

Sirius, Book III

The Essence

Comments or Questions?

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Chapter 6

The words of that strange fox had been hanging in Alps' mind as he moved quickly toward the town of Luca. He had not wanted to get hung up in Seravi, but he felt better now that he had ensured a little better future for the children there. The wolf looked back at Misha and Uri. As far as they were concerned, they were following Nidaja to deal with one of Nita's personal problems, but the personal problem was a direct result of the slave's own past. He hoped they would be able to forgive him after all of this. Still being pulled by the Slinks in their small coach, Alps knew it was possible they could catch up in time or even beat Nidaja, still borrowing his body, to their destination. If he did not succeed, however, he feared what he'd find there.

"Nidaja, you seem rather pensive." The genuinely more talkative Uri tilted. "You still haven't told us what it is you think Alps is doing. I think you owe it to us, since we've been running for so many days, to at least let us in on a little of what personal matter is putting everyone in an uproar." Alps sighed softly. He was put in a position where telling them what Alps was doing was not accurate. It was what Nidaja was doing. He decided that, at this point, the mask had to come off. It would be brutally confusing if there was a confrontation in town and they were only about six hours or so away.

"Misha... Uri..." the general's voice whispered. "I'm not Nidaja." The green lupine gasped at the reaction, which she should have expected but honestly did not. She had just finished that last word when a long, glittering silver long sword pressed right up against her throat. Misha had drawn so quickly Alps could not even see it enough to flinch in time. Had her intent been murderous, he'd be a corpse now. There was a tense, anxious silence. It seemed to last forever. The coach tilted and listed over uneven ground, and Alps knew that a deep rut in the terrain could accidentally open the general's throat.

"Then who are you? I had suspected..." growled Misha. "I had suspected something was different... something was wrong. Where is the real Nidaja!?" Alps reeled at the sudden turn of mood. He felt that it was warranted, however. He inhaled deeply to clear his mind and then spoke calmly and softly, wanting to avoid getting a more intimate visit from Misha's sword. His complete inability to see that coming should have been all the proof they needed that this was to the real Nidaja.

"Misha, it's me. It's Alps." There was a long pause. Uri blinked a few times. The blade stayed at the general's neck. It was Misha who finally spoke.

"I don't think I understand. I have to accept that some strangeness is going on by the fact that you are not Nidaja, even though you are physically her, and you do 'feel' like Alps... but what proof do I have that you are him?" she asked.

"We have not spent enough time together for me to easily give you proof." The wolf stated, hoping that he could get this resolved before they arrived in Luca. The sun was already low in the sky. It would be dark by the time they got there. "Nidaja used her Mindwalk sphere to try to find out more about my past because of the unusual abilities I had displayed inside the Shadowfall. It lets her into my mind." He explained.

"I know about the Mindwalk sphere." Misha stated, Uri nodding as well. "She uses it to test her closest lieutenants to make sure they are loyal before appointing them. So you are saying that your mind ended up in her body... then where is her mind?"

"On its way to Luca?" Uri asked, seeming by her tone already to know the answer. Alps nodded the general's head. Misha finally put her sword away.

"Why? Why would she go there? Why would she run off like this?" Misha asked sternly.

"She saw something in my memories." the general's voice stated. "She saw something that made her angry with my former mistress." The general's head lowered. In the end, it was Alps who was responsible for this turn of events. He knew what memories would be waiting for anyone. It could have been Nita who saw that and he did not really warn them about how bad it was. The coach continued to rumble along silently. The slinks themselves never made noise when they moved, only the coach. It was easy to forget those huge, weasel-like beasts were even out there.

"What did she see?" Uri asked.

"What do you think?" Misha growled to her friend and lover. "That insufferable whore was abusive to him. You saw the scars." Uri gritted her teeth at that. She looked up to Alps and murmured softly,

"Is this... true? She hurt you?" came her slow and measured words. Alps hung the general's head again. He did not like talking about this. It was not a happy time in his life and he really wanted nothing more than to just leave it all behind. He never understood the way people clung on to painful things and felt

the need to discuss them for some kind of healing. The slave felt like he was healing just fine even when he was on the boat heading to Diera for the first time. He spoke in Nidaja's voice softly.

"It was almost every day. It was the worst when she was drunk, and there were times I was so close to dying that I begged the darkness to take me and make it end. Yes, she hurt me, but I don't want Nidaja to do anything to her for it. I just wanted to leave it all behind me. I am not Chana's slave any more and I could be happy about that. I don't want Nidaja, Nita, or any of my friends to harm my former mistress for what was done to me. I feel that her misdeeds are being best punished by my happiness, and I will not be afraid to tell her the joy I have found." he stated.

"Alright, Nid-... Alps..." Misha said with a sigh, hands between her knees. "I will not do anything to Chana, but only because you asked that I do not. I personally believe that she deserves what Nidaja's got in mind. I do not envy her position one bit if we are too late." Alps nodded at that softly and then looked to Uri who looked out the window silently. There was a long silence at that, and then she looked back to Alps, her eyes gleaming wet. She was apparently trying to use the breeze from outside the coach to prevent her from crying.

