

**Sirius, Book III**  
*The Essence*

*Comments or Questions?*

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**Chapter 14**

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The darkness was familiar, at least. Alps could not feel or hear or see anything at first. He remembered that though. He was ready for it, but he knew with a sense of sorrow that Nidaja was not and was probably horrified about now. He knew he was supposed to be holding her hand, but wondered if that was still true after he performed the technique he'd used to move them into this dark place.

The white-furred slave began to focus on his own energy, his own essence. The last time her was here, he did this on his own, without realizing it. Now that he understood it, it came easier. He would feel it soon enough. He would feel himself drifting. He waited for a bit, and finally, it started. It was like waiting for feeling to return to one's foot when it was asleep. It took a bit. He drifted, drifted, drifted. It felt like he drifted for an entire day. He was not sure if Nidaja was still connected to him in some way, but his mind was dominated with finding her, calling out to her, searching for her. Last time he was here, he thought he was dead. There was a kind of peace and tranquility to it when he was not thinking that. It really was not so bad. He felt a little flash of mirth go through him when he considered it might be a nice vacation spot. It was certainly not a bad place to be alone with one's thoughts.

Drifting did give him time to think about what he'd done. He knew the general idea of what he was doing, but felt foolish for the risk he took in taking Nidaja with him. However, he was sure she agreed that the unfortunate alternative, getting all the Asuna in the city killed just for being there, would not have been acceptable. He made the right choice. It wasn't a nice choice, but it was the right one. He knew he'd have ugly choices to have to make, but this was getting to be a bit frustrating. He did feel somewhat confident that he could get out of the crystal, he remembered very well what he did before, but he knew that Nidaja would not feel such confidence, and she would be subject to the effects of the crystal that Alps had somehow missed when he was plunged into it. She would suffer as long as he was not there by her side.

With this in mind, Alps pressed on hard, focusing and focusing, as he had done the first time, looking for light. What he thought had been a way out the last time he'd been here turned out to be the light of someone else's essence in the darkness. It had been someone else trapped in the crystal. He would find the closest one of those lights and hoped that it would be Nidaja, but even if it wasn't, it would at least be someone, and that someone deserved to be free as well. Would there be many others? He would feel terrible for not bringing home everyone in this crystal. Could he afford to really stay

that long, though? He asked that his crystal be taken to Nita, but would she go to war with Rios for letting it happen if he took too long getting back out? He hoped that she would believe Lyat about the choice he made. Ultimately, he suspected she would. She knew what he would do for his friends.

It again felt like a day or so of just drifting in one direction before he saw the first light, a mere speck. He drifted harder, faster toward it. He was getting better at it, especially without regret and despair holding him back like last time. It did not take him long to get to the outside of that ball of light, like a sun shining in the darkness.

And then he was there. He knew immediately he had found Nidaja's little world of suffering inside the crystal. He was standing in the ruins of Castle Diera. Only Nidaja would have this as her nightmare. He moved calmly through the scenery. It was all constructed of her fears, loneliness, regrets and deepest disappointments. It was not real. Would Nidaja know it was false? Would she really understand? The place was very convincing. He looked around at what was present in this limited world. He could not see the town through what seemed to be a dense fog that clung to the ground by the castle, but was higher down into the town itself, but one could suspect that it looked much the same as the castle. The castle itself was burned, broken, and covered in vines that were, themselves, dry and lifeless from what might be the scourge of an endless winter. There was not even any wind, just the cold, eerie calm of the wet fog hanging over everything. It was as bleak and desolate as he could imagine a place being. It was even worse in some fashion than Luna's scorched battleground where he had found that priestess, and far worse than the lonely tomb where Ceriss was the last remaining Letai standing watch over the spirits of all her departed friends. It was worse because he recognized the place, and knew the suffering that had to be going on there.

Alps sped up his pace as he searched. There was not much left of the castle itself. The top floors were gone entirely, only the first floor, in segments, remained, and were buried mostly in rubble, so there was not anything to search there. He went alongside the castle ruins, and finally heard a sound. Soft sobbing. Alps rolled his eyes, speaking to himself softly.

"Nidaja, no, you know you were Shadowfallen, you know this isn't real." He quickened his pace and came around to the back courtyard, where he and Nita and his other friends had spent quite a lot of time enjoying relaxing afternoons together. He had started to wonder if he would ever enjoy days like that again, care free, and looking forward only to dinner and his night life with his love, Nita, or any she cared to share that love with. He finally found the general, still in her armor, crumbled on her knees, hands covering her face, weeping.

In front of her were grave stones, marked with the names of her parents, yes, but others, beside them were marked with more familiar names. Nita. Misty. Misha. Uri. All in a row, these gravestones were slabs taken from the castle, and the names crudely scrawled on them. Another stone rested beside those, marked only with the etched words of Nidaja's own name, and the phrase, "Presumed Dead". Alps understood

immediately what the nightmare for Nidaja was about. She thought that she had escaped the Shadowfall, but that she was too late, and that the empire had fallen, leaving everyone to wonder where their general had gone when they needed her most. Her fear was not only the thought of losing those she loved, but the failure to protect them. Alps put his hands in his pockets, still attired in the now somewhat tattered tunic and trousers he wore when wandering about Diera with his lovers not so long ago.

"It's not real, Nidaja." Alps said finally, not sure how to break the drone of her soft weeping. She gasped, and held still. She seemed to struggle for a moment with disbelief as she remained on her knees in front of the scrawled writing. "Get up, Nidaja, this is the Shadowfall. This is your fear, and nothing else." Alps said. Even as he said it, he found himself wondering again why he didn't see anything like this when he was cast in. He just saw darkness, and he wasn't afraid of the dark. He was alone, but he didn't truly feel that he was alone, and without hope. Was he immune to the effects that trapped others here? Nidaja finally turned, looking up at him, her eyes red from crying.

"Alps?" she asked. "Oh Alps, it's really you? You are ... you are sure this is not real? It feels so real..." she added, standing, dusting off her knees.

"I am quite sure. I have been here before, remember?" he stated. Nidaja rubbed her face a bit, and nodded.

"It's been hours and hours... maybe days, where were you?" she asked. Alps shook his head and replied softly, taking Nidaja's hands. They were cold, but he felt them heat up fast in his own hands. She gasped softly at that as he spoke.

"We got separated. I had to find you. This is a big place." He looked into her eyes, trying to seem reassuring, but it seemed that the effect of just touching her hands with his was doing that. It made him real, where before she might have assumed him to be a phantom.

"You are so warm..." she noted softly, looking at his hands. "Everything in this place feels dead and empty. Even I feel that way.

