

## Sirius, Book IV

### A Slave's War

*Comments or Questions?*

*Contact Alps:* [sarsis@gmail.com](mailto:sarsis@gmail.com)

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

## Chapter 2

---

It seemed like ages had passed since Alps was actually afraid to meet new people because it was always so brutally awkward. As a slave, one always had to be aware of how they addressed the other person, what they expected, being a good host, or following orders that you might find unfamiliar or difficult. Working under Chana had made meeting new people a frightening prospect, but with Nita he was subjected to a steady flow of people he had never met and often would never meet again. While originally he was asked simply not to speak, over time he was allowed to speak his mind, particularly if someone spoke to him first. Eventually, he was perfectly comfortable in social situations with his lover.

The lupine had learned these skills, but there was still some apprehension when meeting someone he knew he was going to be working with instead of just someone he might be expected to socialize with for a little bit and almost never see again. He had to build a good impression and establish his position in the working relationship early. The white former slave considered this now as they prepared to meet the one who would be their guide in the outlands, the areas beyond the border towns far east of Luca, his former home. They would not be passing it, however. They would not pass any place where there would be people who knew him, and they would avoid towns in general if at all possible. That was why they needed someone who was familiar with living without the need for additional supplies.

So, Alps waited with Nidaja and Nita on the dock, Nidaja's clipper ship loaded and ready to go. It had been a stroke of good fortune that their guest was already in the city of Diera when the decision was made that no one better could guide them. She had been there to give the city's library information that she had gathered about towns and places, ruins and other things out in the world beyond where most were willing to go. There were many ruins, and many secrets that had been lost under the weight of the sands of time. Alps expected to see a soldier, someone strong and hardy. He expected someone very much like Nidaja.

"You guys don't care about what's going on over your heads?" came a voice from above. Alps turned quickly and looked up and saw a darkened silhouette in the sun. The person was standing on top of a tall stack of crates, one of many stacks that lined the back side of the dock to be loaded onto or off of

the ships that came to port. It was hard to make out who was there; she was just a dark shadow in front of the sun. Alps reached to the hip pouch where he kept what was his only weapon, Ressaia.

"It's alright, Alps. That would be who we are waiting for." Nidaja said, probably recognizing the voice. Alps perked his ears and squinted, looking back into the light of the morning sun. She had gotten to the high ground and put the sun behind her. This made the white wolf think again that the person he was meeting was likely someone of Nidaja's stature and power. It made Alps feel a little better about the trip that he was about to go on. The form jumped down from the high boxes, a good fifteen feet to the ground and landed without a sound on black, soft suede leather boots.

Alps' eyes followed up her form to take in his new traveling companion. It was not at all what he was expecting. She was an Emerald Amanian, which Nidaja had expressed before, though her fur was even lighter greenish-silver than Nita's was. But, she was hardly Nidaja's stature. She was petite, a good head shorter than him, almost as short as Uri, but not so stocky. She had Nita's trim and noble physique. Her outfit certainly looked different from what Nita's lover expected. She wore a violet and gold dress that cinched around her midriff with a gold belt, and came down to just above her knee. She had leather wrappings above her boot to protect her legs a little more, and also wore a deep red velvet-lined cape, making her look more like royalty than Nita did, standing there in a simple blue traveler's robe. Alps looked up into her violet eyes, as was typical for what the Asuna called "ferns", the Emerald Amanian tribe.

She had an unusual marking around her right eye, though. The fur there from her brow to her cheek, around the eye itself, was solid white, as if someone had dyed it. Alps could tell it was the actual color of her fur there, however. Her hair was long, spilling down her back over the cape as she rested her hand on the hilt of an ornate long sword similar to Nidaja's, held in a black, unadorned scabbard. Alps looked back and forth between this diminutive, flashy creature, and Nita. His life-mate-to-be handled the introduction.

"Alps, this is a friend of the family, Lira Sanreail. Lira, this is Alps, someone who has made himself most... valuable to the Amanian Empire. He is the one I will draw into the Razelle family line." She said this so proudly that Alps had to blush at it. It still seemed hardly a plausible reality.

"I had heard about a white-furred slave that has made something of a name for himself in the city of Diera. And there are some very strange rumors about an attempt upon him with a failed Shadowfall Spell. Very interesting indeed..." She peered at Alps, seeming to be not as harsh as she was just casually curious. The lady seemed a bit laid back and calm to be the one they were depending on in a harsh, untamed wilderness. The white wolf was expecting someone a little hardier to match.

“Yes, there are those rumors.” Nidaja answered, looking around with some obvious secrecy. This made Lira look around as well, and hush her tone.

“That you do not refute them and now show need for my softer tones speaks more words than you dare betray aloud, cousin.” Lira grinned at Alps, looking suddenly as if she were eying treasure. The male made a note that she sounded even more scholarly than Misty, carrying a little of the same ornate accent that the councilor did. “... This may turn out to be a very strange trip then. I am glad of it.” Nidaja cleared her throat, getting the girl’s attention.

“This is not entirely as it seems, but we will be well off shore by the time you are fully brought to current with information. We won’t make you go into this blindly, but we won’t say more here. We should get onto the boat and get underway, if all your things are in order. We are traveling with reduced crew, just Misha and Uri, myself, Nita, Alps, and a few guests. Once we reach the coast of Amani, Misha and Uri will be sailing back to Diera without us, so whatever you are bringing is all you take with you.” Lira nodded and reached behind one of the crates and picked up a rather heavy-looking duffel bag. She was, at least, stronger than her petite form made her appear. Alps moved up the gangplank to the ship, and stood by the ship’s helm, where Misha was adjusting some straps, and tightening the steering. Soon, they would be underway.