"I won't promise." She growled, visibly shaking. Alps sighed a heavy Nidaja-sigh.

"It won't change what she did to me. It won't make it better." He stated in the general's slow and confident tone. He was having less difficulty using that now.

"If she did it to you, she could do it to someone else!" Uri barked loudly, startling Alps, and obviously Misha. "What's to stop her from going to Seravi tomorrow and grabbing one of those children, then torturing him all through life for her sick entertainment?!" Nidaja's teeth gritted. Alps had not thought of that. He shook the general's head again.

"That may be true, but I will leave that for the council to prevent. They can remove rights from her; they can even remove her from her position of power. If she cannot afford to purchase a slave, that won't be an issue." He stated calmly, trying to bring Uri down from her anger. Uri crossed her arms and growled out loudly,

"Rules and laws and even a general code of ethics won't mean anything to her! You were a *child* Alps! You were helpless!" the black-furred lupine shouted, thumping the side of the coach with her fist. "She deserves-"

"She deserves what the world is going to give her in the end. Nothing." He shouted, cutting her off. "I will not have any of my friends dirty their hands over

my problem. If she had to die for this, I am sure Nita would allow me to do it myself, but that's not what I want. What I want is for my friends to respect my wishes and not give me one more dark memory to live with over this worthless bitch so I can get on with the life that I am truly enjoying!" he heard his own feminine voice raise in pitch, and lurched back, leaning heavily into his seat. "I want to leave that all behind and be with my friends and my love. It's all I need now." He whispered. Uri leaned back again and wiped her eyes.

"I'm sorry. Alright, I will promise. But understand this. I don't like it. I don't think she should be allowed to live, but I am going to talk with the council about this. You will not stop me from doing that. If the council decides to punish her, then that will be something you have no say in." she growled.

"If it's the will of the council then Chana brings that on herself. That will not be on my hands." He conceded. There was a long silence as the coach continued to rumble along. Finally, Misha spoke; ears folded back, tinted red.

"So... How was sex as a girl? Learn anything useful?" Alps felt the general's cheeks suddenly almost violently heat up.

Nidaja pushed open the heavy doors of the Inn and walked in with a white lupine male's body which was familiar apparently to many of the people in the room who were sitting about eating and drinking. It was late in the afternoon, and the sun was almost down. It was the perfect time to relax from working in the fields and the shops and have a drink or two. The general looked around quietly, trying to appear meek and harmless which is what anyone who knew Alps before he left would expect. At the bar, laughing and talking with a nervous-looking patrol, was a familiar tan-furred lupine female, with short cropped hair and a starkly thin, boney body. Chana Feras. Nidaja approached casually but silently in that aching white form.

"Oh now there is a face that has been missing from Luca for many a moon." said the thickly built grey-furred female bartender with unkempt frizzy hair. Mountain grays were usually thick-furred like this one, not as svelte and lovely as Tia, who was more an exception. The bartender's words called attention to the entering wolf with every appearance of being Alps.

Nidaja had seen to it that she would be alone now, to tend to these matters without interference from well-meaning friends. Tia had been left with her father, Edgar Reed, who was a blacksmith for the town. She would catch up

on old times and tell him all about the adventures she had while she was gone, surely, and leave Alps, with Nidaja in control of this rather dark situation.

"It has been. Hello... Mistress." He stated to Chana, who looked shocked at first, but then narrowed her eyes.

"You do not call me that, you insufferable whelp. You got yourself purchased by nobility. What the hell are you back for?" she had a very high degree of hatred in her voice. Nidaja smiled almost wickedly, unable to help herself. Perhaps running her own bath and brushing her own hair were too tedious for Chana? The regional matriarch growled a deep and threatening tone. "What are you smiling about, you worm?! You are interrupting my dinner. Go away. Barkeep, I would like to have this worthless bit of fluff removed." At this, the tousled gray lupine sighed and pointed at the door. Nidaja frowned. The regional matriarch for Luca had certainly put a chokehold on this town if that was all it took. She looked sternly back to Chana.

"If you must know, I didn't come to disturb you; I came to pay you what I was really worth. In the year I've been gone, it has troubled me what price I was taken away from you for. It made me feel worthless, and I find myself dwelling on it more and more. My new mistress has taken pity upon me in how this distresses me, and allowed me to bring you a more reasonable amount. Twenty bits is insulting to me just as it was to you. Four thousand should be enough?" Chana's eyes glinted with greed at that. Nidaja knew she would be interested.

"You have... four thousand to give to me?" Chana asked casually, her mood improving. Nidaja held out her arms.

"Obviously not *on* me. Look... I don't want to make a big deal out of this. Meet me here..." the white wolf gave Chana a folded up note. "Meet me there at midnight. I will give you the money then. I don't want to ever be seen bowing and scraping to you again. I have a new life. A happy life. I have to do this to leave behind this place, and all my memories of it." He growled.

