

Sirius, Book I

Diera

Comments or Questions?

Contact Alps: sarsis@gmail.com

Or just drop a note at: <http://www.furaffinity.net/user/sarsis/>

Chapter 15

Nita paced softly along the corridor, waiting. Waiting. It had only been ten minutes, but it felt like so long. She wrung her hands softly, and then sat down on a small bench that was faceted to the wall neatly in this corridor. A door opened, and Nita had no more just sat down that she hopped back up. Nidaja entered. Nita peered at Nidaja intently, but she only shook her head.

"I... I'm afraid he's sick with it too..." she said softly. Nita sat back down heavily. This was the far eastern wing of the castle. It was used as a small hospital when a member of the royal family got sick, or hurt. And right now, Alps was here, and very, very sick. The day before, he had been feeling kind of bad, and told Nita that, and she told him to take it easy. While he was walking with Nita to her military briefing, he collapsed in the floor, and had a powerful seizure. He had hit his head on the floor hard, cutting it, and then bleeding rather severely. It was perhaps the most heart-wrenching thing the queen had ever seen, as he shook, bleeding in the floor. She had screamed. She called for Nidaja, for Uri, for the very light itself. Anyone to come help her! It was Misty who found her, blood-soaked, holding a still lightly twitching white slave, sobbing heavily. She had held him once before, bleeding, dying... when she gave him the order to kill himself with her own knife. Misty had found them then, too. It brought back those memories, surging in violently...

Nita closed her eyes tightly, and then looked at Nidaja.

"Wh... what? Why now? Why is this happening?" she said, biting her lips. Nidaja sat down and put an arm around her sister, cooing softly, reassuringly.

"Hey sis... it's not like he's gonna die or anything.. He is just gonna be sick for about a month. With lots of bed-rest, and about another month to recover, he will be just as good as new..." She smiled softly. Nita shook her head, standing up again, putting a hand on the corridor wall, to steady her self. She had neither eaten nor slept in over a day, with worry. She could not believe how much this was tearing her up.

"It's the twilight fever, Nidaja. He could be... blinded... And he could be sterilized... He could even get paralyzed from it." she said, near tears. "You said

so yourself... he's in a coma already... He won't wake up." The queen rubbed her eyes. She had not cried for anyone like this since her mother passed away. But her mother was shadowfallen. It was a powerful spell that blew her away in an instant. It was not like what Alps was going through now. It was said that in twilight fever one is plagued with the worst imaginable nightmares through the entire illness, and it could last a month to a month and a half. Some had even had their spirits broken by it, and become zombie-like, unable to enjoy anything in life after enduring such nightmarish hardships, stricken like one in years of war and torment.

Uri had gone through it when she was younger, and it took her two months just to recover from the mental strain of it, over three months for the physical strain. And she knew it was entirely likely she would never carry a child. This was fine with Uri, of course, since she had Misha, and Misha couldn't make her pregnant anyway. But still it was hard for her, and the thought of Alps going through it now distressed his owner a lot.

"Nita..." Nidaja said, getting up and putting an arm around her, and then hugging her close. "That does not always happen, and Alps is strong... He's been through worse just digesting a meal before. Think about how he lived before we took him. Alps is not a foppish little house-servant or something! He's a slave, and he's had a rough life. It's made him rugged. He can withstand this better than someone who has led a sheltered life." Nita sat down again, and shuddered a bit, nodding to Nidaja.

"I know... But, he... He's mine - and I don't want any of those bad things to happen to him! I want him to live a full and rich life now... Oh, now that he is away from the people that didn't love him! And I know they mistreated him. He won't really talk about it... but I know he was mistreated. I am not going to have him cut short when life is beginning to be nice to him." She inhaled deeply, leaning back. "I will feel better... if I am trying to do something about it." she said softly. "Nidaja... I... I have duties here I must attend to, as I have put them off since Alps collapsed yesterday." Nita bit her lip again, thinking about that moment, rather unpleasantly. She shook her head again. "I want you to find the absolute best doctor... The best medical treatment for Alps. Find anyone in this whole city who knows more about Twilight Fever than even Misha. You heard her; she specializes in surgery, not viral illnesses. Somewhere in this town, there has to be a really good doctor for this kind of thing specifically. A revolutionary... I want you to find them, and bring them to Alps. That way I can make sure none of the bad things with the twilight fever happen to him." She said. She got up shakily, and then headed down the corridor, leaving Nidaja with said task. Nidaja gaped. It would be like searching for a black pearl in a barrel of coal. Where should she start? The Emerald Amanian general padded down the corridor, and out the door.

Nidaja looked around silently. She had been in this part of town a few times before. It was the best place to find information about hard to find people, or hard to find items. It was not, however, the kind of place royalty would generally hang out. She had on a dark cloak, traveling incognito. She had her royal crest in her pocket to be presented to whomever she found who was worthy of the task of taking care of Alps. She would offer them whatever price they asked. That was her instruction from Nita. Find the best. And she would.

She turned down a small back alley, and then down another. This part of town had many fairly large buildings in one area, so the alleys were tight and many. There were shops, pubs, inns, homes, all kinds of stuff here. It was also the poor side of town. Nidaja hooked another alley, and then opened a heavy metal door, stepping inside. It was a rather filthy tavern; with a girl half undressed serving the drinks. It was sad to the general, a female, bringing herself down to the very level of a male to scrape by. Nidaja smiled to her silently, and sat at a table, looking around, her muzzle showing under the hood, but not her eyes as she tried to find someone who looked like they might be social enough to know something.

In this tavern, there was very little light since lantern oil was not free, so most of these kinds of places held back on the light, letting their patrons bring their own lamps. In this place, there were only two. There were about twenty-five people here, various lupines, each with a very disturbing story of their life to tell. Many were criminals, a few wanted for murder. But Nidaja was not here to arrest anyone. She perked her ears suddenly and looked up at the sound of a female's voice. A voice boldly arguing with the tavern owner.

"-No, I said I would have the money to you by the end of the month. It's still the beginning... No, I said I would have it this month, and I mean it, I just need a little more time! I lost all my supplies at my last job, so I have to purchase more... It's a hard time for all of us. I just need a place to sleep at night, I won't ask for food or drink... I will rummage in the trash if I have to, just give me a dry place to rest!" the voice cried loudly. Nidaja glared. It was her. Neit. The lady general would not mind blowing her cover here for this. She moved up to the tavern owner, and looked between him, and the tan colored master thief. She grabbed Neit by the neck, and threw her on the floor, causing her to crash through a few chairs. The tavern owner shouted out.

"Hey! You can't just come in here pulling that crap! Get ou-" he was cut off as Nidaja held her crest in his face. He went silent, and nodded, backing up a bit. Nidaja never took her eyes of Neit, who slowly got to her feet, shaking off peanut shells and tobacco leaves. The tavern owner called out to the others.