Lira got on board the ship with Nita and Nidaja, who came up behind her, and the gangplank was removed by Uri and Nidaja. Both the general and Uri wore black leather armor, while Misha wore a uniform similar to Alps’ black and gold one, though her trim was red, showing her to be part of the Royal Guard. The activities on the ship were hurried and a bit out of Alps’ general understanding. He knew the basics of what it took to work the sails and the rudder, but he never really understood exactly how it worked, so watching Uri and Misha handle the ship on their own was no different than watching Nita work Essence Magic. At least Nita’s abilities were starting to make more sense to him, even if the essence didn’t seem to want to behave as much in his hands as it did in hers. Lira tried to help a little with this and that, pulling and hoisting, tying and striking. It was just enough to not look as utterly useless on deck as Alps did. Nita held his hand to make him at least look like he was fulfilling his personal requirements to her, and that made the former slave feel better.

After the ship was headed in the right direction, very little else seemed to be needed. They used a compass to make sure their heading was not straying too much, and took the boat out of the large southern harbor, into the open sea, and then slowly pulled her to the east, sailing toward the rising sun. After about an hour of just holding Nita and watching their home of Diera shrink away behind them, they could not make out the harbor entrance anymore, it was just a mountainous little strip of land far in the distance.

As the ship sailed, Nidaja explained to Alps a bit more about Lira, who busied herself getting some things moved around deck and secured. The girl's parents had served Nita's mother Arcana during her reign, and they were sent into the wilds to find relics in Letai ruins, or even in Amanian ruins, secrets that might turn the tide against Mannus. She was not happy with merely surviving; she wanted to remove the specter of death that was hanging over their fragile society. She felt that the Letai were wiped out so aggressively because they knew how to defeat him, and that those secrets might have been left behind for others to find. It was for this reason that Nita's mother, the former queen, had been cast into the Shadowfall. Lira's own parents never came back from one of their outings, and were assumed to have run out of good fortune. Lira had already been trained in the art of survival, silent travel and Letai Lore before this happened, and carried on the family business of ruin exploring and searching for secrets in the outlands. She had become a particularly good friend to Misty, who made sure that the girl's explorations were well funded, even if not publicly supported by the royal house. She did not want a similar fate for Nita that Arcana had suffered.

With the explanation out of the way, and the island of Diera slipping far behind them, Nidaja moved over to the stairs that lead down to the ship's cabin. As she arrived there, Lyat and Reika padded out onto the deck, perhaps quietly summoned by Nidaja. They did not want the Asuna pair to be seen in the city randomly, even with an escort if possible. They knew the rumors were flying, and being seen right there with the royal family would not have helped matters.

"Wait, what?" came Lira's expected question as she backed up a bit, looking stunned at the hyena duo, but not actually afraid. Alps had secretly expected her to be ready to attack them, but she made no motion to her sword. She took a moment to look them both over, instead, very carefully inspecting them, not saying a word for a bit.

Lyat wore a white shirt which billowed a bit in the breeze, tied low in the front which left his chest showing. Alps figured that was at present from Nidaja, given the long, hard look she took at him. He had on black trousers tied at the ankles, and black shoes, which made him look less wild than Alps had seen him originally. He looked less out of place in his new clothing. Both of the hyenas, grey with charcoal points and speckled with charcoal spots, looked clean and fresh.

Reika looked a little more typical to Reika, wearing a leather plated skirt similar to what Nidaja had with her armor, though it was light tan instead of black, and a bit shorter. She had on a grey-colored shirt which had no sleeves and showed bare hyena midriff. It seemed like the kind of thing that was supposed to be worn under something else, but the hyena girl likely got too hot below deck during the day and took it off, and had no presence of mind to put it back on. Of course, she had Bone with her, and Bone had a new "outfit" as well. The leather

wrapping around his handle has been changed with dark blue dyed leather. Alps made a mental note to bolster Reika's happiness by complimenting Bone's new look.

"Is being so good to be out of hot under deck place." Reika rumbled. "We can move around up here now, yes?" the hyena female asked, wide, curious eyes regarding Nita. The queen nodded.

"Okay, so there is this rumor that I had discounted as complete lunacy, but that's true too?" Lira asked. Lyat looked to her and bowed.

"Lyat. Is most pleasing to meet you. We will be in your traveling from here." He was getting a bit better with common speech, but his attempt to sound more eloquent perhaps missed the mark.

"You is meeting also Reika!" the lady hyena barked, waving. "And Bone!" she held up the painted weapon. Lira looked blankly at the club, and smiled at Lyat, murmuring,

"Ignamur ayl forunevandun tanock yuruldrun kumigna'nordun." Lyat widened his eyes and then grinned bright.

"Without even accent. Well done, you talking Asuna better than Asuna are talking Amani." Reika applauded, nodding. Lira looked warily at Nita and Nidaja, as if trying to judge what the hyenas were doing traveling with them. She murmured,

"Are they to accompany us freely, or are they ordered?" the guide asked. Alps folded back his ears. He forgot easily how most Amanians regarded the Asuna.

"It would have been impossible to keep them from coming with us." Nita stated, reliving the suspicion that the pair was forced into compliance. "They come freely. They are envoys sent by Empress Dominis herself, to represent the Asuna in good faith."

"And gladly." Lyat stated for clarity.

"This pleases me." Lira stated flatly. "Obviously, since I speak their language, you may assume I am regarded favorably by the Asuna." She stated. "I had feared our people were being pushed closer and closer to war." She added the weight of intense concern on that last part. Nidaja smiled and moved over to Lyat, making a very obvious show of leaning up and kissing him. Alps wagged a bit, glad to see it. It was a very clear way to show that the idea of war with the Asuna was not a priority to the general. "Oh dear." Lira blinked at that.

"I can assure you, that's not going to happen." Nita said, as if the kiss hadn't made it clear. Reika bounced a bit on her heels.

"Yes yes! All friends now! Love and happiness. Uri wolf kisses Bone." She held out the decorated club to Uri, who leaned back almost outside of her physical capacity to do so, teeth gritted with dead. She was not kissing Bone. Reika laughed. "It's okay, Bone, girls is shy on long trips, she likes you!" Uri slipped behind her taller lover, Misha, shaking her head. Alps wondered how much teasing had been going on before he got there.