"That is your fear, Nidaja. Ignore it. Make it go away. Make this place as unreal as it is. You are with me now, and what's real is the fact that we will be home soon, and Nita will be very happy to see us. We succeeded. We took a risk and we protected the Asuna. They cannot doubt our intentions now. Better times will be upon both our peoples." The general's eyes glittered in near-tears as Alps spoke, taking in his words. He knew the importance of shaking her darkness. It was necessary to bring Luna out of the depths of her cursed world. Even if it didn't affect him, Alps was starting to understand how the suffering here was supposed to work, and what he needed to do in order to break it. He continued to speak, raising his voice to shake Nidaja's heart. "Let the happier thoughts, the better memories all fill your heart... Let us escape this nightmare together!" The slave continued to hold Nidaja's hands tightly, looking happily into her eyes. She closed those violet eyes softly, tears rolling down either side of her

green muzzle, and the world around the two wolves began to change. The fog began to lift, and the sun began to shine, and the castle, in a fading instant was whole again. It was still empty, of course, but it and the town below were simply whole again, just as Nidaja remembered them.

The lady lupine opened her eyes, and then just sobbed, falling into Alps' arms, making him feel like crying himself. He knew Nidaja was joyful, but she was still crying. He felt warmth wash over the area. It really was a mirror of her feelings. When they changed from despair to something more pleasant, it did not take long to fix the negative effects on Nidaja's world within the crystal.

"So..." The general leaned back a little and adjusted her armor. "Our clothes go in too, huh?" She tugged at it a bit, trying to bring herself back under control. Alps was sure that being seen crying was actually embarrassing to the rather strong-willed lady.

"Our memories of them do at least. And I was still dressed when I got out of the crystal last time, as you recall. They are linked to us in the moment we leave, I suppose, perhaps by our self-image within our essence alone." He noted, though certainly not an expert on the matter. "Everything we were carrying went too." Alps held up his satchel and nodded to Nidaja. "Well, except the crystal." He looked around. "Looks better, right? So you know it was not real. There's nothing at all to worry about, and hey! We saved ourselves a week of walking, Lyat and Reika are taking us home right now." He wanted to be certain that she did not start to doubt again, as it would make things harder on her, perhaps. Alps did not wish to see her suffer at all, since he was the one who brought her here.

"Yes, I know. I'm sorry I jumped to conclusions. It just seemed like... I don't know... The most possible and most horrible outcome, you know?" she asked, standing beside Alps and holding his hand. "So..." she looked back and forth through the town.

"Yes?" the white wolf asked curiously. He was very interested in Nidaja's thoughts on a place that she would be one of the few to ever leave it, and one of the few who would get to share her opinion of the experience. He knew Misty would hang on her every word concerning it.

"What are we doing now? Are we leaving?" she asked. Alps shook his head a little. The general frowned a bit.

"We can't leave yet." Alps was cautious in how he said this, wanting to make sure she didn't think the pair were just stuck there or that something was wrong.

"Why not? So Lyat and Reika have time to get us home, you mean?" she asked. "We don't know how much time has passed. You said it felt like just a few days or so but it was months for the rest of us. You said so yourself." Nidaja said softly. Alps held Nidaja's hand reassuringly tighter.

“Right. We don’t want to stay long, but I could not leave last time until I had freed the priestesses and the crystal was clear. I think one of two things happened.” The wolf tried to think of the clearest way to explain, while at the same time, trying to make it sound more like he was giving baking instructions that had to be followed, rather than admitting there might be complications to the plan. “First, I think I was drawing energy because of my ... ahh... contact with the priestesses...” he stated.

“Contact?” Nidaja asked curiously. Alps blushed a bit.

“Oh... that’s right, I told Nita, but I didn’t get a chance to really talk about it with you. They were a bit... starved for affection and company when I found them.” Nidaja’s eyes widened at Alps’ statement.

“Oh my...” she murmured softly. “All three of them?” she asked.

“Not the fox.” Alps offered quickly, as if Elis might just slap him again for the mere implication somehow. He did not think it impossible, really, for him to still run into her in this place.

“But the two priestesses... That is... Oh Alps, that’s kind of silly. You have a thing for powerful lovers. You would do well to admit you may have an obsession.” The general giggled at that loudly. Alps shook her arm a little, in a playfully scolding fashion.

“Nidaja, it wasn’t like that. They were very... insistent.” Alps looked up at the blue sky. “Knowing what I know about the Letai now, I can better understand why they did it though. It was to give me some of their strength. Some of their power. They might not have thought it would do anything to get us out, but it was their reward for freeing them from loneliness at least. But I was stronger after each contact with them, and after getting all the lights out of the crystal. The whole thing became clear, and I broke out.” Nidaja seemed to dwell on that explanation for a bit. She looked thoughtfully around the quiet, deserted town, and finally, she murmured, with a knowing grin,

“So, like... if we have a bit of fun here and ran around town and did the same things you and the priestesses did, we can get out of here faster, yes? Maybe we make a few new friends in the crystal, and show them a good time, and then we are out of here?” Nidaja’s tail swung back and forth a little faster now. “Alps, are you serious, that’s what you did? I thought it had to have been a terrible, horrible nightmare for you. I actually thought you had endured terrible stress and a struggle beyond what any who had gone in had known in order to get out... You are seriously telling me you just fucked your way out of this thing? No wonder no one’s ever gotten out, no one but you would have ever thought that would work!” she laughed. Nidaja had to sit down on one of the benches that replaced the headstones. “That is the stupidest, but cleverest thing I have ever heard!” she wailed in between her fits of laughter. Alps flattened his ears at that. Was she teasing him? Should he feel indignant, or did she really think it was silly?

"I... I didn't actually plan it like that..." he offered meekly. Nidaja took the young lupine by the hand, shaking her head as she grinned at him, pulling him around the side of the castle.

"Oh, stow it love, come on, I know just the place."

"Wait, what?" he asked. He strode quickly along behind the general, tightly in tow. "Where are we going?"

"Are you serious?" Nidaja laughed, "We have the entire fucking city with no one in it. I am going to tag some of my favorite spots with you, Alps! I would regret not having some fun with such an opportunity!" Alps yeepled a bit, and blushed as Nidaja took him toward the town, seeming very intent on having some illicit adventures around the city.

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"You have got to be insane." The grey-furred guard held a halberd across the hall as the other drew her sword, looking fearfully at the pair of bedraggled hyenas who stood before them. "I don't know how you got into the city, but if you bring one more of your filthy spots toward the castle, we will take you apart." Both guards looked grim and determined, knowing very well that a fight against one Asuna would have been stacked against them. Two was almost out of the question. Those crazy things were monsters by Amanian standards.