"Don't interfere... This is none of your business." He said nothing more than that. Neit put her hands at her side and shouted.

"Who the *hell* are you?! That hurt! How *dare* you just come in here and throw me like that!" the younger female exclaimed indignantly. "I know a lot of connections here, you are gonna be found strangled somewhere tomorrow, whore!" Nidaja was quiet for a moment, glaring from under her hood at the furious tan female. She then growled long and low. The general lifted her head enough for Neit to see her face.

"I intend to make you pay..." Nidaja growled savagely, causing the thief to gasp deeply in recognition. "Not for trying to steal from Castle Diera... but for hurting Alps. He was innocent, and a little naive, and you took advantage of his kindness. And I intend to take it out of your hide..." the green-furred wolf growled. Neit went pale, and stammered. Her eyes were almost comically huge in recognition of just what turn of fate had found her.

"Oh... Holy... Shit..." she backed up a little, and fell backwards over a chair. "No... Oh no. Come on. I... I have to. I... I'm already in enough trouble, that robbing the castle itself won't change my sentence. Hitting Alps - that was just to escape. Don't... Oh please don't kill me!" she said, biting her lip, about to cry. Neit likely knew the level of contempt Nidaja had from the rumors about her relationship with the white furred slave that were already rather common inside the castle while she was staying there. By the look on her face, it seemed she knew. This was the end. A pissed off general in a tavern where no one ever actually sees anyone do anything. There would be justice served, without a trial. Swift and severe. The general could almost see the thoughts running through the young girl's mind. Did Nidaja have a sword? A cross bow...? How long had she been looking for Neit - just to dispatch her...? Just to kill her... searching like this? It was all over. The tavern was silent.

Nidaja grabbed Neit by the collar of her vest, pulled her to her feet, and then did a quick double spin on her left toes, her arm flicking out both times that her right side passed Neit, landing two powerful and rapid blows to the side of her head. The thief spun around and landed on her back, her legs bent under her a bit, crying out. Neit rolled onto her side, and stood up shakily, adrenaline fighting the pain, but not very much. She spit out blood. She had hit her muzzle on the floor when she fell the first time, it would seem. She cried out softly again, dazed. Nidaja approached coldly. The general had hoped she would get the chance to do this. Screw Lunaris. He could find this master cat burglar himself. Nidaja would just take her cut for Alps' sake.

"Alps... Is so kind... And so sweet... You could have had the best friend of your entire life in him. He would have held you loyally and lovingly forever..." Nidaja explained, growling the entire time as Neit quivered in fear. "He would have always been there to tell you it was okay. Even if you had been

discovered... Neit, If you had stayed with Alps and been his friend, and not tried to steal anything - not tried to betray his trust like that, if then you had been caught by even Lunaris... Alps would have protected you... and Nita, to keep him happy, would have given you a light sentence, versus death, which is what you are very realistically looking at right now." There was a long pause now, as the general let that sink in. Her attacks would not be all physical, not for this one.

There was murmuring around the room. Nidaja swiveled her ears to listen to some of it. 'Who is Alps?' 'I heard he was the queen's new slave.' 'Did she really try to rob the castle?' 'I bet she's a hot lay.' 'Oh my god, it's the general.' 'We are so totally fucked.' 'Does the general have a thing for that slave?' 'You gonna ask her about it?' Nidaja shook her head softly, growling louder, shutting everyone up.

"But you threw that friendship, and that kindness, back in his face... And to me - and to Nita, doing that to someone so genuinely loving and caring, you stole something that night more valuable than anything else in that castle. Little tramp... You are gonna PAY!" Nidaja flipped backwards, her right foot flashing upward, impacting the bottom of Neit's muzzle hard enough that she came off of her feet and flipped backwards as well, but while Nidaja landed neatly on her toes, Neit landed on her belly, sputtering, and spitting out a *lot* more blood from that one. She bit her tongue almost completely off, a lupine fang putting a neat hole in it somewhere around the middle of the tip. Neit sobbed softly, trying to stay limp in the floor.

"Please... dun' kill me!" she cried. "I... I will apologize to Alps! I will make him happy again, I swear! I will do that, if you promise not to take my life! I will do anything for him - I will even become his slave! Please stop..." she wept, putting her head on the floor, burying her face in her arms. Nidaja padded close to Neit, and grabbed her by her hair. The green-furred female thought silently to herself a moment. This was a side of her that Alps never saw. Before being a general, Nidaja had to be a soldier. She had to become a knight - and knights were tough, and severe. That was how it worked. Her white slave lover had never really seen Nidaja fight, not genuinely. Still, this was not a fight. She was just beating the crap out of a common thief. She turned and slammed Neit against a support beam in this dark, dank tavern, the lantern hanging there swinging back and forth precariously. Nidaja growled severely at Neit, as the tavern keeper looked down and noticed that the thief's feet were not even touching the ground. Nidaja was holding her up with one arm, against the beam.

"It's a little late for you to be saying that now. Alps has taken ill with Twilight Fever, and knows only the treachery you showed him to keep him in his nightmares. What terrible things do you think he is dreaming about, huh?" Nidaja shook Neit a little, until she cried out again. The emerald wolf looked as four of the tavern patrons stood up slowly and left. Some still saw the twilight fever as being contagious. While it was not fully understood, it was known not to

be contagious, but still, there were those who were skeptics, and those four evidently did not want to be anywhere near it. Neit wept softly.

"Oh I'm so sorry!" she cried. "I... I wish I could help! I would even risk getting the illness to help. He... He's really sick?" she asked, hanging limply against the pillar where Nidaja held her. The emerald wolf dropped Neit, who fell like a sack of wet sand on the floor, crying softly. Nidaja sat down, feeling a little better now that she had taken some payback from the little thief. Neit slowly got to her feet and moved over to the table, rubbing her eyes, still wet with tears. Nidaja canted her head, and looked at her inquisitively, with more than a hint of irritation.