This is a great relief to me. You have no idea how much help the Asuna are capable of being when they are treated with dignity. I believe that our people may have been intentionally pitted against one another by Mannus." Lira was, of course, kind of on the mark, except for the little detail at the end. This seemed to remind Nidaja and she murmured,

"We do have two more folks for you to meet..." She called down below deck where Lyat and Reika had emerged. "Luna, it's alright... You can come up now." She said loudly. Alps looked back over to the stairs. They were far enough away from Diera that their secrets could be revealed to Lira. Alps stood by Nita, and watched as Luna came out of the below-deck area, shielding her eyes from the sun a bit, dressed in her usual lovely green robes. The solid white lady wolf bowed pleasantly to Lira. Behind her emerged the black-furred Vhale, his hands innocuously behind him as he nodded politely. Lira spoke up in greeting.

"Hello there. I'm Lira. I will be guiding you hopefully to the fruitful completion of whatever... it is... that you are doing, wait, there's two solid white wolves in one place?" she asked, openly pointing to Luna. "What are the odds of that?" she asked.

"Not bad, given certain new information." Uri barked helpfully. Alps smiled at that, but mostly because of how Luna smiled.

"Allow me to introduce you properly." Nidaja stated, standing by Luna. "Lira, this is High Priestess Luna." The priestess kindly and elegantly bowed again in greeting to the shorter green-furred female. She looked perplexed.

"High Priestess?" she asked. "Ah, so we have those still who are unafraid to bring back the Letai teachings, willing to stand in stark defiance of Mannus' unwritten laws. I could see the need for secrecy. It's as forbidden as you get." She took Luna's hand and held it fondly. "I admire your courage." Nidaja grinned a bit sinfully. Lira looked at her "cousin" with a bit of apprehension. "Am I missing something?" she asked.

“Remember the rumor you spoke of that I was mum about?” Nidaja inquired. Lira nodded.

“Of course, so since we are on our way, you can share that with me, right? Did a Shadowfall crystal actually fail? Is Nita’s betrothed now the only who has seen the other side and somehow slipped out?” Lira looked with great interest at the white male, who kind of shank back beside Nita. He hated being treated like he was special, even if he had at least that one feat to his name not once, but three times now.

“The crystal did not fail, Lira.” Nita said calmly. “Alps forced his way out and shattered it. The Shadowfall has been broken.” Lira’s eyes widened and she snapped her attention back to Alps, who looked away, not interested in seeing an awed expression. He just wanted to come home. It was not so great as all that. His desperation provided the way, and the power he unknowingly tapped at that time was dangerous, so he was not especially proud of what his seemingly only essence ability happened to be. When he looked away, he saw that Vhale looked a bit uncomfortable too. Alps knew that Vhale was a little disquieted by the white former slave’s ability too.

“How did he force his way out? Is he part of our line?” she asked, referring to being an Emerald Amanian. She was asking if he could control the essence the way the Emerald tribe could. “I guess if you chose him as a life mate, he would kind of need to be, huh?” she asked. Nita smirked a bit.

“No, he’s not, but he does have control of the essence. I have a little more important news than even that to impart upon you, dear Lira.” Nidaja said, grinning. She seemed to be taking great pleasure in that reveal.

“Stop with the baiting and let me know already, you know I am curious. You know how insatiable that side of me can be, it had better not be small for how you play this up.” She laughed a bit to show she was being good natured about it.

“You see, when Alps forced his way back from the Shadowfall, he did not come back empty-handed.” The general explained slowly.

“Oh my heavens, a Relic!” piped Lira. “He’s brought back a powerful relic, please let me see!” she barked, looking around as if it might just be sitting on the deck and she had not noticed it.

“Oh, I think I am still a bit young to get called a relic.” Luna proclaimed, smiling warmly at the green-furred lady wolf. Her eyes widened. She leaned back, rump against the railing of the ship, hands clamping it to stabilize herself.

"Wait... You mean he pulled someone else who had been Shadowfallen... out with him?" she asked, her eyes much wider now. Nidaja nodded. Lira looked back at Luna. "How long were you... in the crystal?" she asked, seeming to be fearful of coming out and asking her real question. It was too silly to even entertain... Too impossible.

"Seven hundred years, I am told." The priestess smiled again, seeming calm and serene, in stark contrast to Lira, who suddenly cupped her muzzle, looking near paralyzed with shock.

"Oh... Oh my... You don't just... You are actually... A..." Lira's hands began to shake.

"She's the real deal, lady." Uri said, wagging. "A full-blooded Letai Priestess." Lira inhaled deeply, shaking her hands a little, as if trying to get blood flowing normally again. She looked away, composing herself a moment. Alps felt kind of bad that Nidaja was playing for her reaction, but it was rather interesting to watch. It seemed obvious that she was as interested in the Letai as Misty was, so this was a big deal to her.

"So... wait... How did Alps get the ability to do that? It doesn't seem like something one could do with even my control of the essence." Lira asked, breathing faster now, exasperated.

"He gained it somehow the first time he went into the Shadowfall, when he was a kid." Nidaja explained. Alps looked back to Vhale, who looked out over the ocean, obviously avoiding that part of the conversation altogether. Alps felt a little pang of guilt that it would likely be brought up from time to time, as it was what Vhale considered to be his most vile act.

"He was Shadowfallen when he was a kid? How long did it take him to get out?" she asked.

"Seven hundred years." Luna stated flatly. "He was sent the very same day I was." Lira looked at the pair.

"They're related." she observed openly, before widening her eyes again. "He's Letai too, are you serious? You had a Letai *slave* and you let him get Shadowfallen?" she asked accusingly. Nita chuckled at that.

"I didn't know he was anything so unusual back then, it was discovered after he escaped with his mother." Nita stated, nodding to the proudly beaming Luna. This also verified the relation of the two white wolves. "The plot thickens, however!" the queen said dramatically. Alps noted carefully that his lover did not explain that Alps brought back more than one priestess, or mention anything about Ellis. He suspected that the guide was only being told what she really



needed to know. She was being told who the main actors in all this were. Lira fanned herself, and rumbled,

“Do tell...” and leaned back against the railing again, just in case she could not handle the news. “You are not messing with my head though? This is all for real? Please don’t play weird games.” She shook her head a little, already realizing by the expressions on Nita and Nidaja’s face that they were not. Lyat and Reika knew all of this already, and had started to explore the upper deck of the chip together. Alps quirked his brow as Reika chewed on the anchor chain in curiosity. Lyat seemed to be telling her to behave.