"We is requesting audience with Queen Razelle. Is no joke." Lyat said in a soft, serene tone, trying hard to make himself seem less aggressive. He was a hyena, however, and was quite aware that just being that made him an immediate threat here. He and his sister had done well to obscure their faces and spots on their travels to this point, but no one who was cloaked beyond recognition was going to get an audience with Nita, he was sure. He would have to try to convince them of the importance of the mission.

"You are not getting in, no matter what you say. We have no reason to believe an Asuna, and no reason to listen. Please, avoid the injuries that you are asking for at this moment, and turn around and go back to your mud huts." One of the two guards poked at Reika a bit, who backed up a little, and reached for the bone club on her back, but Lyat stopped her.

"Go and be calling Misty out here then." Lyat spoke in a grim tone. "At least she is understanding what we is needing to say, and knowing it to be truth. Please, just this if no audience can be given." The strong Asuna knew that Misty would be keenly interested in the story he had to tell, and would know why they needed to speak with

Nita.

“So you can divide and conquer? Get one of us alone, and then slip in, I don’t think so. We will stand here, both of us, to stop you until help arrives, and then we will drive you off or kill you outright if you do not follow our instructions, now leave.” The taller of the two guards spoke louder as the threatened Lyat. The Asuna sighed softly.

“Then we wait for help to maybe arrive until Misty or Nita is coming down just to find out what is going on. It is not mattering to me, there is no failing in talking to her though. Not accepted.” He noted. A spear jabbed at his head. With a clink, it was deflected with his metal wrist-band, off to the side. The guard pulled back, rethinking her attack. Reika pulled out her bone club, his feather-laden blank-eyed visage openly visible. The two guards burst into laughter.

“What the hell is that?!” one of them asked.

“Is Bone. You is showing respect, Bone is polite. You is being likewise.” Reika barked. The laughter was doubled.

“No, seriously, what the hell are you two? We thought assassins or mercenaries, but come on!” Their laughter made Reika fume.

“Please, brother, can we be harming these and going inside? Is going to rain soon.” The girl Asuna said.

“No Reika, you know the rules. No harming the Amani people. Even if they is being a little insufferable.” He sighed again, thinking hard about how to get around this impasse. A new voice spoke up from behind the guards.

“What is this? Asuna? In this city?” The dark male lupine towered over the two girl guards, looking as large and strong easily as Lyat. The hyena tensed a bit. He could read his motions. This one was a fighter. His dark leather armor showed that he might even be part of the military, which made him a genuine threat to him and his sister.

“We is Lyat and Reika.” The male hyena spoke up clearly, pointing to himself and his sister. “We is here for meeting with Queen Razelle. We having important messages from Rios Dominis, but guards is not admitting, or even allowing to speak with council, and telling of message is important.” As Lyat spoke, the lupine fighter gazed intently with his yellow eyes gleaming with intelligence and passion. He nodded a bit, and looked to the guards, his eyes narrowing. The chuckling guards went silent.

“Were you going to stand their laughing, or were you going to actually get some help to deal with them, you idiots?!” the dark-furred male shouted to the other two. They immediately cowered. Lyat arched a brow. He was not used to seeing males in such a dominant role in Amani. Yelling at a female like that would get an Asuna put in

jail, and he had understood that the roles were not that much different for the Amani.

“Sorry Lunar, Sir, they just... We didn’t want to leave just one of us here!” one of the guards stated loudly.

“The girl could have broken your necks while the other one went for tea! You should have both went for help.” Lunar said sternly. Lyat noticed his sister wagging a bit. This Lunar fellow acknowledged the strength of the Asuna. He knew how to manipulate their culture to his favor. He was attempting to reduce the insult that the other two had levied against them. Lyat waved his hand dismissively.

“Is not necessary, warrior Lunar.” Lyat motioned for Reika to put Bone away.

“What is it you wish to speak with the queen about? I’m Lunar, I am currently acting guard captain while Lady Nidaja tends to matters elsewhere... matters which we understand are the responsibility of the Asuna, if I am not mistaken.” the strong wolf rumbled.

“Lunar is boy guard captain? Boys is stronger in Amani than Asuna first realize, maybe.” Reika stated with her eyes widening. Lyat shook his head. The guy knew how to get Reika’s attention it seemed, and perhaps he thought he would need to if Lyat, being male, was not in charge. Both were in non-typical roles, it seemed. Lyat considered that a moment, thinking it might give him some advantage in speaking with Lunar. He cleared his throat a little and spoke.

“Asuna is taken Servant Alps from her. Is bringing him back, but is needing to speak about things regarding him. Important, private things. Queen is not telling everything about slave to everyone in kingdom, and Asuna is respecting this. Not telling everyone things either. Only queen or councilor is needing to know.” The larger hyena bowed a bit in politeness. He would use his knowledge of Amani culture to his advantage as well.

“Alps, now... There is a name I am pretty familiar with. You are wise to bring him back, but if you are seeking reward or even ransom, you will find she does not react well to those demands. He’s more important to her than you think.” Lunar circled around the larger hyena, who did not move, though Reika shifted nervously.

“Lyat is knowing things he is not saying in front of guards. Only for Nita to know. Queen is having right to secrets.” Lyat leaned back a little, trying to look relaxed.

“You can say these things in front of me. I will hold them as secret, and the other guards with me will be sworn to this under penalty of death. Tell me now, and I will determine if the matter is so private that it requires the attention of high council members or the queen herself. Now, what does your message concern?” he asked. Lyat inwardly cursed. This fighter was not a pushover. He was a tactician not so different from Nidaja. The direct approach and hoping he believed the hyena would be



the only way. The two other guards looked smug that the hyena's journey had ended and their commander was smarter than the spotty monster. Lyat spoke, Reika looking nervous all the while.

"Asuna is come to the queen to tell her important news about Alps, who is freed himself from Shadowfall, and is freed priestesses too." The hyena watched Lunaris flinch at that, knowing already that his means of becoming free again, and especially the freedom of the other priestesses, was most certainly not common knowledge. The two guards looked dumbstruck. "Queen's lover is giving important gift to Asuna people already so we is not wanting payment for him. No payment equal what Alps is doing for Asuna people. But... he is not just walking back to Diera. He is needing help to get back. All Lyat can say. Will not say more in front of any but queen or councilor Misty. The Asuna are bound to Last of Letai in this way. Bound by our word to serve him now, until mission is over. Lyat and Reika's life is belonging to him now. Amanian threat of harm and death is being meaningless." The hyena made sure to darken his tone and make sure the wolf knew he was serious.

"The white-furred servant of the queen's?" one of the guards asked.

"What would they want with him? What priestesses?" the other guard asked. Lunaris, who was swaying a bit in apparent stunned dread at what the hyena had said, snapped at the girls.