"What are you doing? I let you go - aren't you gonna run for your life you little thieving bitch?" Nidaja took out her crest, and shined it a bit, as if to remind the bleeding, drooling, slobbering mess of a thief she was in the presence of royalty. She bowed her head, and began wiping the blood on a towel that was lying on the floor by the bar. The other patrons began to talk quietly amongst themselves, many of course, speculating who this precious Alps was to someone so important as Nidaja and Nita, whose identity was much better known, while the name Alps simply was not. Why was the general here beating up a thief girl? Neit finally looked back up to Nidaja and said softly,

"I... I wanna help Alps. I don't want him to get... paralyzed... or blind. I... I..." She hung her head a bit. "I really am sorry for hitting him. He does deserve a lot nicer treatment. He took me in when he thought I was in danger... I was running from town guards. He protected me, and risked himself in the process. I cannot thank him for that now, because I will likely never see him again... I'm saving up to move to Jalana - to start a new life. Uri told me never to show my face in Diera again. I had intended not to..." she said. "Tell me, Ni-Nidaja-" Neit said, shuddering. "What... can I do to help? I will do anything.." Nidaja looked up at Neit, and said softly, a growl still in her voice,

"I am looking for a doctor... a healer, magician or herbalist who can help Alps. Someone who can make sure Alps' suffering is light, and his scars from this are few. I do not want him having loss of sight or anything like that either, so I am trying to find the best of the best. I came here for information on that." she said. "But now, I kind of doubt anyone here would provide me with information, since I have blown my cover. It was worth it to beat the fuck out of you though..." the general said, grinning a white, toothy grin. Neit nodded softly, bleeding quietly, but understanding. She then perked up and bounced a little in her chair just a little, before she realized that everything that could get twisted and pulled and bruised... was. She oooched softly, then said, in almost a whisper,

"I know of someone..." she looked around nervously, "Who is said to be able to cure almost any illness... He... He is passing through here, but already, he's healed a stabbing victim, the husband of a rich regional matriarch - just with

magic! There was not even any recovery time, just... Wham - he was healed! I know where he is!" She quieted herself again, lowering her head. "I will take you to him if you want. He's... He's a lapine shaman..." she said softly. Nidaja's eyes widened.

"A lapine?" she lowered her head. This was very big news indeed.

Most of the lapines had moved to the western continent of Saigoss, because of the assaults on their kind from Mannus, the leader of the army that Nidaja's forces were fighting a losing battle with. While the fighting had been less hectic the past decade, it was likely because Mannus was putting more resources into building a new fortress, slightly closer to the skirmish territories. His borders would widen again after it was built, surely, and many towns would be lost.

The lapine tribes had all lived in the east, and were killed off or driven out early on by Mannus' raids. Mannus had created the Uruk to wage war against the Amanian people as well, sterile, lacking any means of reproducing on their own, and getting out of their master's control, there were now tens of thousands of them, warring against Nita's Amani tribe. Powerful spells over more than 800 years had made their numbers simply incalculable. And each one bore the will of their master, golems of various shapes and sizes, looking often enough like lapines with hideous deformities, no ears, short or missing muzzles, glowing crystal eyes, all thinking only of ending the life of anything unfortunate enough to be in the way.

Mannus' territories kept expanding, and the lapines, a peaceful nomadic people, were wiped out among the first, simply for being too close to the center of Mannus' new territory. One had not been seen on the continent of Amani in over 150 years. These people, the lapines, were known for their powers of healing, and also for their unproven and eerie rumored ability to communicate with the dead. Left alone by Amanians, even 800 years ago, they were always seen as dark and mysterious, and now, they were treated in many cases like a fairy tale.

Those who did believe in them now treated them with fear and respect. Their fame to those who knew they were real had only grown to legend. Still there were large parts of the population that did not now believe that they ever existed. So had time masked their being, and eaten to dust their history.

Neit stood up and nodded softly. "I will take you to where he is... I promise he's there. He's real. I saw him, and he is a powerful healer..." she whispered. Nidaja stood up slowly and walked out with her, after placing a single cut emerald in the hand of the tavern keeper. It was likely worth as much as the tavern itself. This was for the chairs that lay broken. The tavern keeper looked at it, and startled, stuffed it in his pocket. This was *not* the kind of thing you just carried around and let people know you have! He nodded to Nidaja, who left with the

same girl she had just beaten the stuffing out of.

"Come on! Quickly, this way! He is supposed to leave for Jalana on a ship tomorrow, we have to hurry or he won't have time to help Alps!" Neit said. Nidaja ran along behind her. They were still weaving through alleys and the like. They were getting closer to the port section of town. Nidaja followed quickly. She panted heavily. Was it going to be this easy? Was she going to be so fortunate as to find a healer of the level that the lapines were known to be? Finally, Neit stopped running, and Nidaja, lost in thought, nearly crashed into her back.

"Whoa! Warn me before you stop like that!" she cried, shaking her head. She looked ahead. They were looking into a tunnel. These were the aqueducts, where they emptied out into the ocean. It was the city's source of fresh, clean water. It was dark in there. And quiet. "Umm... Neit, the aqueducts are like... Three miles long, and dark... Are you sure he's in there?" Nidaja asked.

"Yeah! I'm sure that's where he is staying. He does not wanna be noticed and all... He only comes out at night." Neit said. "I... I did not bring a lantern... I completely forgot." she said. "I can go up and get one from a store down the road." she nodded off in some direction. Nidaja shook her head.

"No, you have no money, remember, and when you are with me you are *not* going to steal something. I have it taken care of." Nidaja drew a slender silver rod from her belt under her wrap around cloak. Neit went right down to her knees, sobbing. "Oh please! No! No... I - I helped you didn't I? Don't kiiiiill meeeee!" She put her hand forward on Nidaja's foot, petting it lightly, pathetically. Nidaja closed her eyes, shaking her head and sighing.

"Let go of my foot before I kick you in the head..." she said calmly. "I'm not going to kill you." she said. Neit stood up shakily, snuffling.

".. Th.. then what is the weapon for?" she asked, nodding to the rod. Nidaja mumbled a few soft and arcane words over it.

"Stararthu'curureneldadae binlinarthu'dae.. gilistaval mirelda linista'tir." she said, and the rod suddenly shined with bright, powerful silvery light, illuminated in the shape of a blade. Neit gasped and backed up a bit, before cooing out,

"W... Wow! That is a... Very impressive trick!" The thief was very

impressed. It was the first time she'd ever actually seen magic used. Nidaja nodded silently, and headed into the dark tunnel. Neit ohhed and sauntered along with her. "He is not too terribly deep in here, they said... Just far enough so that he would not get woke up when couples came down here to hide from prying eyes and have fun when there is not enough money to get a room at the inn." she whispered. Nidaja groaned as she stepped in something slimy, suddenly worried that it was from one of those loving couples.

She sighed and nodded silently as they walked. Nidaja was not nearly the sorceress her sister was, but she did know a few spells. And this silver light spell was one of them. She plodded along, avoiding the debris and stuff that clung to the sides of the aqueduct. The water rushed along its merry way, past them, to the ocean. They rounded a few corners, in silence, until Nidaja saw a soft light. She looked to Neit. The thief nodded softly.

"That's him, around the corner there. There is a little alcove for cleaning supplies like rakes and shovels that the maintenance people use down here. He has pushed it all to the back wall, and is camping in it." she said softly. Nidaja padded along slowly. This would be the first and possibly only time she would ever seen a real lapine. The others would be so jealous if they knew. Especially Misty. She crept cautiously around the corner, to find a little campsite, a tent, and a fire, glowing warmly. Sitting in front of it, eating some kind of soup, was a very curious and handsome creature.