“No, no game. This is the real thing.” Nita offered, “You see, events took Alps and Nidaja to the Asuna capital city, where Empress Dominis had stolen Alps for personal reasons.” Alps was actually kind of relieved that Nita did not explain exactly what he was needed for. “While he and Nidaja were there, the city was besieged by an Uruk army, looking for the general and the unusual white slave she had been with, perhaps to prove that the Asuna were not being faithful to their promise. Rumors of Alps’ escape from the Shadowfall might also have reached the dark domain. Collaborating with the Amanians is as much a forced taboo to them as teaching the ways of the Letai is forced out of us. You can imagine the two of them being found alive in the capital would have been disastrous to everyone there, so Alps had to do something a little... extreme.” She noted.

“More extreme than forcing his way out of a Shadowfall Crystal?” Lira asked incredulously.

“Yeah, he forced his way back into one with Nidaja, to escape.” Nita explained.

“What.” Lira’s reply was flat. Nita continued to explain.

“In the domain of the Asuna, Alps learned more about using the essence, as he was learning what exactly he was. He learned the ability, and put them both into the Shadowfall. The Asuna brought the crystal back to Diera, where he popped out of it again.”

“Wait, he can go in and out... of his own free will? Nidaja has also been in the Shadowfall and lived to tell about it?” Lira seemed to understand the scope of that quite well.

“Yes, but with me, he also brought back another guest, the guy you see there.” Nidaja said softly.

“Hi.” She looked at the somewhat sad-looking lupine, resting in his black and silver robes against the mast.

"I'm Vhale." He said with a distant look. It was obvious he intentionally omitted his last name. Nidaja didn't press it. It did not seem to trouble Lira.

"He knew some things that helped us formulate a plan to push back the Uruk, and reclaim our lands." Alps said, finally taking a moment to talk now that the story had steered away from making him talk about himself. Lira nodded at this and regarded the group on deck for a moment, before speaking again.

"I... see. Well, I suppose that I was right. This will be an interesting journey. The most interesting that I have ever been on." She paced a bit. "The queen of Amani and her top general, an actual Letai High Priestess who has been released from the Shadowfall by a slave who is, himself, Letai... Another Letai male who will help take back our lands... Two Asuna envoys from the Empress... Am I missing anything?" she asked.

"Probably the fox." Alps half-whispered.

"What?" Lira asked, blinking.

"Nothing." Alps said, shaking his head. He had no proof that Ellis was on the ship, but he didn't really need it. He knew she would be there. Lira looked at Alps for a little longer and then back out over the ocean.

"Okay, so now that you have given up more secrets than I could possibly make anyone believe even if I did tell them, what is it we will be doing?" the lady guide asked.

"We will be pushing deep into dark territory and attacking two Uruk bases deep in the heart of those areas. We cannot fail this." Nidaja explained.

"I'll just be getting out here." Lira stated, motioning that she would be going overboard.

"You are welcome not to come if you do not wish to, and we certainly are not going to force you to fight or attack those bases with us." Nita stated. "But we need a guide to get to where we are going, and hoped we could have the best. This mission, as Nidaja said, cannot fail."

"This is insanity. You would need an army." Lira said with a stony face.

"We have a Letai Priestess and an Asuna with a bone club." Nita said with a positive tone. Alps could hardly tell if it was optimism or sarcasm, though, so he chimed in himself.

"I'm actually feeling pretty good about this." He grinned to the hesitant potential guide. Lira looked back and forth between each of the group, and sighed.

"Fine... Someone's gonna have to come back so everyone at least knows what happened to you." She sat on a crate and looked up at the male hyena.

"And you are sure you aren't being forced?" she asked.

"Lyat would not miss this for entire treasure of Asuna people." He grinned. Lira shook her head, rubbing her temples and sighing.

"I must be the craziest one of us for agreeing to this... but... Damn it... I'm in."

---

The lamplight flickered softly in the sandstone-lined luxurious room. Freshly remodeled, this had become Misty's favorite room in the castle. It was part of the library to be used as a study. It was carpeted, bright, warm, and had tables and plush reading chairs spaced attractively throughout. Nita had it remodeled because she expected that when she started a family Misty could help her child pursue the very finest education. For now however, it was Misty's to use. In the many days leading up to the departure of the queen on a quest the councilor was loathe to allow, she had shared this beautiful tan-colored fire-lit study with a mysterious guest. The fox, Ellis, had spent more time than Misty could even fathom with her nose in books the entire time after the Asuna brought Alps' crystal back. The same day Alps left again, the fox was missing as well. There had not been an agreement for her to go, but Misty suspected she went nonetheless. She was very odd.

Still, it was nice to have the place to her self, but she regretted not spending more time with Alps before he left. Particularly to satisfy her cravings that had gone largely unanswered for some time. Still, she was very involved in all her work leading up to taking stewardship of the throne until Nita returned, and perpetuating the story that Nita and Nidaja had taken vacation because the general was so often away from home and was sorely missed. This was not unusual, given the stress that the queen was often placed under. Some bonding time with her family was certainly understandable. Misty, clad in her dark blue silken robes, round spectacles perched on her muzzle, read a book that Lyat had brought for her. It was one of the history texts for the Asuna. She had found it incredibly interesting because it gave a lot of insight into the culture that the Amanians might soon find themselves in an awkward alliance with.

The emphasis on personal honor in Asuna society pleased Misty, who found this to be a very easy concept to share with them, and encourage them to see in the Amani as well. The thought of an alliance, unsteady or otherwise with the Asuna had never really held much weight with Misty, as she had never known any Asuna, and the general understanding was that they had no real interest in getting to know the Amani. They just enjoyed burning down their towns and cities. This, Misty learned, was forced.