"Enough! You repeat none of that. I was serious about your deaths. Your lives have just become moot in light of that information if you should pass it to anyone else! Understood?" he barked. They girls both gasped and nodded, seeming even more mystified by it. Lyat smiled a little at this. This would dominate their discussions privately for a long, long time, he was sure. Lunaris looked back at Lyat and growled,

"How am I to know you were not able to make him talk about those things? How do we know he was not tortured?" he asked.

"Alps is never betraying friends!" Reika shouted, to Lyat's immediate surprise. Even Lunaris flinched at that. The girl Asuna continued. "Only weak person is betraying! Alps is strong Letai! He is rather die, or worse, be Shadowfallen before is bringing hurt to any friends! Even Asuna!" she shouted furiously, her voice echoing. "Reika breaks any who dare say otherwise!" Lyat cut her off.

"Enough!" he did not want her to actually say he had been Shadowfallen already. This would only complicate matters before they could get the crystal into the queen's hands, and if anyone here was not able to be trusted, it would further implicate the Asuna in helping his escape or even risk losing the crystal. Their mission would fail. The dark lupine looked hard and long at the indignant, protectively fuming Reika. He then lowered his head in submission to her slightly, and nodded, with a slight smile.

"A little passionate about the slave... He does seem to have that effect on those

he becomes friends with. Come with me. I will let you speak with the queen, but you have to leave your weapons with the guards here.” Lunar is indicating the cowering lady guards who had not expected Reika’s furious outburst. Their captain had just told them she could kill them both easily. Reika clutched Bone and shook her head. Lyat sighed softly. Separating her from Bone was not something he wanted to think about the whole trip.

“Sorry Reika, it’s only fair. We would not have let armed Amani near Rios, would we?” he asked. She growled.

“Bone is not weapon.” She gritted her teeth.

“Close enough to one though. Don’t worry, they won’t hurt him.” Lyat said comfortingly. Lunar is looked puzzled, and then a little worried at Reika. The elder hyena knew that it had dawned on him that he was now taking a mentally unstable Asuna to meet the queen.

“Don’t worry. You have my word, they will not so much as pluck a feather from it.” Lunar is finally stated. Reika very reluctantly gave up the club and crossed her arms, fretting as Lunar is lead them into the castle.

The two Asuna were lead to a small room to sit and wait, as gaining audience with the queen was not so simple as just walking up to her and saying hi. Lyat was already aware of it. The Amanians were very serious about procedure and they would need to have plenty of guards present to deal with the two Asuna and discourage them if there was anything amiss with their message that might be seen as a threat to the queen. During his wait, he got to enjoy Reika’s fears of being without her bone club.

“They is licking him, Reika knows it...” she said at one point.

“They is not.” Lyat replied.

“They is putting him in water and smudging his face.” Her hands were wringing in fear of this possibility. “Reika never gets it just right again.”

“Reika, quit, he’s fine. You smash people in the face with him and wipe his features off with fighting all the time.” Lyat said.

“Reika is having Bone’s okay to doing that! Bone is wanting to smash face for Reika! He says!” she flailed a bit.

“They have no reason to do anything to Bone. And they are afraid of Lunar is. They won’t do it.” Lyat sighed a bit. He hoped the wait wasn’t long. This was not pleasant for him.

“What if they is deciding they love Bone? He is being smooth and silky and clean

and strong... He is feeling wonderful in girl's hands, and they get ideas, yes? Bone is being irresistible." Reika said, her voice squeaking with concern. Lyat flattened his ears at that, wilting a bit at the mental image, not of the wolf guards fondling the bone club, but at the cause that Reika might have to even consider it. Fortunately, he did not have to listen to her continue, because Lunar is finally came and retrieved them both. After a little while of wandering through some of the halls, he became aware that the castle was a bit more complex and large than the slightly more utilitarian palace he called home. There were luxurious rugs that felt soft under his feet, and beautiful tapestries depicting important people and places and events hanging on every wall. There were bright torches and flickering candles that cast light upon everything, and shiny metal fixtures on every clean and heavy door. Even the hinges were bright and polished. He'd never seen such luxury in his homeland. The Amani valued the appearance of power as much as the Asuna valued the use of it. There were surprised faces of course, everywhere that he and Reika were led, and at some points he wondered if they even had to be taken through such a round-about course, or if they were being shown to people in the castle to get everyone on their toes and make sure people were ready in case things went poorly.

Finally, they arrived at a pair of large double doors with the glittering gold royal crest emblazoned upon them both. As they swung open, he realized that he'd been taken directly to the queen's throne room instead of a meeting hall, and there was a very worried-looking and very lovely green-furred lupine sitting upon that throne. Lyat was immediately able to tell this was Nidaja's sister, it was unmistakable. He felt miserable suddenly about the news and "gift" he would be bringing her. Reika moved behind him a little as she looked at the others that were in the room with the queen. There were two very strong looking guards, one with black fur, and one with grey, armed and looking quite ferocious. There was a gold-furred lady wolf with long hair and fluffy fur and thin-rimmed glasses standing beside the queen. Off to her other side was a very pretty lupine with a striking appearance. Her fur was as pure white as Alps' own. Lunar is moved over beside Misty, and nodded to the pair of Asuna.

"You may speak now, but please, keep to important topics, the queen is very busy." The dark-furred male said in a serious and symbolic tone.

"We is Lyat.." the male Asuna pointed to himself, "... and Reika." He pointed to his sister. Reika moved behind her brother a bit. The queen was powerful, and Reika showed understanding of that, as required by her custom. "We is servants of Rios Dominis, Empress of the Asuna people. We come here with her permission, but we is being asked to come by Letai, Alps. Is being by his request we is standing here now." Lyat paused, seeing the queen look up to speak.

"What makes you think he's Letai?" she asked. The hyena paused a moment. She knew, right? Or was it simply not believed yet? Alps had seemed to find it hard to believe. He certainly had all the proof right there with him.

"We is hearing rumor of one who is Shadowfallen by agent of Mannus, assassin

attempting upon life of the Queen.” Lyat nodded to Nita, who shifted a bit, her violet-colored robes remaining neat and tracing her form beautifully. She seemed very nervous about such a rumor getting out. Lyat knew she should be, though. Mannus would surely see to investigating such a claim, and it was important that she find some way to cover it up. “We is hearing he is getting out. None but Letai would be strong enough, and even no Letai is known to do that. So we is asked to find him and bring him by Empress herself!” There was a pause, and some murmuring back and forth between Misty and Nita, and then the queen looked off behind Misty and her throne, and spoke again.

“Are they the ones?” Nita asked. A slender, tan, short-furred lupine female slipped out from behind the throne. Lyat looked up at her. He recognized her immediately as being the one who was with Nidaja when he first met her, sent back to tell the queen what was going on. She nodded to Nita fearfully.

