base of the minotaur's neck and pushed, leaning his entire body into it. The minotaur whimpered and collapsed to

the ground, red froth bubbling from the front of his mail-covered face.

Nerras was like a raging barbarian. The minotaur would have bled out and died soon, but he gave it no chance. Everywhere an inch of flesh was visible, he rammed his spear and twisted. The man didn't stop until the minotaur was completely still. Nerras spat on the giant's corpse.

"Holy shit," I wheezed, then rolled onto my back. My left arm hung uselessly and my chest was a mass of pain. With all the magic I held, I directed my body to heal itself.

With injuries this severe, the healing was nearly as painful as the injuries themselves. I cried out as my bones knit, as my ligaments pulled joints back into place. Torn muscular tissue reformed. It was a feeling so horrible I retched on the ground.

"Are you okay?" Nerras asked, running up to me. His eyes widened at the sight of my body healing so quickly.

"Yeah," I told him, faking a grin. "I'll be fine in a bit. That really wore me out." I released my grip on my magical power.

I barely finished the sentence before falling unconscious. The last thing I heard was Nerras laughing and saying "that's what she said."



**T**here was a distinct coolness in the breeze that told me autumn would be here soon. I smiled, looking forward to spending my favorite season with my future wives. A few birds flew by, far overhead. The sun was behind a cloud, which kept the day from being too warm.

“Have you decided yet?” Cirro asked, seated on the grass next to me. “Mayor Beezle said he would give you a plot of land for free, and I think everyone in Gillamoor would pitch in to help you build.”

I rubbed my chin in thought. There was a trace of stiffness in my shoulder that hadn’t quite faded from my healing two days prior, but I knew it would get better with time. Even magical healing wasn’t always perfect, Ulenor had told me. Fortunately the rest of my wounds had healed well.

“He probably wants to be out in the woods somewhere,” Thilli said, lying on her back next to a patch of small wildflowers. She lazily raised her hand and a small white butterfly landed on her finger, then fluttered away.

“Wherever he decides, I’m sure we’ll all be happy,” Lossia said, although the look she gave me said she hoped I didn’t make any dumb choices.

After defeating the minotaurs, I had been hailed as the hero of the Battle of Gillamoor. That’s what they were calling it. A memorial service had been held for the goblins that had died.

In the goblin tradition I needed to build a house so these women would marry me, but I was still struggling to decide exactly where I wanted to live. At least I had it down to two choices.

Most people, my future wives included, wanted me to take the mayor up on his offer and build a towering stone mansion inside the walls of Gillamoor. It was hard to argue with them. It was a clean, safe city and our children would be well educated. We would have a peaceful life.

But part of me balked at the thought of living within the city walls. I yearned for the freedom of living on my own, a few miles away from the city. Perhaps near a stream so we would always have fresh water. Just me, my family, and the beautiful countryside, living in the unspoiled beauty of nature.

I had pondered this for some time, and it dawned on me that I couldn’t make the decision entirely by myself. I wasn’t going to be the only one living in that house, after all. I was going to have three wives, and at least three children. What would be best for them? What would give them the best chance at happiness?

“I’ll talk to the mayor when we get back,” I said to Cirro. “Let’s build something in the city, so we can be surrounded by our friends.”

Her smile was all the confirmation I needed that I had chosen correctly.

“Now I just need to figure out how to build a house,” I said with a slight chuckle.

My smile faltered as I thought of my immediate future. I had work to do. Hard, dirty work, and nothing that involved a house.

“What is it?” Lossia asked, noticing the change in my countenance.

“I have to leave soon,” I said, looking up at the gorgeous blue sky. The steady *clang clang clang* of the goblin workmen rebuilding the city gate barely reached us at the field in which we were resting. I could almost, for just a moment, forget about the battle that had just taken place and forget about what I had to do in the upcoming weeks and months. For just a moment, I could just sit here with three beautiful women and think about how I was going to marry them soon.

“Already?” Cirro asked. Thilli sat up and looked at me.

I nodded. “Unfortunately, yes. I know exactly what I need to do to defeat Vogrim, but none of it will be easy.” I reached out and took Cirro’s hand. “And the sooner I get it done, the sooner we can all start our new lives together.”

“So, when are you leaving?” Cirro asked.

“In a few days,” I said quietly. “I’m all healed. I just need to gather supplies and plan the trip with Ulenor and Nerras.”

“Where are you going?” she asked.

“South,” I said. “South and east, I think, to a cave near the border with the elven kingdom. After that, we’re heading to the drowned lands.”

“I’m coming with you,” Thilli said, her voice firm.

Having been caught off guard by her comment, I blinked. I opened my mouth to tell her it would be too dangerous for her, but one look at her stern face shut me up. Hell, Thilli would probably do half of the fighting for me.

“We’ll need to get you armor and some weapons,” I said. “Some clothes, supplies, food. All of that.”

Thilli nodded. I wanted to ask her why she wanted to come, but instead I simply smiled at her. She was willing to go somewhere incredibly dangerous, just to be near me. That was a good sign. She smiled back.

“That’s not fair, I want to go, too,” Cirro said, sticking out her lower lip in a mock pout.

“Not me,” Lossia said with a chuckle. “I’ll stay here, safe and sound, and keep the bed warm for when you come back.”