She stretched a bit, trying to decide if she needed to head to bed or not. Tomorrow the governing body would rest, and she would not be expected to take the throne. Even royalty was allowed a day to rest, and other members of the high council could very well share the task of running things with Nita gone if Misty needed a break, but tomorrow would be a break for everyone not tied in to special emergency services. Misty sighed and decided that if she went back to reading this interesting text, she might not sleep at all. She wished that she had Alps around for distraction. She slept so well any night that she had him. Was it wrong for her to feel for him the way she did? Nita didn't seem to mind it, and she didn't require him often, but it had been so long.

She got up and stretched a bit, looking around the study. The bookshelves were neatly stocked with the tomes that Misty was studying at that time, and with a few that the black fox had been studying. It was a lovely and peaceful place where no one ever disturbed her. The door opened. Misty narrowed her eyes. Alright, almost no one ever disturbed her. The councilor looked up.

In the doorway was a guard, wearing the black uniform with red trim, as well as some chain mail and a red sash. He had grey fur, with a darker grey, almost black patch on the top of his head, and coaly black on his ears. He seemed fairly mature, which was reassuring, as the trend of guards offered to the royal house had become either too old to fight on the front lines, or too young to have the experience to do so, which left Misty feeling a little vulnerable. This one looked like he knew what he was doing at least. She had not seen him before, however. He paused, realizing that he had walked into an occupied room.

"Oh. Pardon me, I am a bit new, I was told this wing was unoccupied at this hour." The guard bowed courteously. Misty leaned back against the edge of the study table, looking over to him.

"It's alright. I'm Misty Metsuko." she offered with a nod.

"Oh!" the guard chimed brightly. "I recognize you then, you are to tend the throne while the Lady is away? Captain Lunaris told me about you. You are up late studying then? Nice library. I could lose myself here." The councilor looked at the guard again. He seemed a little younger than her, though perhaps not

much. She scolded herself as she felt sudden fondness for his company creep over her. It was because she was missing Alps' company and she knew it. But he seemed energetic and strong, and he had to pass rigorous tests of trust and dependability to become a castle guard. The gold-furred wolf shook her head a bit, and murmured,

"You are new to the castle, or are you new to Diera? Did they transfer you?" she always liked to know where folks were from.

"I transferred from Kishu Valley in the spring to Jalana, and a month ago to here. I didn't think I would actually get selected to work here. I had been told that it was really difficult to get, and Lunaris can be a very stern captain, but I am glad to get the chance. I am sorry I didn't get to meet the queen, but I hope to still be here when she gets back." Misty smiled a bit, wagging her tail. He was social. That did make her feel a little bit better. She rarely took the time for a personal, one on one talk, and he wasn't shy about talking to her even though she held power. She ran into that a lot, but this one was a bit bolder about speaking.

"You said you could lose yourself in here... you like to read?" the lady wolf asked. The guard nodded emphatically.

"I did all the time when I was younger, but not so much now. I loved stories about traveling over the sea, and the Lhap islands, the lean fox folks... those were interesting stories. I started to get into history and legend a bit when I was getting older, but the army doesn't offer much in the way of a library." He laughed. Misty grinned demurely.

"When you are not otherwise occupied with your duties, I do not mind at all if you use the library here, but please leave things exactly as you found them. You would not enjoy my company if I encountered poorly arranged volumes in my library. What's your name?" she asked, relaxing a bit and feeling a bit happier for his conversation.

"Leal, milady. It is good to meet you. Thank you, I shall certainly take you up on that offer, and will leave everything exactly as it is. I am sorry if I interrupted your studies. I should come here a bit later in my rounds then?" he asked. Misty shook her head.

"Oh goodness no, I don't consider a guard's rounds as an interruption, it's reassuring. Think nothing of it. I am happy to talk to those I work with here too, so if I am feeling conversational, I would certainly not bemoan your occasional distraction, Leal. It's nice to have someone more conversational on the rounds to be honest. Most take to heart Lunaris' instructions to be as quiet as they possibly can, sneaking about in an uncomfortably spooky fashion. You are

actually approachable, which tells me that you are probably doing it wrong.” Misty and Leal both laughed, the councilor finding it refreshing to do so.

“I would not mind at all talking with you more. Intelligent conversation is sadly not the kind of thing you get much of in the rank and file of the army. Being sent here was a worrisome change for me, but I suspect it might well turn into a boon.” He wagged his black-tipped tail slowly. Misty smiled as she watched her, and then gritted her teeth a bit, her mind wandering to activities that would certainly delay the poor guard’s rounds. Sure, she had every right and privilege to delay him as she saw fit, and Lunariss would not argue his duties if he were with Misty, no matter how unimportant her tasks or intentions, but her use of that time was something she was shocked that she could even consider. She really did miss Alps, and she missed her chance to enjoy him and would not have him with her again for possibly months, even if everything worked out perfectly well. It weighed heavily on her mind to think that they might all be in danger and that made her crave company to keep her mind off of it all the more. Leal bowed to her pleasantly, perhaps perceptive of the awkward pause as Misty struggled with her thoughts and desires. “I shall allow you to return to your studies if you wish, milady. I do not wish to prevent what I am sure is very important work if you are up so late.” Misty looked up again, furrowing her brow. He was very mature and polite, not unlike a white-furred former slave. He turned to depart.

“Wait.” Misty blurted out and then looked away, feeling silly. What was she even thinking? She looked down at her feet, feeling as completely stupid and ignorant as she had when she was giving Alps his first checkup in Jalana, uncertain of herself, what she was doing, or how it would go. Her heart hammered. He would be mortified if she asked him for such a personal favor. He had just met her! Then again, she had not to long known Alps before they...

“Yes, Lady Metsuko?” asked Leal, wagging his tail slowly, attentive to her instructions. Misty looked up into his eyes a moment, tense, anxious.