Nidaja stopped and looked for a moment, since she seemed to not be noticed right away. Neit held still against Nidaja's back, peering cautiously. A rabbit, he was about 6 feet tall, and of rather well muscled build, scantily dressed, only wearing a heavy looking leather loincloth and a fang necklace. He had light tan fur, which was short, and very soft looking. There were marks in his fur that looked like he had dyed some patterns into it in dark red paint of dried blood. There were three lines over his chest and three lines on the side of his face on the left side. They were a much deeper earthy brown, and looked a lot like dried blood. Perhaps that was the effect he was going for. Nidaja softly spoke, finally, causing the rabbit to look up, his long, but broad ears swiveling to face her even before his head. He did not seem alarmed.

"Sir..." she started. He gazed at her with dark brown eyes that seemed to gaze right through her clothing and into her soul. She licked her lips a bit, and resumed talking. "I... I - My name is-" she stammered, trying to get started. The rabbit cut her off, however, before she could continue.

"I know who you are, Nidaja... And you have come for the sake of Luna's Knight... Alps..." he said slowly. "I have seen it in the fires of destiny... The powers behind this fate are a tough chain to break." he said softly, his voice not echoing at all. In this ever echoing cavern, his voice did not echo. It was as if he were out in a field, and not in this dank, dark place. Nidaja's jaw hung slack.

How in the world would he have known that? Alps' presence in Diera was not even common knowledge. Most people did not know Nita even *had* a slave, much less... his name. Nidaja choked slightly. What did the rabbit call him? Perhaps he was only partly right, but it was still impressive! She asked him softly,

"Luna's Knight? Alps is just a slave. Sir, I -" he cut her off again, looking back to the fire as he spoke.

"He is as I say, though he does not remember... you won't understand either. Not until the fires burn with a violet light, instead of red. Look into his eyes. You will see that fire, Lady Nidaja." The general sighed softly. Great. He was insane. How could he help her? "To heal him... you will need to give to him a medicine I can make. It is... different from the other medicines that you are used to." He held up a bottle. "It is not free though. I will need you to... do something for me... to help me make this medicine. If you truly wish to help him, this is what you will do. I look into the fire, and she flickers... so many ways..."

Nidaja sat down on a rolled up blanket, near the fire, nodding. This was more than a little bit creepy to her. The rabbit took out a yew staff, and held it out to the general. It had a silver tip with feathers all around it, and leather bindings with cryptic writing on it between the banding. Nidaja looked at the staff carefully, as he closed his eyes and waved it on either side of her. "The fires of destiny... They have told of Alps' blindness... Unable to see, he will be prone to disasters that will steal away his life, and misery as he feels he is no longer able to serve the ones he loves. You... Only you... can help him avoid this fate." he said, with a deeper voice that echoed just a bit. Knowing about the illness itself pretty well sealed the deal to Nidaja that this was worth looking deeper into. This rabbit *knew* something.

"How can I help you?" Nidaja asked. "I don't know anything of medicine - just about fighting," she said. The rabbit smiled softly, and looked at Nidaja with those deeply peering eyes.

"You have no skill that can help, but you do possess the ingredient that I need, and the life essence to give the medicine it's most potent property. If you truly wish to save Alps, and save your sister the grief she will feel when her love can no longer see her beautiful body, you will agree to what I ask of you." he nodded, his eyes closed, his voice filled with confidence, but seeming... sad. Nidaja gritted her teeth... Now *that* was something he could *not* have known unless he could, indeed, see those things in that fire, as he said. Nidaja leaned forward, paying close attention. Neit sat down near the water, keeping her distance. This was spooking her too, and she did not have the nerves that Nidaja had, trained from a cub to fight in war. The general nodded softly.

"Then... Tell me. But, tell me first, what your name is. So I know how to

address you, noble sir." she said. She smiled a bit. Finally, she got to finish a sentence without him knowing what she was going to say. Normally, a female would never address a mere male so courteously, but the legends had said that the roles were reversed in Lapine society. The females tended to a more submissive role, she had been told. She could not demand anything of this shaman. He looked up at her and smiled softly again, those alluring brown eyes gazing into hers. The rabbit answered softly, still without any semblance of an echo.

"Those I meet in my travels know me as Xanthas." he says. "Easier, I think, to call me Xan." he put his staff down and stood up carefully, moving to Nidaja, and placing a hand on her head. Nidaja noticed that he did not, of course, have that long, fluffy wolf tail, since he was a rabbit. It finally fully dawned on her that he was, in fact, a lapine. It seemed almost like fantasy to see him there before her. His little bushy, tear-drop tail twitched a bit as he held her forehead. The general noticed how lean and muscular this rabbit was. For not even being a lupine, he was actually extraordinarily handsome. Nidaja wondered how other lapines saw him. She wondered if there were other lapines he could meet at all. She looked up at him as he took his hand from her head.

"How can I help you, then, Xanthas?" she asked. "If I have no skills..?" Xan smiled again, and said, rather calmly,

"I need you to help me perform a ritual with which this kind of medicine is made... I need your body to be able to do this ritual..." he explained, seeming almost apologetic, and still slightly sad. Nidaja gritted her teeth.

"And just... How... do you intend to use my body?" she asked, feeling her blood already begin to boil. He had better not even be thinking about that.

"I need you to take your clothes off now, Lady Nidaja." he said. He remained expressionless as always as he said this.

"Uh oh." came a whisper from Neit, shrinking back away from Nidaja. She knew full well what the general was capable of.

"You think I am dumb enough to just do that? You are probably going to cast a sleeping spell on me, and then have sex with me!" Nidaja protested. She could not believe the audacity of this creature, even if he did see more than he should in that stupid fire. Xan shook his head softly.

".. Oh no... I won't do that... I have to have you awake for it..." he said. Nidaja's jaw dropped. Totally beyond comprehension!

"Then the ritual - or whatever - *is* sexual?!" she stammered. Sure the bunny was handsome and all, but Nidaja was *not* loose. She would not put out

just under the pretense that the rabbit was going to help, if it was still possible her participation was not necessary. Xan nodded softly. The only reason she had been with Alps was her love for her sister. She trained him, even if they had ultimately become very close friends in the process. She had no reason to have sex with this rabbit if there was another way.

"Well, it has to be. Your life energy is what I need to make the medicine, and the best way to get it is to pull it from you when that energy is at its highest tide... Which only occurs at the peak of sexual pleasure." he explained, bowing his head, as if slightly shy about it. "There is no other way to help your friend. It has to be the life energy of a young, passionate female. And it has to be the life essence of a female who holds a special place in her spirit for him, or it would be completely inert. I apologize for the inconvenience of it." Nidaja shuddered a bit at the thought of being taken by the rabbit. It was not a disgusting thought really... It was kind of exciting, but if she did not have to, she would not.

"Is there no other way to gather life energy of the type you need to help Alps?" the general asked. "Surely someone as skilled and wise as you knows another way." she barked.

"I do." Xanthas said, his voice eerily unwavering.