“You’re pregnant, Cirro. We can’t risk that,” Thilli said.

I looked at Cirro, shocked. “You’re pregnant? Are you sure, so soon?”

She blushed and beamed a smile up at me. “It’s only been a few weeks, but I haven’t gotten my moon blood yet. It could just be late—we’ve certainly been under enough stress lately. I’m pretty sure I’m pregnant, though.”

I wrapped my arms around the diminutive woman and held her tightly against my chest. I knew this was coming, but being confronted with it still got my heart beating. I was going to marry this woman, and soon. And she was pregnant with my child.

Sure, I was going to have kids all over the country now, probably more than a hundred of them. But this was different. All of those kids were going to be raised by goblins, and cherished for generations. *I* was going to be raising this one. I was a father now.

She squeaked and I realized I was hugging her a bit too tightly. She pulled away and we kissed for a while, soft kisses filled with joy.

“Careful,” she said. “You’ll squeeze the baby right out of me.”

We all laughed.

As the sun continued its trek across the sky, we decided to end our lazy afternoon and head back to the city. We walked hand in hand through the broken gate and I marveled at the goblin workmen and how quickly they worked. In another day or two, the gate would be completely fixed.

Several people raised a cheer as we entered the city, which was something I was still getting used to. People were

understandably grateful I had saved their city, and had showered me with gifts since the moment I woke from my magical sleep. Not long after we entered the city, an elderly goblin woman approached us, her smile beaming, and gave me a small basket filled with fruit and freshly baked bread.

At this point I half expected someone to offer to build a house for me, but that might violate some aspect of goblin society. I had no clue.

Cirro and Thilli had their arms looped through mine as we walked through the city. Lossia walked in front of me, with a snug dress that clung to her bottom like spandex. She did that on purpose, and I loved her for it.

We went to my place, which was to say my room in the temple of Zozella. A warm feeling flowed through me as we strolled up the steps and entered, which I realized was the goddess herself showing me that she was pleased with my actions.

“Hold on a second,” I said to the women. “I need to pay my respects.”

I released Cirro and Thilli and walked up to the statue of Zozella, then knelt in front of it. I still wasn't very good with words, but I did my best.

“Hey,” I said to her. “I just wanted to say thanks. I'm sure plenty of people pray to you on a daily basis and thank you for this and that, but I really mean it. You've helped me build a good life here, and I hope I've done a good job showing you that I'll protect your people.”

“Continue protecting my people and your life will be long and happy,” Zozella’s voice said in my head. Her statue smiled down at me like a mother looking at her favorite son.

I looked up at her and winked. “You got it.”

After that I went to my room in the temple. It had been lavishly outfitted with hand carved wooden furniture, soft rugs, and everything else they could fit in there. Trina even stopped by to bring me more clothes, these with embroidery up the sleeves and down the sides of the pants. One look at her ridiculous ass nearly bursting out of her clothing sent blood rushing to my crotch, but surprisingly enough, Thilli dealt with it.

“Thanks for the clothes, love, but he’s ours now,” Thilli said in a pleasant voice. When Trina had left, Thilli turned to me, hands on her hips. “I guess you’ve done a good job at keeping your word. More than a hundred women! If even half of those take, that’ll go a long way towards helping us repopulate. And people will tell stories for years about how bravely you fought the minotaurs. I suppose...”

She trailed off as she walked over to my bed with Cirro and Lossia in tow. When they reached the bed, Cirro and Lossia helped undo Thilli’s dress and let it fall to the floor, revealing her tight, toned figure.

“You kept your word, so I suppose it’s only right I keep mine,” Thilli said, turning to face me. Her face twitched into a smile as our eyes met.

“So are you saying you’re ready?” I asked. “To get pregnant, that is.”

Thilli’s smile deepened. “Soon, yes. I had two cups of forkleaf tea earlier today, so I won’t be fertile for at least another week. We can call today...practice.”

My clothes were off in a millisecond. I rushed across the room and scooped Thilli off her feet, then leaped onto the bed. She yelped in surprise, but moments later we were deeply kissing each other, and her slender fingers were around the base of my cock, guiding it inside her. Her stern expression was gone, replaced with laughter and a smile that made her violet eyes twinkle.

Lossia and Cirro climbed on the bed with us, but stayed to the side. They held each other tightly and kissed, giving us an opportunity to make love.

Finally being inside Thilli was amazing. She was wonderfully tight and wet, with a body that was both soft and firm in all the right places. After watching her and lusting after her for so long, this was a dream come true, quite literally.

We rolled around on the bed, spending a few minutes in every position imaginable. She liked it when I pretzeled her up, so I hooked my shoulder beneath her knee and got as deep as I could inside her. Her lips stayed on mine the entire time.

Later that evening, the four of us laid in bed, all close together. I was happy with them; they made this temporary room of mine feel like a home. I never wanted it to end. And one day, we would sleep this way every night.



But first I had to go on the most dangerous quest of my life.

The end.

Thanks for reading Goblin Breeder 1! I hope you enjoyed reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it. Don't forget to leave me a review, and grab book 2 here while you're at it!

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## About Author

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Micky lives in Denver, Colorado with two dogs and writes books when time permits. Micky is an avid skydiver, mountain climber, and multi-billionaire.