“I didn’t see the girl back then, but she took him in some kind of weird boat. The guy though, he’s the one Nidaja fought. She went with him.” Neit explained. Nita spoke up.

“Where did you take Nidaja?” She drummed her fingertips with some irritation on the throne. It was obvious she did not like having Asuna in her throne room. She had the same bias that her sister had thankfully managed to get over. The future would be hard for the Asuna and the Amanians if everyone was so dedicated to disliking their people, but this was damage done to their people by Mannus and their own fear. He forgave the queen for her obvious disgust.

“She is went with me to get Alps back.” Lyat tried to speak as candidly and openly as he could so it didn’t seem like he was hiding anything, but he still feared having to tell the queen what happened. Alps trusted him, however, with this task, so he’d have to do it. “Reika is took him to Rios, in palace, so Lyat is took Nidaja there.”

“They went to Asuna capital?” Misty asked incredulously. Lyat knew, from Alps’ description of her, that she’d be curious about everything she could learn about the city and its people.

“Yes. Is went there to meet Rios, and Lyat is took Nidaja to get him back. Nidaja and Alps is being ready to leave together, but Uruk is found out, and even though talking was good between Nidaja and Rios, and is talked about making better future for both Asunas and Amanis... Uruk is coming to city and was no way out of city for Nidaja and Alps.” Lyat spoke of this regrettably. There were fearful gasps in the room, and panicked murmurs. Nita bolted up, looking immediately horrified and anguished.

“The Uruk took them?! No!” She pointed at Lyat. “You foolish creatures! That wolf was more important than you could ever realize!” her voice echoed unnaturally. Misty scooted away from her about ten feet. The white-furred lupine female moved over toward Lyat, standing between him and the queen a moment, then to the side a little,

motioning to him.

“Nita Razelle knows essence attacks, Lyat of the Asuna. Be careful not to anger her with such talk.” she stated. “Alps *is* very important, as she said. You already claim you know he is Letai, so you know this is true. What happened? You said that you came to bring him back, but that he needed help to get here. That tells me that the Uruk didn’t take him because if they had there would be nothing left for us to go get.” The lady’s words were soft, smooth, and intelligent. She had a very matronly feel to her, feeling even more like a leader than the obviously younger Nita did. She seemed to have the ability of a diplomat, calming everyone no matter what the circumstance. Lyat was glad that she had a level head, whoever she was. She at least understood that Alps wasn’t dead at this point. Nita calmed visibly, and there were some worried sighs in the room. The black-furred female guard was busily clutching and releasing the handle of a particularly vicious-looking hand-axe. He cleared his throat, as the others watched on with anguished expressions. It was already as bad as he suspected it would be, and it was only going to get worse, he thought.

“There is being no escape from city, and Uruk is made to see essence users, so is no hiding. No way out for Alps and Nidaja.” Lyat continued his story. “Alps is learning much from Asuna books about Essence, and Rios is even teaching him some about essence. He is fast becoming powerful essence user in Asuna city, is surprising even Empress herself.” Lyat said.

“Then... He fought his way through the Uruk?” the white-furred lupine asked softly, the sound of hope and awe in her voice. Lyat even thought that he detected a little bit of pride. He looked at her, not wanting to say it directly to Nita, and not knowing who the lady was. This was the hardest fight he’d ever had. The white-furred lady wolf motioned to him. “It’s alright, you can talk about it.” Her tone was very soothing and pleasant. “I’m Luna, a high priestess of the Letai. I’m among those who Alps freed from the Shadowfall.” Lyat widened his eyes at this a little. This explained a lot about why she seemed so calm and elegant and proper. The Letai were legendary for it. Yes, she would be perfect to tell this to, as she knew that Alps could escape again, since she saw him do it already. This might diffuse the situation Lyat had been dreading. It was Nita, however, who spoke up.

“The next words out of your mouth had better be a location where we can go get my beloved or so help me they will be picking spots out of the tapestries in here for years to come.” Her words were dark, trembling with dread at what could have befallen her fiancé. Lyat looked at Nita, then back at Luna, and swallowed, before taking out the crystal that was in the same pouch he’d been keeping his traveling blanket, carefully and safely rolled up. He held it up.

“Alps is being in here, your majesty.” Lyat spoke earnestly, doing exactly as Nita instructed. He did not dare defy her in front of the priestess, as even she would not be able to help him for his direct disobedience in her presence. Reika ducked down a little instinctively. Nita looked, wide-eyed, at the crystal. Luna stared fearfully at it too, much

as someone who has a phobia of snakes might look at one of those when presented one suddenly. The whole room was quiet, save for soft whimpering from the two lady guards who seemed near tears. Lyat gritted his teeth. Was Alps so close to everyone in the entire room? Had it been more than just Nidaja? Even Misty, who Alps had said was so calm and level, looked like she was prepared to slit the hyena's throat.

There was a very chilling, awkward silence as Nita stood there, looking at the crystal. The hyena knew he would not be able to ever forget the queen's face as he gazed upon it, her ears flat and eyes wide, lips drawn with little discernable expression. The most striking feature however, her pupils were mere points on those round pools of violet. It was horrifying to look at. Lyat carefully put the crystal down in front of the throne before backing away slowly, not wanting to seem like he was attacking the queen with it. It rested, cold and lifeless at her feet. The chilling silence continued, the queen just staring at the crystal, the points of her pupils having followed the object as Lyat put it down in front of her. She then looked up at Lyat, those points seeming to snap to him like magnets, and she held up one quivering hand, palm facing him. Lyat's sister called out fearfully to his defense.

"Your majesty, Asuna is not doing this to him, Alps is doing this himself. To save Asuna! If him and Nidaja is being found in Asuna city, Uruk murder everybody! He is not letting it happen! He is going into the crystal with Nidaja! He is saying he can get back out!" the girl yammered. She could tell that an attack was coming. She knew rage and uncontrollable fury when she saw it, Lyat was sure. He cursed himself for having forgotten to say that part before showing them the crystal. Of course they would think the Asuna did it. Then again, what were the chances that Nita would even believe him? Lyat spoke up himself.

"Is true, majesty! Alps is doing this willingly, and is telling Asuna to bring crystal to you!" he held his hands out to show he held nothing, reminding her that he was unarmed. The white-furred priestess whispered incredulously,

"Oh shit..." Those were not words the Asuna warrior expected to hear from the refined priestess, but it was a good indication of the danger. Nita's arm trembled heavily, still pointed at the hyena as Lyat felt the pressure in the room go up sharply, his ears popping from it. This was bad.