"Then why don't we do that?" Nidaja asked, insistently. Now she was getting somewhere.

"We would need your blood for that." Xanthas said softly, matter-of-factly. The emerald lupine blinked and canted her head, then held out her arm helpfully.

"I love him, and I love my sister, enough to give you as much as you need." Nidaja said. Perhaps the rabbit had merely not known how important this was to her. She felt better, knowing that she might avoid having to have sex with someone who was not even her species.

"I would need all of it." Xanthas said softly, drawing a slender knife from his canvas pack. Nidaja jerked her arm back.

"Are you serious?!" she cried.

"Quite, I'm afraid. But, I can feel in your heart, the conflict." he stated. Nidaja swallowed and nodded, feeling a bit afraid again. "You would give your life for them gladly, but now, the other way seems to suddenly be more inviting." he stated casually. It was as if he were teaching her in as subtle a way as he could. The general thought for a while. Was there no other way? If he really could help Alps as he said, it would definitely be worth it, but... Nidaja ohhed! brightly, and pointed to the thief sitting by the water, trying *not* to get noticed.

"Hey! How about her? She's younger than me. I bet her life energy will work, and she had *better* want to help Alps that badly..." Nidaja said, glaring at Neit. The girl thief gritted her teeth, and then sighed, nodding softly, bowing her head. Yes, she would do it. To save the slave, but herself as well. She would not choose the blood route, though. Sex all the way. She would redeem herself in the process, perhaps, and not have to leave the city after all. Xan shook his head sadly.

"No... No, I can't use her... Even if she loved Alps, which she does not, someone has beaten her up, it seems, and she doesn't have a strong enough life essence as a result." he said slowly and evenly. Nidaja flinched.

"Doh! Well... Fuck!" she murmured. Xan's voice broke the soft silence immediately. This time, it sounded a little different, and echoed through the cavern like Nidaja's and Neit's did.

"...Well, I'm trying to, but you are being difficult..." Nidaja's head snapped up, and she saw Xan's head still down, looking apologetic, unchanged in expression or position. She blinked.

"What... did you just say?" she asked.

"I said that it looks like the other girl, Neit... She was beaten up. That makes her life essence a lot lower. Also, even if not injured, she might very well not be enough. Your family is a lot closer to the wellspring of life - It's why your fur is green. It would have to be you or your sister, to guarantee he's healed." He added. Nidaja blinked again.

"No. After that." she said.

"I did not say anything after that." he said, shrugging. Nidaja looked up and down the visible area of the aqueduct, and then shrugged softly, and sighed.

"Well... if this is the only way... Then I guess... I have to..." she said. "But I guess you were certain of my destiny too."

"Yes... I am." Xanthas remarked softly, his voice free of echo again. It was like a thought in the darkness. "If I did not already know how our meeting ended, I would have merely told you there was nothing I could do for him." he stated. Nidaja nodded, and looked to Neit.

"Does she have to be here?" Nidaja asked. Neit ear-flicked softly. She wondered, for that brief moment, why she suddenly found herself wanting to stay.

"Yes. I need her to help too. While I work, she will need to put these crushed bones on the fire, and keep it burning the way it needs for this ritual." he

handed the thief a small leather pouch with powdered bones in it. "Taking your life force I can do on my own, but converting it into something that can help Alps, I need help..." he said. Nidaja nodded softly and was not at all happy that her body would possibly be seen by this thief who she still hated, despite her help. "When I tell you to, Neit, I will need you to scatter this dust on the fire. It will make some sound, and change color, so don't be startled." The young cat-burglar was already startled and afraid. This creature knew her name too! Did she have some strange fate he knew about too? "When it starts to change color to orange and red," he continued, "like regular fire, I need you to put more of the bone dust on it, okay?" he explained. Neit nodded softly, so nervous already, and feeling a little odd. She was going to watch this rabbit... Do something sexual to Nidaja? It was a very weird feeling. She sat across the fire from the general and Xan, and opened the pouch, waiting for the order. The lapine nodded to Nidaja.

"Okay... I need you to go ahead and take off your clothes." he said softly. There was something so very seductive about his sweet and tender voice now. Nidaja nodded slowly, and did not even feel nervous about it suddenly. It was as if she were with Alps. Was this some kind of spell he was already casting? She didn't care. Whatever made it easier. She swallowed softly, and Xan rolled out the blanket, letting her sit again.

Nidaja started to slowly undress. Xan nodded to Neit who then scattered some of the sand-like bone chips on the fire. The small blaze hissed and crackled, and began to glow white and blue. It was very, very odd for a fire. Neit 'Ooooooooooed' softly as if she was a child playing with a sparkler.

Xan looked to Nidaja as she undressed. Slowly she took off her robe, wearing only a blouse and a pair of short canvas shorts underneath. The ones she usually sparred in. Nidaja slowly pulled off her blouse, unbuttoning only the top button and peeling it up her body, over her head, and off, then placing it on the ground nearby. Xan sighed softly, licking his lips a bit as Nidaja's sculpted breasts bounced into view, her arousal already starting from the idea of just... Doing this right here making her nipples harden, pink and teasing. She blushed a bit, and looked at Xan as he watched. He nodded softly, encouragingly.

Nidaja looked down to his loincloth. It had not moved any, so he seemed to be remaining calm. It made Nidaja feel a little better. The rabbit really was looking at this like Nidaja felt he should. This was only an important and necessary ritual. She then lay down on her back, and arched her hips, to lift her rump off the blanket, as she pulled down her shorts. She was wearing nothing beneath of course, as she always felt panties made her too hot, and kept her too moist there, messing up the texture of her fur, which she had a lot of pride in.

The general then lay back against another rolled up blanket, slightly propped up. Xan smiled, and nodded to her, as he drew close. He took a jar out

of his pack, which was lying against the wall.

"This will... Tickle a little bit." he explained. "None of this will hurt, don't worry about that. It will actually feel very, very good. But you might need some help walking home. You will be really tired when I am done." he said. Nidaja blushed slightly, and could not help but smile.

"Is that a promise?" she asked, slightly coyly. She blushed deeper, unable to believe she just said that. She glanced at Neit, who sprinkled a little more dust on the fire. She seemed a little stunned by the comment too.

"Well now... Your true self shows through a little. Don't be afraid to enjoy this, Nidaja." he said softly. "I need your life energy, Nidaja, not the life energy of a nameless general, for this to work." Neit inhaled deeply, and suddenly felt even guiltier about what she did to Alps. The gentle slave made love to her when she still only had the unwashed body of a young girl of the streets. She was nowhere near as beautiful as the wolf who lay there before Xanthas, and nowhere near the friend that Nidaja was, for wanting to do this to help him. And Alps loved her, like Nidaja said. Neit realized for the first time what she had let greed take away from her. She stole his trust away from him and she decided to herself then and there... That it would be the last thing she ever stole. Nidaja inhaled softly, and sighed.