“To be in the army, you offer your very life to the royal house... I could ask you to run to your certain death, and you would have to do that. Do you regret giving others this power over you? Do you fear it would be squandered and your life forfeit cheaply?” Misty blinked a bit at her own question, feeling as if she didn’t even know where she was trying to go with it, even if she did know where she wanted this conversation to go.

“I suppose everyone worries about dying, but it’s not those who make the decisions about my life that I joined for. It’s all those who can’t make that choice.” Misty widened her eyes a bit. It was a rather sage answer.

“You will do anything asked and not question it, for the good of those you protect and care for?” Misty asked.

“Indeed. It’s even part of the oath, though I am sure you know that.” He replied. Misty inhaled deeply, and swallowed, her heart pounding, fingers feeling numb as she fought with what she was actually doing. She felt so fearful, and for what? She looked away, a little ashamed of herself, but she yearned so much. The feeling of a lover held close was addictive. She wanted so much just to push her body against another and feel reassured and wanted.

“I want you to do something for me. If you do not wish to, I understand, and will not request further, but it’s a bit unusual, and I would demand that you hold it in highest confidence, Leal, even my asking. Can I have your word?” Misty’s stomach sank, and she felt almost panicked. This was so incredibly bold and so luridly depraved of her. But she could not stop herself.

“Sure, you have had my complete loyalty for silence or otherwise since I came through the door.” The helpful and appealing guard stated. He was making it so much harder to resist what she could no longer prevent. Misty moved over to the door that Leal was standing near, and moved her hand to it, feeling almost as if someone else was moving her hand for her.

*“click.”*

The door locked. She looked up a bit, closing her eyes, trying to steel up her courage. How would she ask it? ‘Please let me have sex with you, I need it..’ That sounded desperate and dirty. ‘I am used to the love of another, and miss his touch, please satisfy my longing.’ That sounded even worse, it made her seem cheap and devalued Leal. Her heart hammered harder. This was a terrible idea, she would feel so stupid if he was not interested or said no. Maybe he even had a mate already in the city, he was handsome.

“Are you okay? I assure you I will honor you, milady.” Leal said softly. He seemed concerned at the councilor’s pause.

“I’m lonely. I need your company.” Misty said it without thinking. She felt immediately stupid for it. It was the worst way to ask for it. She sounded weak.

“As I said, I will always be happy to render that, it’s more pleasant than most any other duty a guard can have.” He explained. Misty looked back to him, her eyes ravenously hungry. He widened his eyes a little, and the lady wolf was sure she saw realization sweep over his face. She couldn’t talk anymore. Everything she said sounded so stupid. She moved forward, taking his hands into hers, and she just closed her eyes and pushed her muzzle to his own. Their mouths cupped one another and her tongue pushed feverishly into his maw, his back thumping up against the door.

This was it, she thought. He’d struggle, gasp, and writhing pull away, and inform her that he had misgivings or worse. He would inform her that those

charged with the castle's protection had to focus on their duties, and he would not risk losing his hard-to-get status with this task that was in no way part of his duty. Her mind was spinning but she could not pull her tongue from his mouth, and could not move her body away from him. Then, as her blood rang in her ears, she felt his hands leave hers. She suspected he would push her away, but they laced around her, slipping up her back, and stroking her through her silky robes. Her ears flattened and she whimpered softly in utter happiness, her tail whipping back and forth for a bit behind her. He wasn't pushing her away, he was embracing her. Would he regret it? Would he do it once and not visit again? She felt a burning lust rapidly overcome her entire quivering body that told her that, for the next thirty minutes to an hour that was the last thing she was going to care about. Her body called upon him, and his body seemed to, for now, answer.

Misty stopped thinking about whether it was right or wrong, her mind switching instead to how she could forgive herself, and even those thoughts faded as she felt his tongue push back against her own. She inhaled sharply through her nose as he pulled her to the side, and pushed her back against the wall so they were not against the door, the guard now the aggressor in this sudden, unplanned affection. Misty whimpered with joy. She wasn't taking it, he was giving it. She felt wanted again. How wonderful the memories that raced through her mind, and yet, she did not feel the way she had been afraid she would. She wasn't thinking solely of Alps and wishing it were him satisfying some addiction, she was excited for the young male guard that she had gained the intense attention of.

The councilor felt less and less sorry for herself as his hands slipped over her shoulders and caressed her cheek, slipping through her long hair, and holding against the wall as he kept her close, his mouth parting to pant softly. Misty took advantage of his panting to speak, hoping that something intelligent would finally come out.

"You can still stop this... if you don't want me to..." Misty bit her tongue. Mixed signals were not at all intelligent. The guard arched his back a bit in his heavy chain mail hauberk. He looked into Misty's emerald green eyes and murmured,

"I'm not sure... either of us can stop this now..." He slipped his hands into Misty's own, and pulled them over her head, kissing her deeply, pushing his body against hers to push her against the light-colored sandstone wall. The way those words flowed off Leal's tongue before that passionate, fiery kiss struck the too-long untended Misty deep, and she tensed as she felt her honey actually roll down her inner thigh, already absolutely shamefully wet for her near stranger of a lover. Misty swallowed loudly around Leal's tongue, drawing in his moisture, kissing back with a starvation for any contact with him, shocked at herself, and at the truth he spoke. She didn't think she could stop, even if she thought he might



not want it. Misty felt her legs wobble a bit. She was having trouble standing, even pushed against the wall.

That was okay. She didn't want to stand anymore. The moment he broke the kiss to rub his cheek sweetly to her own, she just let herself slide down the wall, her hands slipping forward and dragging down his tummy, feeling the cool, textured chain mail slide under her fingertips before she found the sash of his trousers. He let go of his lover's hands and put his own against the wall, leaning forward a bit as he looked heatedly down at the top of Misty's head as she pushed her nose under the chain mail, kissing at his tummy through the black dress shirt that the guards all had to wear. The councilor found herself on her knees, thighs spread wide to let her nose trail low over his tummy before him with her back against the wall. She looked up at him over the top of her spectacles. She wondered what he was thinking. Was he wondering how the hell this could be happening? Was he thinking it was a trick, and she might scold him soon? Or had he given that up for want of whatever came next?