"DIE!" came an echoing shout from the powerful and enraged Amanian queen, and a brilliant flash ignited in front of her outstretched palm, still facing the two dumbstruck hyenas, and the dazzling, almost white-hot ball of fire was launched. Lyat knew dodging would not even help. He would not want to survive any contact with that even if he could, so he inwardly just apologized to Rios for not coming back and Reika for letting her experience such a thing. At least Alps made it home. He had completed his mission.

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The day was absolutely gorgeous, even if just a figment of the mind of the general who created this world inside the Shadowfall. The sun was shining. The soft wind blew in just as Alps remembered from the sea, in between the narrow alleyways leading down to the docks. Every detail made the place feel real. That was the power of the Shadowfall's design. It was made to feel as real as possible. The wolf was led along by the excited Nidaja, who took the time to talk about all the places that she might consider for the act she had in mind, all the while leading him toward the one that, without any input from him, she'd decided on already.

The trip was pretty long of course, since the castle was situated a little way outside and above the city and the city itself was massive, but eventually Alps and Nidaja found themselves at the docks. After a short jaunt along the oceanfront, they padded back to the main thoroughfare of shops and restaurants, a place with which Alps was very familiar. Nidaja and Misty often took him here when running errands. He had sampled some of the finest cuisine that Diera had to offer here. He immediately got the feeling he knew where Nidaja was taking him. One of her favorite places to go in the evening, due to the bards and the dancers and minstrels that performed there, was a tavern called the Sea Lantern. It was not the most luxurious place, but it was a favorite of the locals, and it was always busy any time it was open. Now, it was open, but there was no one there. The general stopped short, marveling at the detail of her memory, and at the complexity of the Shadowfall's representation of it all. There was food on many of the tables, just as if people should have been there, eating.

"Seriously? Even food? Is it edible?" the general asked. Alps nodded to that in reply.

"Yes. It's probably just as good as you remember too." The wolf wandered over and took a nice long draught of wine. It was a far cry from the danger they had been facing not very long ago. Despite it being a personal hell, there was nowhere else in the world safer for them than this. No one could follow them here. The green-furred lady wolf scooped up a thick slice of pie, made with sweet, well prepared fruit and covered in sweet spices and crystallized sugar. She took a bite and crooned happily about it, munching on the slice. Alps leaned back, sipping his wine.

"Oh, I have to admit, I am a bit sore at you for making me think you suffered here. This place is not so bad, Alps." Nidaja said, swallowing down her dessert. The white slave lupine laughed a bit at that and rumbled,

"Well, you would not want to be here for eternity I am sure. It would get awfully lonely. Besides, my ability to work the essence of the nether is the only reason we can break free of the illusion of suffering this place creates, otherwise you would have spent forever thinking you were the last survivor of the Amani empire and even when you realized that you were not aging, or your attempts to off yourself failed, there would not

be any way to get out. It's a brutal place to be trapped, but I can't think of a more fitting 'screw you' to give to Mannus than for the two of us to enjoy this place." Alps laughed with Nidaja quite heartily at that as he walked over to the main stage in the middle of the tavern main room. It was a huge stage, half-circle in shape, with rows and rows of benches around it where people watched performers. In Nidaja's memory, a battle scene was set up, perhaps for some kind of epic hero's tale.

"We will get out though, right?" Nidaja asked, stepping close to Alps as he leaned over the stage, looking it over. He never really got a chance to get a close look at it. The white lupine turned and smiled to Nidaja.

"I am certain of it. We just have to get a little energy built up, like last time. I felt the crystal change with each time... I am sure I can do it again." Alps was not so sure, really, but he could not let Nidaja's hope waiver. He had to have it. In the end, it was the hope of the priestesses that helped to get him out. Alps looked back over to the well-crafted battle-scene on the wooden stage floor. "This was the place you wanted to come to try to build up that positive essence?" Alps asked, indicating the tavern. "A special room here, or someplace nice and cozy that you have wanted to get your hands on?" he looked around.

"Nope." Nidaja wagged her tail briskly, grinning as the white slave heard the soft clink of one of her fasteners to her leather armor release. He looked back to his lover, and swallowed as the carapace of her leather cuirass fell heavily to the floor in front of the stage, leaving her in her leather plated skirt and her white, silky blouse. Alps murmured softly,

"Oh... You mean right here in the main room." The slave blushed heatedly as he backed up a little, sitting on the edge of the stage.

"Right on the stage, in fact... I wish to be right in the middle, where everyone would see us if we played. There is no more public place, and even if no one's gonna walk in on us, we will remember doing this here, every time we see a minstrel play or watch the drama unfold in this place. I have secretly fantasized about doing this to you here over many a third or fourth cup of ale, I promise." Alps' ears went more scarlet at that, and he carefully, casually removed his tunic, folding it absentmindedly on the edge of the stage as he watched Nidaja crawl to the middle, sultrily moving herself as she looked back over her shoulder to Alps.

"You are a lot more adventurous than most who meet you will ever give you credit for." Alps said as he kicked his trousers off. He was embarrassed given the scene, but he was more than willing to bring this pleasure to Nidaja. "Is there a particular act you wish to elaborate on in this, the main stage?" the wolf asked teasingly. The general moved to the middle and got on her knees, facing Alps, wagging her tail slowly as she gazed at him wistfully. Alps watched as she pulled off her blouse and revealed her generous, round, perfect breasts, bouncing softly as she tossed the shirt away. Her fingertips fiddled with the straps of her plated skirt, eyes still locked on him



hungrily. The now undressed slave made note of the fact that his lover's nipples were already obscenely perked. She was aroused highly by just where she was. She really had been thinking a lot about this.

"Alps... no one else is here... What I want from you is what I have wanted for a long, long time. No witnesses, no regrets, no pretending." Her words were already breathless as she seemed to tremble even just thinking of it. The slave paid close attention to every word Nidaja said, as this was as private a thing as she could ever tell him.

"Yes, beloved?" he offered, slipping close. He would dedicate himself entirely to her pleasure in this place. It was not merely what was needed; it was what he genuinely wanted. After all, Nidaja had been the one to bring Alps into a world filled with adventure, good food, warm compassion, love and tenderness. There was a forever-debt to the general he knew he could never fully repay as long as he lived, even if he could spend an eternity in this place trying.

"Alps, I want you to take me." the general said very deliberately. "I don't mean hold me close and make love, I don't mean serve my every need and bring me soft and wonderful pleasure, Alps. I want you to attack me, pin me down, and fuck me until I can't take you anymore." Her words were under bated breath, the lady lupine on her hands and knees, bristling with hungry fury as she looked at the slave and asked him for something very base and primal.