"Y - Yeah... I guess you are right! If I gotta do this, why should I not enjoy it, huh?" she said, smiling a bit. "Besides, who else will I ever meet that will get to participate in a real Lapine ritual." she said. She opened her mind a little and just relaxed a bit. Xan opened the jar, and began to slowly trace a design into Nidaja's fur. She did not dare ask what he was using. It was red. She did not want to know. She decided that for her purposes, it would be red dye, and that was all. That thought comforted her.

True to Xan's words, his caress of that red coloring tickled a bit. Nidaja tried not to giggle any. She shivered a bit though, her nipples getting even harder. Xan traced a slow zigzag patten all the way down Nidaja's left side, a very beautiful pattern, actually. It's meaning she could not possibly fathom. The general inhaled softly again, trembling. Another hiss came from the fire as Neit tossed a little more bone onto it. Xanthas removed his loincloth as Nidaja watched. He was already slightly aroused, his pink member stiff, though not standing fully erect yet.

He traced his lines on his cheek and his chest again with the red dye, leaving it fresh, as he lowered his head, and began to tenderly, oh so carefully lick one of Nidaja's exposed nipples. The general gasped hotly, and Neit watched silently. Xan's tongue was so smooth, and a lot shorter than a lupine tongue, but seemed to be a bit stronger too, with being a bit thicker with muscle mass. Rabbits would chew their food, not bolt it, so the tongue had to be

stronger.

Nidaja felt her hand drift up, and she did the one thing she had been wanting to do since she first laid eyes on Xan. She caressed his long, beautiful ears. Her fingertips traced their rims, and she began to massage them between her fingers. Xan seemed to smile around her turgid flesh as he licked that nipple with slow, gentle touches of his tongue. He then moved to the other nub. Nidaja could feel herself becoming wet slowly. So hot. That tongue was so hot and intense. She found herself thinking about having it caressing her sex instead of her nipple, and how he could press it against that already tingling little button between her legs. She blushed softly, and uttered a very soft and tentative moan.

She slowly spread her legs a little, hoping to invite the attentions of the rabbit. She remembered then that this was a ritual. He was bound by whatever this ritual demanded, and could not really take suggestions from the wolf general. Nidaja's chest began to rise and fall deeper, as she felt his strong hands slide down her body. Xanthas was older than she was, and likely a lot more experienced with this, and it showed, as he squeezed her thigh with a careful and strong hand. He was stronger than Alps was, and more... dominant. Nidaja could only think how suddenly alluring it was to have a male dominate her. She had never even considered it before. Could she convince Alps to be so strong with her? He murmured a soft incantation, something the general had never heard before, as he held her thigh, and then he slowly moved down Nidaja's body.

Another hiss from the fire as Neit watched, wriggling a bit on the smooth and large piece of driftwood she was sitting on. This was a little arousing to her as well, and she remembered what it was like, watching Nita with Alps that evening from the balcony. She swallowed softly, knowing she could not pleasure herself like that this time. She straddled the piece of driftwood though, knowing that the pressure on her sex would help her calm down. She swallowed again.

Xan slid down Nidaja's body, on all fours, letting his long ears sweep her nipples, and then down to her belly. In one of his ears, he had a little bone earring. It teased at Nidaja's nipple as it brushed over it. The general arched her back softly, and whimpered with need, sliding a paw down to her nethers, spreading them, about to place her middle finger on her clit to provide her with some pleasure. That dye... It had been a spell to excite her. She understood now. She had no other reason to be *this* aroused. However it felt so wonderful. Also, it meant that the lapine actually cared about whether or not she really enjoyed it. Even if it were only necessary to make the ritual work. This was much better than having all her blood drained. Xanthas pulled her hand away and softly said,

"Nidaja, just relax. I will make the burning stop - don't worry..." His voice

echoed. It was closer to the voice she heard before. Was that really Xanthas? Or was it the one before? Was it... One and the same? Nidaja's wondering ceased as she felt it. That hot, broad, strong tongue, touching right over her sex. Her hips lurched back a bit as he tasted her, and she forced herself to calm down, as his muzzle pressed into her mound. Both his hands went to her legs, holding them up and out of the way, basically folding Nidaja in some way.

The emerald general moved her hands down behind her knees, to hold her legs back for Xanthas. He nodded softly, and pressed his muzzle more firmly against her, as that smooth, hot, wet tongue continued to work. In slow caresses that felt a lot like petting, he stroked the tender, hard little bud of her clit, teasing it, rewarding it and savoring it.

He released a shuddering sigh, and Nidaja took in his scent... a soft musk, like she'd never smelled before. An aroused Lapine. She whimpered softly, and looked between her thighs. With the rabbit's positioning in front of her, she could not see that arousal which was teasing her nose. She looked to Neit instead who she saw was rather shamelessly rubbing herself on the driftwood, her hands holding it like they might a mate's chest. She stopped shifting back and forth when she noticed Nidaja looking at her, and blushed deeply, getting some bone dust and putting it on the fire. It did not really need it yet, though nothing was harmed in doing that. She swallowed, her own chest rising and falling a little more rapidly. She had no idea it would be this arousing just to watch. Maybe Uri had been right. Maybe she was something of a voyeur.

Nidaja looked away from Neit. She would slap that girl in the back of the head hard for enjoying this. Later. Right now, she was enjoying it a lot more than Neit was, and felt smug about it. Let the girl watch. She won't get this kind of attention. Not from the rabbit now, or from Alps when he recovers. Nidaja moaned loudly suddenly, as she felt Xan's tongue probe deeper into her. It was not a terribly long tongue, but Xan was very persistent, and forced his muzzle tight against that warm, wet sex, pressing in as much tongue as he could.

Nidaja's eyes shot open, her chest sinking in suddenly with a deep gasp as she then felt the glory of what a rabbit has better capability of. Without such a long tongue and with more muscle that tongue could move very fast. Xan flitted it back and forth over Nidaja's clit, and she groaned loudly, shifting a bit, feeling the heat rising fast now in her body. She panted deeply and felt herself sliding toward that undeniable state of feral need that would cause her to not even care if *Neit* was the one pleasuring her!

She glanced at that girl for a moment, which was, again, shifting back and forth on the driftwood. She was panting softly as she watched, dipping her paw into the bag of bone-sand again, and sifting it on the fire. Nidaja looked back at Xan, who was moving his head from side to side as he swirled and flicked his tongue so rapidly. Nidaja's legs twitched with the rhythm of that tongue. He

seemed to know where Nidaja needed to be touched, and what felt best for her. Alps was not this skilled in bed, no matter how good he was. The general panted harder, feeling herself slipping quickly toward climax. The rabbit would not relent, as his tongue rapidly dipped in and out of her, sliding over her clit, and teasing and caressing and keeping her hot. She called out softly,

"Mmmff! Ohh...! Xan! If you keep... Doing that... I'll... I'll..." She winced softly, feeling his muzzle close around her sex, and it was almost all she could stand. She rolled her hips into the mouth of the lapine, who knew so very well what he was doing. Her hands moved to her chest, and she tweaked her nipples hard, wanting to cum *now*. She could think of nothing else but her powerful release now! She didn't care about Neit, who was riding an inanimate object not four feet from her. She only cared about the wildfire coming to a flashing point within her searing body!