"I will take the money, pup, but only because I was cheated before. Don't think you are finding a warm spot in my heart. You know better." She hissed. Alps' lips drew back slightly.

"We will see if there's warmth in there." He muttered almost imperceptibly.

"What?" she asked. Her eyes narrowed at the slave's muttering.

"I said I know there's no warmth in there." He turned to leave. "Don't be late. I won't wait forever, and if you are not there, I will just assume you didn't want the money, and I will give it to the orphanage where you bought me." He walked out amid murmuring and the resuming typical humdrum of a tavern.

Alps approached the now silent town in Nidaja's body, scarcely able to wait to get back into his own. A long discussion with his friends had made the next several hours of his journey pass quickly, as embarrassing as it was to discuss. It was true, being in this body had taught him a lot, and Uri especially made it clear she wanted to test what Alps had learned when he got into his own body again.

But now, with his friends behind him, Nidaja's leather-clad form strode through the silent streets of Luca. Was he too late? Where would Nidaja have done it? In Chana's house? In the woods outside town? Would she think to lure Chana away and make it look like an Orcish attack? The shops were all closed and the streets pretty well empty. The town had no reason to be active long after dark because farming and mining were not night time activities. Alps felt certain that they were too late. They could not have beat Nidaja here without noticing her. Misha finally spoke up, pointing forward.

"Look! Is that who it looks like?" she hissed under her breath. Nidaja's head looked forward, the general's chest tightening. With what he was expecting, it could be something really bad. He breathed a sigh of relief as he saw what Misha was pointing at. Nidaja, in Alps' body, was on the stage where he had been purchased a year before, holding a box in his hands. Chana was there, her arms crossed, looking sternly at the wolf. Nidaja was talking to her, but Alps could not hear what was being said. They sped up alongside the front of some of the shops. Finally, Alps was in range and could hear the discussion.

"... could not possibly be telling me that you brought me out here in the middle of the night without ever intending to pay me, you stupid freak of nature." Chana said coldly. Alps pressed Nidaja's back against the shop front, and Misha and Uri did as well, perhaps just as curious as to what was going on as he was.

"You deserve nothing from me, in the end, Chana. But I will level with you. I originally brought you out here to kill you." There was a sudden easy visibility of the whites of Chana's eyes. Alps' heart froze in his chest. To hear that stated in his gentle voice was hard on him.

"What?! I'm just a shout away from the guards, I'll have you know. For even saying that I can have you hanged and it does not matter whose slave you are!" She growled with a sense of superiority she seemed never to lose, even with such a grim threat having been made against her.

"I said originally. I changed my mind. I have no intention of harming you now. My beloved would never forgive me." Alps listened to his own voice say this words and his heart swelled with joy and pride. He was just in time for something even more valuable than stopping Nidaja from killing Chana.

"Why the change in heart? Found out how much you missed me while you were gone when you saw me again?" Chana scornfully muttered. "What's in the box if not money?" she asked. Alps' form bowed down and put the box on the stage, then backed up. Nidaja's form stayed in the shadows against what smelled wonderfully like a bread shop. It was hard not to feel suddenly hungry despite the dread in his heart. Chana moved forward and opened the box, then withdrew from it a slender silver dagger. It looked expensive and well cared for. Alps silently wondered where Nidaja had gotten it.

"As you see, it had been my intent. I don't need it anymore. You can keep it as my farewell to you. I have decided that it does not change anything to leave you dead in a ditch somewhere, Chana. You see, in a very short time, I will be the life mate of the Queen in Diera. You don't have to believe me now, the news will reach you through its regular channels soon enough, and you can spend your life alone for all I care, thinking about how happy I get to be while you have to follow the orders of the person who spends every single night bringing me pleasure and happiness. I will laugh louder than you, eat better than you, drink finer wines and leave behind better stories. I don't need you. I don't need a single extra memory of you. Where I am going, even my scars can't really follow." He turned and Chana gripped the dagger more tightly. Alps gritted his teeth, Nidaja's muscles tightening under his command. He feared suddenly that Chana might attack his body, and that would not do at all.

"What's wrong, Alps?" Chana asked darkly, "Did it not hurt enough when I scalded you under your tail with a hot poker? Surely you remember your screams from the outhouse in the days that followed? Did you forget having your toe claws pulled out for waking me with their incessant clicking on the stairs?" she asked. Alps gritted Nidaja's teeth as he saw his own fists ball up on stage. "You were eight years old for that, and that was just the beginning." She said proudly. "The best was yet to come. Do you still believe you have no soul? That was my favorite part. I loved just fucking with your innocent little mind as a child. Then, as you got older, teaching you to punish yourself while I watched. I can't believe you would break your own fingers. I still roll around laughing late at night at the thought of your tail hanging worthlessly behind you, unable to move after being broken so many times. How you recovered from that and ever got the ability to pick it up again and wag it is beyond me, but I guess I will have to start over, won't I? I will have to get another little child from that filthy orphanage and start on another little boy. Maybe that one will have the emotional fortitude when I am done to be half as strong as I am." she laughed coldly. Alps body lurched a little as Chana mentioned starting over.