"You are so beautiful..." his raspy voice, throat already dry from panting announced. Misty inhaled deeply, drawing the scent of his body as she undid his trousers. That was what he was thinking. That hardly gave her room for pause. He moved his hands up, arching back a bit as he removed his heavy hauberk and dropped it on the floor. Misty undid the ties to his trousers as he worked the frog buttons of his dress shirt. He wore a light, cottony white shirt underneath that, and he let the over-shirt just hang open. Misty's hands slipped into the shirt, stroking his tummy before pulling open his pants, and drawing them down. Misty melted at the sight of slightly more flesh than even Alps offered her, at least in how wide. That heavy member bounced a bit before her nose and she could not keep her hands off for even a second. She embraced it with her dexterous digits and began to stroke him before her nose, drawing in his heady, masculine scent. A bead of pre rolled from his tip, spread quickly by her stroking hand, slick and warm.

"Magnificent... this is everything I wanted..." Misty half whispered. She thought that perhaps the lupine male tried to say something, but she engulfed about half his cock in her hot, wet mouth and he only squeaked out something unintelligible at her. The gold-furred wolf slipped her hand up under his heavy sack and cradled it as she slipped her other hand along his lower back under his shirt. She held her head essentially in one place and worked his cock with her tongue, hard and slow. The coiling, undulating motions of it drew that salty pre to her gullet and she could not get enough. He held himself ridged against the wall, legs parted slightly and hands both on the wall itself, one occasionally slipping down to hold Misty's shoulder. He panted out raggedly and winced or gasped with pleasure occasionally as she swirled and darted her tongue around and along the underside of his shaft. Misty delighted herself with the moans she pulled from Leal, his wavering breath unsteady with the intense pleasure the stand-in Queen caused him. She writhed, longing for pleasure herself, but she

had learned the joy of pleasuring another with Alps, and this was exactly the same, if not more, because she had no idea how long it had been for Leal, but he was new to Diera so this pleasure was likely very welcome. Leal's hips trembled a bit.

"Milady, I beg mercy..." he whimpered, arching a bit against Misty. She looked up at him, a pained expression of deep pleasure fixed upon his handsome face. He didn't seem to need mercy. "I am unaccustomed... I fear I shall disappoint..." She then sighed hotly, realizing what he was begging about. He was afraid of cumming too soon. In playing with the queen's slave, Misty had learned that a quick, easy first climax made it so Alps could last a long time once he caught his breath and really got down to business. She wanted nothing less than that from her new companion. She smiled and slipped her hand up and down his obviously aching swollen cock a few times to spread the wetness of his pre and her saliva, before engulfing him again. She moved her hand to the base of his tail to hold him steady and keep him from thrusting.

"Mmmnh..." she moaned around his member as he throbbed hard in her mouth. She drew back, speaking around his twitching shaft. "... If you were to disappoint me, you would have had to leave fifteen minutes ago." She growled hotly, insinuating that she was already happy with what she had been presented with. She planned to enjoy him much more, however, whether he understood those plans or not. He winced again as her mouth overtook his cock, and she stroked her muzzle slowly, evenly up and down his throbbing girth, pre spreading over her tongue again as he held his hips as still as he could, still trembling.

"I... I'll..." he whimpered as Misty cupped his balls again. They immediately drew close to his body, telling her he was out of time. She drew back, holding just the tip in her mouth and fluttering her tongue at the sensitive underside of the tip as she undulated his orbs in her loving, warm palm. A much more copious amount of pre spilled over her tongue as he whimpered loudly, crossing the point of no return, only an inch held in the councilor's mouth as her tongue drummed at it hotly. "Nnnngaaaaaahhh!" he roared out, and then stifled himself, as that first powerful shot of his cum splashed the roof of the gold lady wolf's mouth. She slipped her hand back from his tail to pump his shaft wetly as he exploded in her mouth, still holding the tip in her lips as his heavy, salty seed blasted her tongue. This was not one of Alps' small climaxes that she was used to warming up with, he really let loose hard! Every hot, gooey streamer of his release was swallowed down, the high council member satisfying more than one manner of hunger in those guttural contractions of her eager throat. Leal sank down suddenly, his knees giving out, putting a few smaller ropes of seed over Misty's blue robes. She giggled a bit and held Leal up as he rested on his knees before her, trembling.

"Whoa there, Leal... Take a breath, I'm not done with you. That's good, breathe... breathe..." Misty held him, looking into his eyes as she licked her lips.

That was perhaps the most emotionally gratifying blowjob she'd ever given. There was something about practically destroying someone with pleasure that had no match in the sense of satisfying experiences.

"S-sorry..." he panted. "Only done this... a few times..." He leaned back a little, his twitching cock still bouncing in front of him. He kicked off his trousers the rest of the way, having left them only on one foot once Misty really started playing him in her muzzle. He needed to just to keep his footing. Now, on his knees before her, he pulled at the sash of Misty's robes. She smiled and helped him to open them up, leaving her warm, soft-furred body bare underneath. He sighed happily, trying to catch his breath and enjoying slipping his hands over her heavy breasts in the meantime, teasing her nipples with pinching, tugging fingertips as she rose up to let him touch freely. He finally gave her what she was longing for the most.

"Yesssss!" she whimpered softly as his fingers caressed her sex with a nearly sickeningly wet squish. She was soaked worse than she could ever remember being. "Please, yes!" she whimpered.

"Oh heavens, milady..." Leal marveled in a panting breath, hooking his fingers easily into her tight sex. The sound of his stroking fingers was so lewd and scandalous. She thought that she should perhaps be ashamed, but as his fingertips teased against her glistening, slick clit, she just shuddered and enjoyed, wrapping her arms around Leal's shoulders and biting at his neck with need. She wouldn't need much, just a little and she could join his level of pleasure fully. She was on pins and needles with need and intense lust after giving that incredible blowjob, and all she needed was a little.