That wonderful tongue, which incredibly knew even better than her own fingers what felt good to her, where to move, and how hard and how fast, sent her over the edge suddenly and violently! Xan knew it before Nidaja did, apparently, as he suckled heavily, closed-mouthed, on her sex, drawing her juices out of her. The lupine female wailed loudly, her voice echoing through the aqueducts as her climax crashed down hard around her, making her entire body shake as the rabbit drank that sudden deluge of nectar!

Nidaja whimpered softly as, on top of the powerful rise of heat in her orgasm, she felt what was almost an electrical tingling of her sex. Xanthas was drawing on her life energy. Nidaja heard Neit whimper from her perch on the log. She blushed a bit, reeling in afterglow, relaxing a bit. Xanthas smiled and gazed at the general. His muzzle and cheeks were a soaked, matted mess. The general actually felt a little pride in the smile he was wearing.

"I had to test your life energy for impurities." he explained, Nidaja seeing his thick, hot cock bouncing in front of him, looking very much in need of attention. The wolf hungered for it. "If you wanted to help Alps for the wrong reasons... It simply would not do. But you love him... You care for him. So yours will be the best energy to use." he said. Nidaja dizzily considered that a compliment, as she nodded to Xan.

"Mmm... Then you are not... Done then... I take it?" she panted hotly. There was actually more than a measure of hope in the sound of her voice, and she knew it.

"No. Not yet... To really bring your energy - your very soul - to its highest tide, I need to work a little harder." he said. Nidaja blushed softly. His voice was echoing again. It was more comforting, that voice, than the one from before. She arched her back softly, and murmured softly,

"Mmmmph.. well. Then get to it..." she said, a little startled at herself for saying it. Xan smiled softly and said lightly,

"Hehe... Very well, my lady... It would seem the sigil of lust was given correctly." he lowered his head, and to the general's less-than-hidden delight and loud moan, the rabbit licked softly along Nidaja's labia. She flinched a little, still a little sensitive from her climax, as he heard a more desperate sound from Neit.

She glanced over, to see her breasts bouncing softly as she shifted back and forth a little faster on the log. It felt a lot better than she had thought it would, and her shorts were not enough to really keep that sensation from reaching her sex. She finally rather recklessly turned, and sat on the log, her legs spread. She dipped one hand into the bag of bone dust to put more on the fire, and the other down the front of her shorts, which were undone already. She cried out softly as she cast the dust on the fire, the lump of her hand under the fabric of those shorts moving from side to side rapidly, and then slowly, as she panted, watching.

Xan finally slowly got up on his knees, letting Nidaja see him. He was as fully aroused now as he possibly could be, easily 8 inches, perhaps even nine from what the wolf could see. She had thought that perhaps rabbits would not be quite that... well endowed, given that they were usually a smaller race than the lupines. However Xanthas was a little taller than she was. Nidaja was again shocked at herself as she cooed with delight at the mere sight of his shaft, bobbing with need.

The bunny shaman lifted Nidaja's leg, her left one, and then her right, into his strong hands. He licked his lips slowly, still soaked from the general's juices. Her fur shined more silver in this odd light than green, and Xan also looked as if he were a deep silvery color. There were no reds or browns or greens in this light to reflect back, so these two were more monochrome now. It was odd for her to realize it now, but she did, as he held her legs up. This was like a heavily erotic dream!

Nidaja whimpered softly and held behind her knees again as Xan slowly brought his hips to hers. She heard heavier panting and coos of pleasure from the driftwood log, and knew the thief was enjoying the show. Nidaja would definitely smack her in the back of the head but could care less at present. Xanthas slowly, evenly moved forward, his hips drawing to Nidaja's like the setting of the sun. Nidaja's hips lifted up a bit, like the rising of the moon. She could not help it. She wanted this so badly now! How could she possibly have complained before? She looked between her legs, just to take in the seductive and erotic view of that tapered tip pressing into her folds, and being slowly swallowed by her hot, needful body.

Xanthas moaned softly himself, and let his hips continue to drift forward

like the even, slow coming of a storm. Nidaja moaned long and low as she watched his length slide into her, stretching her labia apart, the length of that cock caressing fully over her clit. She inhaled sharply as she felt his balls caress against her tail hole as he pressed fully into her, and stopped, sighing deeply at the feel of Nidaja's inner walls, tensing, relaxing, still twitching slightly from her orgasm a short while ago. It was like being suckled on. He held her knees, letting Nidaja move her hands to where she wanted them now. Her breasts. She eagerly squeezed them, surprising herself again as she lifted a nipple to her lips and lapped it heatedly. Xanthas began to slowly move his hips.

"Oh dear heat and pleasure take me... Uhh... Oooooohh..." Nidaja moaned, squeezing her breasts tightly, nipples perked red between her pinching fingers. So sensitive! Everything felt so good! Was it the spell? Or was it the rabbit? She could not tell. She felt so hot! She wanted that heat to go away, and what Xanthas was doing... felt like standing in a cool breeze on the hottest of days. It was bringing relief. And soon, the relief would be complete. She arched her back a little, and called out softly... "Ohh... Xan... Don't - Ahahh - Don't stop..." she pleaded as if in fear that he actually might. There was another hiss from the fire, and a passionate moan from Neit, who had taken her shorts off while Nidaja's attention was on the cock sliding into her, and the thief was on all fours, in front of the fire. The bag of bone dust was in front of her. She would rise to her knees every once in a while to replenish the bone dust in the fire, but whether she was replenishing the flame, or just watching, her other hand stayed down the front of her body, between her legs, stirring her sex, as she watched. She was shamelessly masturbating to the ritual now.

Nidaja did not care at all any more. In fact, she only moaned louder at the sight of it. She looked back down her body, slightly folded with the position she was in, as Xan began to caress her sex from the inside with his swollen cock, slipping in and out of her tight depths, thrusting slowly and seductively. She watched it as it moved, almost hypnotizing in a sexually enflaming sort of way.

Nidaja's toes curled, as Xan began to move faster, making soft sounds of pleasure to match Nidaja's own. The sound of sex filled the air now, as Neit plunged her fingers inside herself, and Xan's cock slipped in and out of the now desperately willing wolf. The emerald lupine female panted harder, feeling herself drawing closer again. Xan too, was speeding up now. He was enjoying it. He should. He deserved it. He was helping Alps. He was a good rabbit. Nidaja pressed herself harder against him, matching his inward thrusts with a backward thrust, to bury him deeper.