Everything happened so quickly after that. Misha and Uri were not as fast as Alps in Nidaja's body, but even Alps was not able to stop his body in the sudden blur of motion that it took to bring him in full contact with Chana who went sailing off the stage backwards. From the force of the impact, the regional matriarch hit the ground before the knife landed on the stage. It had flown out of her hand when she leveled it to strike her former slave down. Her plan had been obvious. Anger him enough to attack her and then be perfectly justified in ending his life. She had not, however, been prepared for the fact that Alps' body was not populated by the gentle slave's mind. Nidaja was a trained killer in a strong body. Chana's knife was no defense in comparison. Alps was, however, fast enough to get in Nidaja's way when she jumped off the stage and moved quickly toward Chana's coughing, winded form to resume the beating.

"You!" she coughed, furiously. "Did you see that? He came to kill me! This is HIS knife!" she wailed, pointing at the knife that lay on the stage now. "I demand he be arrested and tried!" Nidaja, in Alps' body, seemed stunned to see the green general, her own body, standing before her.

"You will hold your tongue until you outrank me, you miserable bitch!" came words that shocked Alps himself as the general's mouth formed them. He was just as furious as Nidaja was about the threat to do this to another child. Uri had been right all along. Alps' words from Nidaja sounded more like Nidaja than perhaps the mind of the general had expected, and she actually seemed to genuinely cower. Alps knew why immediately. Nidaja thought Alps was mad at her, and that was where all the rage came from. Alps inhaled deeply into the general's lungs. Chana spoke shakily, still winded.

"My apologies... General Razelle. I was understandably upset." The matriarch then paused a moment to perhaps compose herself. Nidaja walked over to Alps, pulling him by the wrist off of the stage, and pushing him back against it roughly. Misha and Uri knew that their minds were switched, so seeing it was a thing of intrigue to them both. Alps was actually manhandling the general.

"You do not run off without my leave and take something so grim upon yourself! Your hands are not meant for this kind of thing. They are meant for my love... lovely. My lovely sister. Remember?" she shook the Nidaja inhabited Alps by the shoulders, and Alps whimpered. He shook his head, agreeing. Of course, Nidaja had already agreed not to kill Chana, so Alps felt certain that now that the rage had been stricken from her, he could expect she would not press the issue. The general spun on her heels and rather suddenly grabbed Chana, jerking her hard to her feet and slamming her against the side of the stage as well, surely bruising her back against the lip of those planks. She winced and cried out.

"Stop, I'm the victim here!" she cried with more than a tinge of fear.

“The urine-soaked HELL you are, you orc-laying harlot!” Nidaja’s voice roared. “I will pass the official decree by my sister the moment I return. I will have you stripped of your merit and your authority, I will have you banned from owning land, slaves, or even livestock for the rest of your life, and you can depend on a friend to take care of you!” Then Nidaja’s lips curled into a hateful smile. “Oh yes... that’s right... With no money, land, or power, no one in this entire town would likely feel the need to tolerate you. Might wanna take what little money you have and find a new place to live.” She turned back to Nidaja who stood in the stunned and silent form of Alps, who finally just pressed in against the armor-clad general.

“I’m so sorry...” came the slave’s voice from Nidaja’s nearly crying soul. “I was going to, but I knew... I knew you would not want this.” His voice murmured.

“It’s forgiven. You proved what you were when you gave her the knife. We can leave this behind. Let’s go back to the inn. This is all over.” Nidaja’s soft and confident tone lilted.

“Thank you.” croaked the strained throat of the wet-eyed slave. Uri and Misha came up alongside their friends, both to offer support, and strength. Chana had just been dealt some very ugly cards, and neither of the guards trusted her with a knife not far away. Chana shouted some manner of muffled obscenity into her hands, enraged, and ran heavily back to her large home at the end of the row of finer houses across from the shops. A solid wooden door slammed hard enough to knock a pin free of the hinges, causing it to hang dejectedly to one side. Nidaja’s chest puffed out as Alps drew a long, deep breath, and then sighed rather happily.

“That felt so very, very good.” Nidaja’s voice squeaked.

“I see you have learned to act a little more like a general while you’ve been in that body. I can’t call that a bad thing.” Nidaja said in Alps’ voice.

“We should get back to the hotel and switch bodies before we complicate matters any further.” Nidaja’s voice murmured. Alps was tired of pretending, and wanted to go back to being himself, even if it had been, for a time, liberating. “Where’s Tia?” he asked.

“She’s with her father. Probably asleep by now, it’s late.” The white slave stated. “She doesn’t know I’m me.”

“We should keep it that way.” Alps stated from the general’s lips.

“I have to confess something.” Nidaja said from the slave’s body.

“Probably the same things I have to confess.” Nidaja’s voice cut in. Uri and Misha both laughed playfully.