But Leal gave her a lot. He pushed three fingers into her suckling, soaking honeypot, holding her shaking body with his other hand as he pushed his thumb against her clit. He stirred heavily at that little nub with what seemed like instructed skill as he more slowly undulated those wide-spreading fingers inside her. Misty could only think of his thick, swollen cock, that girth widely spreading her sex, just as she had felt it in her hand, then her mouth. She bit into his shoulder harder to stifle a long, loud cry as the sound of fluid spattering on an expensive library rug was heard. Misty was completely unashamed then as she gushed around those pumping digits. Leal sped up his hand, letting his thumb strum over her clit as his fingers pounded in and out of the sexy intellectual reduced to whispered drooling profanities over his shoulder. Who bothered teaching a guard something like that? Where did he learn it? Why the fuck did it matter?!

Misty finally reared back up, pulling her robes off and casting them down under her to keep her dribbling sex from further marking the carpet. Her clothing was easier to replace. She then turned around, a bit dizzy from her release. She lowered her chest over her hands, cupping her own breasts.

“Oh by the essence yes...” panted Leal, who understood her offering easily and got into position behind her. Misty whimpered loudly with approval and invitation as he slipped a hand around his again throbbing cock, worked up again from bringing her to an easy and rushing release. The moment she felt his tip slip against her folds in the perfect angle, she cast herself back hard into his lap, impaling herself deep upon his tightly swollen shaft.

“Oh yes!” cried the lady wolf, shaking with need as she felt him hilt inside her, those tight, spongy depths squeezing him hard in loving internal steamy embrace. The guard behind her put his hands both on her hips and cried out hoarsely.

“Nnn - fuck!” He was obviously surprised at how much she wanted that, but Misty could not deny herself any longer. She gritted her teeth tightly, and began to roll and grind her hips back against his, still sailing in the afterglow of her first hard climax. She wanted more. She wanted that last most intimate gift Leal could give as well! She then cried out happily, not caring how much noise she made in this normally empty wing of the castle. He began to pump heavily from behind, holding her hips tightly, grunting as he seemed to intentionally slam himself hard into her haunches to let her feel deep, deliberate penetration. He clutched her hips with strong, vice-like hands, actually slightly painful with his claw tips pushing into her hide through her thick fur. And she loved every bit of it.

As he drove hard into her, she jerked back to meet him, blow for blow, body lurching, both huffing and puffing heavily as they fucked so lewdly on the library floor. Misty had been building this up for months, no, nearly a year and it was all coming to a head. She grunted ferally, letting herself go completely with this helpful young guard. Leal began stroking himself inside her faster, pistoning his wide, tightly swollen cock in and out of her suckling honeypot with almost reckless force, not at all afraid to be rough with the councilor.

“I’m gonna cum, Leal!” the gold wolf female cried. “Don’t stop. Don’t slow. I want to cum around you!” she panted, shaking a bit, tightening her leg muscles, raising her hips a bit. It was going to happen. It was going to be hard and so satisfying. Just as the lady lupine held herself ridged to let it happen, to explode around that pounding wolf-cock, Leal grunted loudly, in a sudden panicked tone, and pulled out, pumping his cock with his hand against Misty’s pussy. He seemed to be trying to rub her with his tip to finish her off, but the loyal and understanding guard seemed to fear that Misty was desperate the way she was because of a more biological kind of need. He wouldn’t want to needlessly complicate her life, after all. However, it was the wrong month for that, and it was sure as fuck the wrong moment for the guard to pull out. Misty cried out in frustration, turned, and tackled Leal, slamming him onto his back.

“Wait! Think about what – “he tried to complain, to get her to hear reason through what he obviously suspected was merely a hormone-driven haze. Normally, she would understand his predicament, but right then, she could not take the interruption.

“If I say don’t stop, you *listen!*” Misty barked, not hearing any of it. “I’m not in my season, so *fuck me*, damn you!” she clamped her hands on his shoulders and took his cock back inside her already spasming pussy. She had been right on the edge. He planted his feet firmly on the carpet and began slapping his thighs hard to hers, pistoning his cock in and out of her seizing depths once again. He staggered to a stop.

“I’m cumming!” he barked helplessly. Misty grabbed Leal’s shoulders, snarling as she pounded her tight sex over his throbbing cock with ruthless force. She shocked herself with the force she used on her suddenly helpless guard, and that, paired with the rushing groan he made when he immediately began hurling hot streamers of his spunk against her cervix, lit Misty’s loins like a powder keg. She gave a short bark, and then a long, happy howl of pleasure, grinding savagely down into Leal’s lap, riding him slow and hard as her climax raged through her and his seed sprayed tumultuously over her inner flesh, against her cervix, and all over his lap.

“Misty – Gaaaaa!” he finally shouted as she continued to rub against him beyond the timing of general comfort in his waning climax. The wolf then finally huffed loudly and flopped against the pinned guard.

“Oh Leal... Oh by the stars and all the green in the valley, Leal...” Misty panted mindlessly, not even sure what to say, but feeling a million times better. She wagged her thick, fluffy gold tail gladly over her lower back as she squeezed that thick, but softening cock inside her.

“This job... is a lot more... physical than Lunaris... had led me... to believe...” the raspy wolf puffed over Misty’s ears. She took her glasses off, since they were not on straight anyway.

“So long as you hold your tongue...” Misty crooned weakly, already looking forward to crawling happily into her bed, “... You can expect you may feel mine again.” She grinned a bit at the handsome guard who lay in a wet mess under her. “I hope I didn’t hurt you...” Misty remarked, suddenly remembering how roughly she cast him down onto the floor in her desperation for her release and his own inside her.

“Well, if I get to feel that tongue of yours again like I did tonight...” Leal murmured melodically, “... we can forgo any discussion of hazard pay.” He and Misty giggled warmly before embracing on the library floor. Her friends and lovers would be facing dangers to be sure, but she had considered them lucky in

that they did not have to face them alone. Now, Misty did not have to face her worries for them alone either, and her heart sang with exhausted, satisfied joy.