"N.. Nidaja... Tell me! Tell me when you are ready to cum!" he panted loudly, his voice echoing. Neit burst. There was no other way to express it. She cried out, her hips lowering as her paw worked herself beyond climax, her thick syrup spilling over the stone floor of the aqueduct, spreading into its own glistening pool between her out-strewn thighs! Tears were in her eyes as she bit

her lip, panting through her nose, and moving a very soaked paw out in front of her to help her hold steady. She put more dust on the fire, and pressed her rump against the driftwood again, sliding it back and forth, savoring the feel of climax and slowly enveloping afterglow, crooning loudly and lustfully. Nidaja nodded at Xan's words.

"I'm... Oh! I'm not far..." she said loudly "You are so... Oohhhh!" She laid her head back and pounded against him harder. Xan held her legs behind the knees, keeping her sex tighter around his cock as he pumped harder. His hips slapped heavily against hers as he was obviously working himself closer to his own climax.

Nidaja hoped Xanthas would make his release obvious too. The green general now *wanted* to reward him! The slick suckling sounds of Nidaja's hot inner walls wrapped so tight around his member almost echoed too, as Neit just panted now, and Nidaja cried out in pleasure.

"Ngg, Nkk, Tell me!" Xanthas ordered, pumping his hips harder, pistoning his shaft rapidly now for the return-humping general lupine!

"Mmmph! Mmmph! Not yet - getting closer... Ohhh, oh f-... feels so... Mmmmmm!" she whimpered back desperately. Nidaja was beside herself with need. The spell was surely partly responsible for making it feel even hotter than usual, but that didn't matter. She was on the verge of a mind-shattering climax!

"Let it happen! Nng - mpph - nnf! Ohh, let me know when you are almost ready to cum - don't... mmmph.. Oh General... Don't cum first and then... tell..." he said loudly, his hips jerking back and forth harder. The rabbit too, it seemed, was close. He was panting heavily as well. Neit was rubbing her sex again with her wet paw, looking quite deeply lust filled as Xan rocked Nidaja back and forth with his powerful movements.

"Closer..." Nidaja moaned, her voice wavering as if afraid, her hips rising and falling to meet with those powerful thrusts, her breath loudly hissing through her panting. Her hips and inner thighs were drenched with the wetness of her sexual longing and her first orgasm.

"Oh yes! Tell me, Nidaja!" Xan ordered, holding tightly, his back claws scraping the rock floor of the aqueduct, off the blanket they were on. Nidaja began panting increasingly desperately, faster, shorter breaths, little excited cries mixed in, before she finally cried,

"NNNKK! OH XAN! I'm GONNA CUM!" She shut her eyes tight. Even if the rabbit stopped moving, it would not make a difference. She was that close by the time she finished saying she was ready. Xan, it seemed, was waiting just for that. He cried out heatedly, and held Nidaja's knees tighter, as the wolf felt hot,

thick seed spray into her, and a powerful rush of electricity from the rabbit. It did not hurt, but it stunned her slightly, and then, like a rush, she came. It was by far the most powerful orgasm she had ever experienced, and she howled in a fit of pleased rage!

That climax was so intense, as she wailed with each hot explosion, that it almost hurt! She howled again and again, just like Alps would when he was climaxing, Nidaja's voice peeled through the aqueducts, a loud, piercingly perfect note. She felt the thick, hot seed of the rabbit splash heavily against her cervix, coating her inner walls completely as he jetted hard into her, wincing himself, seeming as if he were overloaded. Xan cried out softly, and his eyes glowed for a while, a deep red color... The color of blood, and then went dim and out again, his soft brown eyes heavy lidded as he felt that warm, wet sex suckling lightly on him, pulling all the seed he would give.

Relaxing, he let Nidaja's rump go, and slid his cock out of her carefully. The removal of his thick length caused his rich white seed to spill out onto the blanket, coating the base of Nidaja's tail as she panted, feeling extremely dizzy and wonderful, deep in afterglow. She looked to Xan, who picked up the bottle he had a little while ago, and uncorked it. He moved over to Nidaja again, and waved that bottle around over her, murmuring weakly a soft incantation. He then moved over to the fire, still burning with that blue light. As he got close to Neit, she crumbled to the ground, squealing with orgasm again, her eyes shut tight, scattering that bone dust one more time on the fire, her hips pressed against that drift wood again. Her juices splashed out of her, onto the eroded rock of the natural aqueduct. The little thief looked totally wiped out.

Xanthas smiled softly, and shook his head as he put the bottle into the fire. The fire was promptly extinguished, though a soft bluish white glow continued from the bottle, which Xanthas corked. He looked to Nidaja, who was illuminated slightly by the silver rod that was beside her. He moved over to her, and spoke softly, as she lay on her back, sprawled out, enjoying the warmth of afterglow.

"You... are very weak right now. But unlike when you normally have sex, you are not going to just recover in a few minutes, and be able to move around like normal. You are going to feel like this for the next two or three hours." Xanthas said. "I will put the bottle in your belongings. Do not uncork it until you are with Alps. Point the bottle at him, and touch it to his lips, and pull it away slowly. That is important. Okay, Nidaja...?" he asked. It seemed that, while Xanthas was a little tired, and perhaps a bit giddy with his happy expression, he had already recovered. His thighs were still soaked, and his shaft still rigid. Physically, it would probably take a little while to calm down. Nidaja's head swam, and she was very content. A three hour afterglow. She would just have to suffer through it. Darn.

Neit moaned softly from the floor of the cavern, in front of the extinguished

fire. "You however..." he said to Neit, "Will be fine in a couple minutes. And you have to help Lady Nidaja get back to castle Diera. I know you are not wanted in the castle, so just get her to the gates, and leave her there. She can do fine from that point on, okay?" Neit murmured a soft affirmative. Xanthas sat back down beside Nidaja, who continued to pant deeply, cooing happily.

"I wish..." she said softly, "All medicine tasted this good." Xanthas chuckled warmly at her statement, and shook his head.

"The rest is up to you, Nidaja. Take good care of that slave. He is not the last one of his kind you'll see, but he may yet prove to be the most useful..." he added cryptically. Nidaja nodded softly, barely even registering what the rabbit had said. She murmured, in a soft, drunken tone,

"Good journey to you, Xanthas. You have a good heart... and a kind soul." she said softly.

"A powerful heart yes." Xanthas said, his voice having stopped echoing again. "But a soul... What I would give to have one of those..." he said, rather darkly. Nidaja did not hear another word from him. She simply passed out. When she awakened, only a half hour later, he was gone, a mystery having come into her life, and then left, with just as much obscure intrigue.

Neit was waiting for her, and would help her to the castle, and accept the repeated slaps to the back of the head, but no amount of slapping would tell Nidaja anything more about who Xanthas was. He would to her, remain a story to keep her up at night, staring at the stars, and wondering.