“Alps you wouldn’t have!” Nidaja protested in his masculine voice.

“What did you do to Tia?” he asked.

“Umm...” there was more laughter.

Alps looked into his own eyes for what he hoped would be the last time without a mirror. Nidaja’s hands, still guided by his mind, held the sphere that the general had used to switch their minds. The two were alone. For the first time since this all began, they were alone together. Tearful apologies and promises had been made, but all concerns were water under the bridge now. All that remained was for the general and slave to switch their minds again, and the orb in the general’s hands was all it would take. They would concentrate, and Nidaja would access it with her mind, and push their souls back to where they belonged. It has been an incredibly strange experience, and Alps intended to use that journal Nita had given him months ago to recount every detail lest he ever begin to forget. It was a story that deserved to be told some day. He and Nidaja had both grown some with it.

The process was painless, and only took a few fleeting moments, but, dizzy and disoriented, Alps found himself facing the other way suddenly, as if the room had spun around, rather than his focus merely switched. He looked up into Nidaja’s eyes, and thankfully, was done with being in a strange body. The wolf was immediately aware of the pain as it returned to him. The various scars and old broken bones and aching lungs from untended infections from the past were there to greet him. Nidaja too seemed to be aware of the lifting of those aches and pains that the time in his body had made her used to. She put her hands on his chest, clad in red leather vest.

“I never knew... how much you hurt every day, Alps.” She whispered. “We will talk with Misty when we arrive home. She may be able to help you.” The general crooned softly. Alps nodded softly.

“It’s alright... There are other things that ease the pain that you have already done. Your love and our friendship have done much to make me forget it. Blind to it, with every breath we take together.” His gentle tones told the lady

lupine. She smiled at his gentleness and leans in, touching the soft fur of her cheek to his own.

“Thank you Alps. I needed to hear that. It makes me feel whole to know that you suffer so much less because of me. I look back and I see what you have been through, and know now what I took you away from, and even for all the good I have done my empire I am not so proud of that as I am the single act of saving you.” She whispers. “I am sorry I put you through this over my selfish need for revenge.” Alps wrapped his arms around the general, clad in night silks so that she was as soft and inviting as possible.

“Nidaja, you misunderstand. This was a harrowing experience, I will admit, but the more I look back, and now forward, the more I know it was necessary in a way. I was not truly saved until now.”

“I don’t understand.” The general said, leaning back and looking into her sister’s mate’s violet eyes. They were so gentle and innocent, and they almost watched her commit murder in his form. It was incredible to hear him saying there was good to those intentions.

“Two things happened during this trial.” He stated sagely. “First, I am able to put the suffering of my past behind me. That is a small boon to ease my pain and clear my mind for the happiness to come. It will strengthen my heart, and my heart needs to be strong to best serve and love your sister, and you, and all our friends. It beats stronger with my conviction and love than ever before.” He pulled Nidaja a little closer, nuzzling at her neck before whispering, “Second, and I think more importantly, I got to live as you for some time. I gained something from that, something that, just being back in my own body, won’t change. You saw it tonight didn’t you?”

“I ... I think so, Alps. You got stronger. Not physically. Your spirit, I mean. You were ready to fight; you were ready to take control. You learned to be...” she seemed to search for the words.

“I learned to be something other than a slave.” He finished for her. “I learned to be independent, and make my own choices and believe in myself. I had to if I was going to be you. In the end, I came out of this a better person.” He murmured in this soft voice. “I had been worried that I would not be strong enough in the eyes of the people to be what Nita wanted me to be. I thought about it a lot. But now... Now I know I can be that strong. I can grow stronger and be the slave she loved, and the mate she needs.” He said warmly. Nidaja then silenced him with a kiss, and pushed him back slowly, her silk clad form over him, gentle and soft. Alps blushed a bit and looked up at her.

"Our first kiss was in this very room." He reminded her. She sat up a bit, and then looked at the open-shuttered window. The moon shone in brightly. She smiled at him.

"It was the middle of the afternoon. I brought you here with the intention of playing with you to see if you might make a good companion for my sister. I didn't think I'd fall in love with you myself." She chuckled.

"Take off your silks, Nidaja." Alps' sure and happy tone lilted, making the general raise her eyebrows.

"Plans for your mate's sister?" she asked softly, standing up by the bed, her strong, lean, emerald form gleaming in the moonlight. She crossed her arms coyly.

"I'm stronger now. I can make plans." He offered, teasingly.

"Stronger? I still see a soft, white slave, sitting on the bed, waiting to be taken advantage of by the mysterious general who purchased him over a year ago." She laughed.

"Oh I'm not that slave anymore. I promise." He said, sitting up, hands on the edge of the bed as his feet touched the floor, the wolf looking up at Nidaja, eyes gleaming with aggressive energy. Nidaja smiled a very mischievous smile.