"I'm... a slave so I am not really used to being so... forceful." Alps rubbed the back of his head, but he could not deny (or hide) how quick his already tingling cock was filling out, swelling with eagerness to deliver just what Nidaja wanted.

"Alps, you aren't a slave here. You are a Letai essence user. You are stronger than me. I can't get out without you. My life is completely in your control, just as yours was in my control the day I freed you from Chana. This time, you freed me from my forever-suffering, and I want to give myself to you, but I want you to hold nothing back. I want to feel how much you want me. How much we want to escape together. I want to feel your body against mine, rough, hot, hard... Can you do that?" Nidaja asked, her tail flitting back and forth over her back. The white lupine swallowed reflexively. Oh yes. He could do that. The more she talked about it, the harder it was to not do it. He smiled at Nidaja and murmured,

"I shall be as grateful for this as you are, I can assure you..." and with that, he got on his knees in front of Nidaja, looking longingly into her eyes, naked before her, aroused, drawing in the scent of her own tangy arousal. Without another word, he put his hands into her shoulders and literally slammed the wolf general back on the stage, enough that one of the tacked on stars fell off the painted night sky. She barked in surprise, and then rapturously whimpered out,

"Yis, love! Oh you have the idea!" her legs parted and her feet planted on the

stage as Alps looked at his tackled lover, her ponytail laying over her breasts, her chest already rising and falling quickly. Alps looked into her eyes, looking serious and severe as he could. He rumbled softly.

“Nidaja, you are mine now, for as long as I have you here, and I intend to make you remember how this felt every time you close your eyes...” he moved his hands to her wrists, pulling them over her head as his thick masculinity patted down on her lower tummy, the wolf leaning over her. “And every time you sit down.” Those words came out in a severe growl, but his teeth were bared in a smile, not a snarl. He was enjoying this. The lovely lady wolf struggled playfully. The slave knew she was capable of more strength, but she wanted this genuinely.

She gave out another hot squeak as he lowered his body over hers again, and this time, his teeth came to the point where her neck and shoulder met, and he gave a secure and longing bite. The general gasped, arching a bit, and Alps gripped her wrists tightly, holding them in place. She gave a sweet, begging whimper, and the wolf moved his knees forward, ears folded back, trying to look as powerful and sincere in his role as possible. This was incredible to Alps. He was playing, acting out his part on the most well-known stage in Diera, and he was finding that he loved the feeling of force and power over his lover, even knowing that everything he did was in the dedication of her happiness and pleasure.

Alps slipped an arm under the lady’s shoulders, and boosted her chest up a bit, his hot mouth closing lustfully over one of those heavy mammaries as they were lifted to his reach by his ensnaring embrace. He suckled eagerly, likely painfully at one of those ridged tits, rolling it against his tongue tightly before taking it between his teeth and giving a sharp, vicious squeeze. This made Nidaja cry out. That sent a little shock of fear through the wolf, who lifted his head, panting as he looked with concern at Nidaja.

“N..No, keep going.. Unnh..” the general shifted lewdly against him, smearing her soaking petals against his strong thigh. Alps was shocked at the sheer amount of slick wetness she glazed him with. He knew that Nidaja wanted to see him a bit forceful, but he was not prepared for just how much she appreciated it. The white wolf panted softly, and mauled the opposite breast as he had the first, giving a bite to that supple, mouth-filling flesh, clutching it heavily, painfully with one hand while drawing his muzzle back, teasing and nipping the teat with his teeth and hearing Nidaja cry out again. He gave her a vicious little shake in his arms, pulling himself tight against her, and grinding his thigh into her wet sex again, marking his fur in her scent intentionally. Alps then reared up a bit, putting a hand on that rising and falling chest, clutching an offered breast and gazing intently into his lover’s eyes.

“I don’t... know why we waited so long... for this...” he panted. “I wish I had known how nice it felt... to know I can do whatever I want to you... just because I can.” Alps huffed happily as he slipped his hands under Nidaja’s knees, pulling them up. She gasped a bit as the wet tip of his masculinity prodded against her soaking, puffy folds. He was normally given to slowly pleasuring his lover with his tongue, bringing her to a

happy climax before even trying to tend to his own pleasure, but that was not what she wanted this time. Alps had to be a little selfish now! He had to show her he cared about what he wanted, and *she* was what he wanted. The wolf pulled her forward heavily and speared her deeply with his already aching pink lupine flesh.

Nidaja gave a sinking, joyful cry of deepening pleasure as she felt her lover take her so forcefully. He pulled her hips snug against his own, driving his length as deep into the twisting, writhing general as he could, lifting her haunches off the floor with the force of his rolling penetration. She moved a hand up to her chest, clutching her breasts, toying with her nipples as the wolf took her. Alps watched in awe for a moment even as he drove himself deeply, steadily into his moaning lover. He wanted to remember the face she was making, surprised and excited and thrilled beyond words, it seemed. The whole while she squeezed her lover tight in her willing body and it felt like an internal hand was wringing him, encouraging the gift he wanted very much to give, but it was his gift to take this time. He pulled her haunches against his own, and began to buck his hips hard and aggressively, shaking her body. She yipped out with each impact, her back scooting back and forth against the floor. The general slapped a hand down on the hardwood floor of the stage and her claws raked loudly back and forth against the glossy wood.

“Nnnh! Ahahhh! Alps, oh great stars, aaahh!” Her white wolf lover smiled mirthfully, unable to keep his tail from wagging even as his hips slammed into hers. This was the most forceful, almost criminally violent thing he’d ever done to someone, and it was utterly delicious to him because of how wonderfully Nidaja reacted. How long had she liked this? Was this as new to her as it was to him? He was sure he would enjoy doing this again if they had the chance, and even then he knew it was something Nidaja would want again.

Her cries only doubled his determination, and he opened up to a rapid, desperate pace, shaking his lover with the force of his now fevered pistoning strokes. Alps closed his eyes, tongue hanging out, panting raggedly. Never as a slave had he used this much strength and endurance! He had never been given cause to burn off energy so fast, but it felt so good, that wet inner flesh of his lupine lover suckling at his meat as his heavily throbbing cock slipped wetly, noisily in and out of her. Alps got so lost in the moment of just focusing on how hard he could take the pretty wolf general that he wasn’t aware of the toll it was taking on the general’s senses until he felt the familiar, welcome wet squeeze, that sudden clench of her body just before a splash of wet heat in his lap, snapping him back into the moment as she wailed with climax around his still rapidly bounding length of wolf flesh. Alps grunted loudly, and gritted his teeth, only speeding up as Nidaja wailed pitifully in furious release!

“Oh I-love! Oh this is wonderful... I feel so – ahaah!”

The wolf growled loudly as he rather suddenly rolled Nidaja, his cock twisting wetly inside her still spasming depths, pulling her onto her hands and knees, cutting her off mid-sentence.