"Prove it." She growled. With that, rather suddenly, Alps stood, and the green-furred general squeaked with surprise, backpedaling a bit before her back thumped against the wall beside the window, the white lupine slave pressing her heavily against it and taking her hands, holding them above her head as his chest pressed against her own quickly rising and falling bosom. The general puffed out softly, "Yes, this is much better than the last time we were here." Alps leaned up with his nose to the rim of her ear, and growled darkly,

"I wasn't waiting for permission." His hips pushed up against Nidaja's, the thin silk letting her feminine curves between her thighs feel the ridge of need the wolf had hidden under his canvas trousers. The general squeaked with delight at his words as he tucked his muzzle over her jaw line, nipping downward along the ridge of it, and then over her neck, biting firmly. His tail lashed side to side slowly as his form pushed against her, not letting her free. The general pushed back a little, as if trying to struggle, but Alps knew in a real fight she'd have him on the floor in pieces if it were not what she wanted. He smiled into the bite he gave her and he lifted her silk top up, peeling it off her arching form. Her pushed his hands under those perfect breasts, nipples trapped between splaying fingers as he squeezed, keeping her neck in his jaws, squeezing a bit tighter if she moved in a way that he didn't want her to.

“Oh... my...” came Nidaja's suddenly breathless words as the wolf continued to manhandle her much as he had when she was in his own body hours ago. His hips bucked against her own again firmly as one of her legs rose to curl around the back of his thighs. If she wanted, she could push him back and trip him like that, but instead, she pushed her own panty-clad hips against his thickening covered masculinity. The scent of her arousal spilled from her like water overflowing from a fountain, rich and powerful. Alps gave a commanding snarl to her as he released with his teeth and rumbled,

“I let your wrists go for a reason, general. Put those hands to good use.” His words were spoken as if somehow he outranked her. She squeaked in pleasure again as his hips moved back enough to indicate what he meant before he revisited her neck with his jaws, holding her with grim determination. Those slender and usually calm and careful hands shakily swept down his chest and tummy to his trousers, awkwardly working the straps to free them, and finally, parting the folded-over front of the fabric, both hands eagerly wrapping around the thick, aching meat that fell forward from the dividing cloth. Alps growled hotly, needful for her touch. He gave a little jerk of his muzzle, pulling at her with his teeth insistently.

Nidaja understood and began to slip her hands up and down that throbbing flesh, feeling every pulsing vein slipping between her fingers as she squeezed and stroked that already hot and tightly swollen lupine cock. Alps pushed his hips back a bit, and then forward, rumbling affectionately as he rested his chin over the general's shoulder to pant with pleasure and lust.

“Oh dear... it seems I have found the means with which to calm the savage beast.” The general crooned with sweet longing.

“Nidaja...” Alps panted out through clenched teeth, “tease your self with me. Rub me against you through your silks.” His body was trembling a little at the thought. Nidaja did as she was told, pushing the tapered tip of that throbbing pink flesh to the divot of her sex through the light and paper-thin silk of her panties, gasping at the pressure. Alps wrapped his arms around her again, biting and kissing hotly at the side of her neck and shoulder as he felt the burning tease of that aching cock against quickly slicked silk fabric, soaked through with his pre almost immediately, and mixing with the general's own hot, slick juices.

“Just like that?” she asked, head tilted back, the female lupine seeming lost in her own fantasy and lust as she held him tightly in shaking fingers, teasing him against her silk-covered petals. She spread them with that firm head, seeping that tangy slick fluid to make herself even slicker for him. In reality, Alps could hardly tell she was still wearing anything for how wet and smooth that fabric was. Alps nodded softly, and groaned out,

“Push me against you... through your panties... Rub me there... Do it...” he panted, getting more and more worked up at just telling her what to do, even if it was not the most productive means for having sex. It felt very good, and he was enjoying playing with Nidaja in this very memorable place.

“As you command.” Nidaja’s words spilled from her panting chest, making the white lupine blush a bit, but his teeth gritted, and he groaned as her now wet, slick fingers slipped along the underside of his throbbing cock, and pressed the top of it against the soaking wet crease of her folds through the negligible negligee. Alps then gave a long, experimental stroke of his hips, feeling the pressure of those wet fingers under, and the smooth, slick panties over, not at all unlike a nice, deep penetration as he pushed forward and back. He trembled, and Nidaja groaned too, the stroke felt over her tingling clit.

Slowly, the lupine slave began to move his hips, pleasuring himself between the general’s fingers and sex, the panties only a promising barrier soon to be broken if their passions continued to flare. Alps bit the side of his lover’s neck as his hips began a more fevered motion, stroking back and forth as the general’s other hand slipped over the wolf’s shoulders, gripping him as one leg stayed up, hooked over the back of his own to keep that pussy easy to stroke. She began to puff out hot panting breaths, her eyes closed, head forward. Her hips began to stroke back against the slave’s own, the pleasure of it apparently not much less than it was for her lover.

“I want you to cum like this...” Alps growls demanding. “Let it happen. I want to feel you soak your silks for me.”

“Unng...” Nidaja panted, hips jerking softly as she pressed him tighter to her covered folds. “Faster... If you want to feel me soak you, you... have to pump faster...” The slave folded his ears back at that, not sure if he could do it faster for very long without just squirting his lust into those stroking fingertips. The general was rubbing him as if to masturbate herself through that stroking cock, which was only making the sensation of each stroke more intense and wild.

“Alright love... but you better not hold back. I want to feel you pop over me!” he grunted hips thumping against her own. She squeaked hotly, hand gripping his shoulder tighter as he bit her neck firmly. Hips bucking faster, the pair began to thump up against the wall, and Nidaja even tried to shush her lover a little to get him to calm down, fearing they may wake their neighbors in the next room. The slave would not relent however, being more forceful with her now than she’d ever felt before.

In the end, it was that forcefulness that drove her to her peak. Her body tightened after only a few moments of this “punishment” and then she trembled heavily before Alps actually heard the spattering of wetness on the hardwood floor. Nidaja cried out loudly, then clapped her muzzle shut, trying hard to stifle it

as her cheeks flared out. The wolf felt her head wetting his thighs as his hips ground into hers, and then he just could not resist any more. He gripped her with both hands behind her and growled out commandingly,

“Pull your silks to the side. I have something to give to you now.” The wolf stressed the word now almost desperately, indicating to Nidaja that it was not going to wait much longer. She squeaks rapturously and moved her hand off of his stroking cock, and pulled the crotch of those panties to the side with her fingertips, before the white-furred slave angled his hips slightly lower, and then caused the general to cry out loudly as nine inches of need penetrated her still quivering depths. The general arched her back, throwing another leg around her lover’s hips and leaning back against the wall, pinned between him and the wall with both feet off the floor as Alps slammed into her deeply!

“Yes! Yes, fuck me, love, don’t stop! Fill meeee!” she cried, yelping out as Alps swatted her rump for perhaps just speaking out of turn. Besides, it was unnecessary to tell him to do that, she would have had to injure him badly to stop it from being the next thing to happen anyway. His hips ground tightly into her own, and her fingers slipped back between them, pushing and stroking at her little clit as he felt her muscles contract around his thick, flaring cock.

“Yes!” alps barked, “Cum again, Nidaja, cum around me, I wanna feel you squeeze me inside you before I flood that heat right back inside you!” he snarled, knowing talking dirty was not common for him, but as aggressive as he was being, he couldn’t help it. Apparently, for Nidaja, it did the trick. She yowled loudly, ears back, eyes widening so much that he could see the whites of them, and then he was treated to long, rhythmic squeezes internally, and felt hot wetness running down his inner thighs as it spilled over the dock of Nidaja’s tail. She curled into a ball against him, between him and the wall, and Alps finally just let go to enjoy her completely.

The general no longer protested the noise they were making as his hips pistoned furiously into hers, thumping her lower back against the wall as he bounced her in his lap against the wall, her toes spread as her legs gripped around his lower back. She occasionally squeaked out as the natural rhythm of their sexual frenzy would push her over the edge again and again, but the odd position, coupled with the fact that he was holding most of Nidaja’s weight, made the wolf’s focus a little divided, so he was not able to just explode as naturally as he might if they were on the bed. The wolf slave was sure that the general did not mind in the slightest, however, as the wetness splashed lewdly between them.

Finally, Alps grunted heavily as he felt the aching need for release boil within him. He rutted harder with Nidaja, bouncing her firmly against the wall, face contorted in pleased fury, his muscles straining to hold her as they tired from the exertion, but the heat only made him want it more. A picture frame fell

on a dress that was close enough to the wall to get jarred a bit. The general clamped down around her lover and made it feel like she was suckling him inside her again every time he lurched into her. Alps simply and unceremoniously exploded, spewing thick streamers off his lust into the convulsing depths of a frantically orgasming general. The combination of their thick, hot fluids spilled between the lupine's parted feet, Nidaja's feet still up near his shoulders as she folded in half and wailed with heavenly release! Alps ached from how hard he released into Nidaja. It had been a while since he felt that kind of climax in his own body, and it seemed almost as strange suddenly as the first time he felt a climax in Nidaja's body. The thought of all of the experiences that both bodies shared, and that he knew exactly, without a shadow of doubt, how the general was feeling now, only made the intensity of the emotional exchange between them even more intense!

For several minutes, the two writhed and pitched against one another, letting Alps fully spend himself in those claiming depths, before finally he moved his hands under the general's rump and the slave staggered over to the bed, dropping himself and the still tensing and relaxing green wolf female onto it, his hips gyrating slowly to stir the intimate soup they had created in that tight passage. Alps rumbled softly,

"I think... I am gonna rather enjoy being more spirited and dominant." His panting words flowed in staggered puffs. Nidaja sprawled a bit, finally moving her legs from around his back, splaying heavily on the bed, feeling that twitching, hot cock bounce and throb inside her as the wolf enjoyed slow sexual aftershocks. After a bit off silence, she murmured, with a smirk,

"I think we *all* will enjoy that, Alps." before chuckling softly, and embracing her lover in that familiar, welcoming room at the Luca inn.