“...Not done with you yet!” the slave barked, panting raggedly. He wanted to keep feeling that pleasure, and enjoying his lover, but his muscles were already burning from the force he was taking her with. There seemed to be a limit to just how much of this he could give her. The wolf made a point to practice and get better at it, grinning sadistically at the thought. Nidaja whimpered heavily, still shaking with climactic aftershocks. Alps grabbed the base of the green-furred lady’s tail and tugged her against his hips hard as he tightened himself up on his knees.

“Yes love... anything you desire...” came the plaintive offer from Nidaja as her lover pulled her into position in front of him, his thick pulsing masculinity still spreading her wide around him.

“It’s my turn now, love...” the slave growled, pulling her tail back to sink himself in her, and then pushing her hips away, then pulling her back again. “Back into me... hard... fast... make me cum... I want to fill you, Nidaja... I want to take what’s mine.” The slave gasped a bit as he felt a hard squeeze from the wolf in front of him as he said the word ‘mine’.

“Aaahaaaallps!!!” she wailed helplessly. She climaxed again, just at that. She had perhaps not been ready for how forceful he would be for her, but her sudden collapse into climax was not at all unwelcome. Nidaja’s back sank down and she just squalled as she gushed over Alps’ rock-hard cock. Her lover smiled a bit, and decided to really play into it now, since she was pretty much putty in his hands.

“What are you doing, Nidaja, move your ass, it’s my turn, not yours again!” the white male snapped, raising a hand and whapping the general’s backside with a loud ‘crack!’. This was something he learned was fun when he was traveling as Nidaja when they had switched minds from the mindwalk sphere, but would she enjoy it done to her? He got his answer as she rose up on all fours and slapped her hindquarters into his lap hard, beginning a brisk, hot, passionate pace of breeding back into him. The male folded his ears back, the slkslkslkslk of his cock pistoning in and out of her with no effort at all utterly heavenly to him.

“Love... yes... please...!” she panted, exerting herself heavily for Alps. He’d never seen her so desperate, and as her honey pooled at his aching knees, he found he’d never seen her so wet. She pitched herself hard into him as he held her tail, and slapped her tight, strong ass again, giving her no quarter as she shook a bit, trembling. By how she was shaking, Alps knew what was happening.

“Don’t you pop again, Nidaja, I haven’t cum yet!” he barked, feeling a little odd but wonderful in their reckless play. How forceful could he be with her? Would she be insulted? Would it matter right now with how hard she was cumming for him?

“I can’t help it!” she cried, and Alps gave her another across the other ass cheek.

“Don’t do it!” he barked loudly, grinning even as angry as he sounded, feeling his pleasure rising. It would not be long now. Nidaja huffed loudly, thumping her ass into his lap, the wet splashing sound of his cock slipping, suckled, in and out of that tightly clutching channel a delirious, lewd, messy affair.

“Ahhaaa! Aaaallps! Please!” she cried. Alps slapped her again, and then snatched her bouncing ponytail, pulling her head back.

“Harder!” he barked, his voice as commanding as he had ever heard it. He really had changed a bit since he had been forced to wander around as the general of the Amanian army, and she was getting to see just what it was like. Unfortunately for the poor lady general, that last bit of hard dominance from Alps might have been a little over the top for her expectations, because she just curled up with her face in her arms, bearing her rump hard into the wolf as her sex clutched vice-like around him. She trembled a few short jerky times, and then just screamed with her face buried in her arms, her body arching as she exploded around him. The male wolf still held her ponytail tight. Alps cried out from how painfully tight she went around him, and began to lay into her backside with a strong, solid swatting hand. Whap-whap-whap-whap!

“Nuuu! Ah stars and stones, love, I can’t... I can’t... aAAAAHHH!!” she gushed helplessly again, in a plateau from one climax to the next as Alps tanned her ass with passion. He was almost there... He had to get her to keep moving!

“Make me cum, Nidaja! I’m close... I *want* you!” he ordered, the quaking general a mess in front of him, whimpering, not even budging with the spanking he was giving her. Alps pinned his ears back, feeling that welling sense of need. Now. He needed it now! He got onto his feet, kneeling behind Nidaja, his body over hers as he pulled her haunches up, and just did what came naturally.

Hard. Fast. Base. Primal, he fucked the sobbing, climaxing general beyond her body’s own limits as he burned his muscles more and more, pitching himself hard into her as his toes gripped into the wood, spattered and soaked with his lover’s tangy honey. A little more... A little more... He felt her go tight again. Even as she tightened up, he pounded harder, shaking her ferociously against the stage as he gave her everything he had, and more. And then the wolf threw his head back and howled in victory as he felt the bolt of pleasure rush through him, spewing thick, heavy rope after clinging sticky streamer of his steamy spunk hard inside her suckling, clenching, squeezing sex. Alps doubled over her, shaking as he clamped his jaws over her shoulder, making her cry out in pain again. She shook desperately, gripping nearly painfully on his cock again. Her gushing lover groaned out furiously through his nose as the pinching tightness of her pussy held his cock so hot inside her, making it splash into her in one forceful pulse after another, spraying those seemingly endless torrents of his lust into her gladly receiving depths. It was obviously hard enough for her to feel him soaking her inner walls as she barked out in surprise and pleasure.

The entire time she was crying and pitching back into him and squirming beneath

him, Alps could feel the happy bursts of energy around him, more attuned to it now than ever before. How could he have ever missed it before? He could feel the energy rising around him so easily now. He wondered if it was just the training, or a combination of that and his being more sensitive to it naturally in this place. Even as he wondered he drew upon it hungrily, letting the general enjoy him completely as he enjoyed her, but not letting any of that heat and power escape. He simply brought it to himself, making it a part of himself as best he could, based on what Rios had told him. Drinking of Nidaja's energy just as she drank of him in a very different fashion was a delight he knew he would partake of often. Alps sighed happily, heavily, and sank to his knees behind the general again with a final clunk, only to gasp as Nidaja collapsed heavily, fully, onto the floor in front of him in a panting, wheezing, twitching heap of barely-conscious pretty emerald wolf female. Alps looked at Nidaja with some concern, before she finally whimpered out,

“Ah think he likes me...” and giggled stupidly. Her lover gazed at her happily, rubbing the back of his head, panting heavily himself, dizzy, happy, but strangely full of life even despite it all. He stretched out alongside Nidaja, his body pressed tight to hers, and embraced her, content to stay here with her as long as it took. He secretly hoped that, even though she was in a hurry to be free of this place, she would ultimately feel their vacation here had been far too short. The general's happy memory of being Shadowfallen would be a bizarre insult to Mannus' darkest creation.