The drying leaves of the trees outside of town rustled softly as Chana leaned back against the quality wood paneled wall of her classy den, and looked at the guest she had invited into her home at the recommendation of one of her less reputable contacts. The cloaked figure gazed at her from under a dark hood from across the expensively carpeted floor, standing stark still and silent. Chana wrung her hands expectantly as she watched the tea she had served her guest cool in its small, green cup, the sweet scent filling the room like incense. There was a lengthened silence as the guest sipped at the tea calmly.

"So we understand one another? You cannot be seen, and you cannot be caught. This cannot be linked to me. I just want a clean, simple death. I just want an end to a wretched life that should never have been allowed in the first place. He has brought humility to me, and as the last in my family line, it's a

humility my family name will be marked for. Your kind understands the importance of honor.” The tan-furred lupine female growled with sickened resolve. She had, by the look of her, not slept in two days or more, and had been furious the entire time.

The dark figure remained silent as they listened. Chana watched quietly as the figure nodded.

“Good, we have an understanding. Four Thousand is what I will pay. That’s what he promised me when he got me up in the middle of the night to assault me and humiliate me. When I know proof of his death, come to me, and I will pay it to you.

“I don’t want your money.” The dark, robed figure said in a soft, perfect tone.

“You are an assassin. My sources were able to retain your services with the understanding that your rates are reasonable.”

“I don’t have rates. Your sources never sent me. I came on my own.” The cold feminine voice whispered again.

“What do you want then? You had better not be wasting my time, criminal. I asked you if you were here to do the work I offered! You said yes, so why are you really here!” Chana bristled, moving forward to the dark figure, pulling a small round table between them and putting a bag of gold onto it. “This is not a joke. I intend to buy a reliable service, and if you are not as reliable as to stake money on it, then you would be better to leave now and sip my tea no longer. Do you know the trouble it would cause for you if I told the guards here that a Lhap islander was in the vicinity? You’d be hunted down like the heathen trouble maker you are.”

The dark figure pulled her hood off, and silver gleaming fox eyes peered at the tan female wolf. The black fox female with silver hair and markings stared coldly at Chana. She spoke slowly and evenly.

“I’m not a Lhap. The work you had to be done was the unfortunate matter of murder. You asked me if I was here to do this work, and I am. There had not been, up to that point, any establishment of just who it was I would kill. I will not slaughter an innocent boy for your pride. I will not take your money to commit murder.” The dark vulpine whispered casually.

“Then get out of my house, and get out of town as fast as you can. The guards will be on your heels, Lhap.” Chana hissed.

"Not until I finish my tea." came the fox's reply, as she held the saucer in one hand, bringing it up in front of her with a coy smile, eyes closed as she brought the little cup to her lips to sip it pleasantly. Chana seethed at the perceived insult, and wrenched her slender, quick arm out to slap the cup and saucer out of the fox's hands.

The little saucer hovered in the air for a brief second before clattering to the table as the black fox's free hand vanished, and Chana felt a stabbing agonizing impact on her own wrist just before it arrived to strike the cup and saucer. Chana recoiled and wailed in pain as she gripped her arm, the dull, burning throb telling her that her wrist was broken as she wrenched it from the fox's grasp and the fox finished her warm sip of tea her expression unchanged.

Chana moved her uninjured hand to her waist and drew the fine silver dagger, long and slender, that Alps had left for her. She barked out furiously, "You're dead you filthy fox-whore!" her scream in both rage and agony as she lurched forward with the knife. The fox, so quick, intercepted her and she jumped back, gritting her teeth as her opponent wrenched her wrist painfully, making her drop the knife which the fox caught as Chana started at her, stunned. The cup and saucer placed neatly on the table, she stood and pulled Chana close, the long silver blade held before both their eyes.

"Such lovely work, this knife..." came the fox's calmly reflective tone. "... and you ..."

"Who are ...?" Chana asked, but she was cut off by the fox who leaned in close to the once demure female and to her shock, kissed her. Her eyes went wide with confusion and fear as she stared into the gleaming, unusual silver eyes of that vixen. The tan-furred lupine began to feel light headed, and then... wet? She reached up, putting a hand on the side of her own neck, but even before her hand reached her neck she could feel the hot warmth of her own blood. Out of the corner of her eye she could see the knife, now dripping blood, her blood, onto the floor.

"You make a very pleasant cup of tea." The fox answered matter-of-factly, as if she had not just ended her host's life.

"You monster..." Chana said, going to her knees, and then slumping back onto her rump, against the wood-paneled wall. "You're just ... a murderer." She half gasped, and half choked, speaking and breathing both becoming difficult as her throat began to throb with a dull but steadily growing pain.

"...And knowing that, you still invited me in for tea." The vulpine said, carefully cleaning the slender elegant knife on a once neatly folded napkin. "And really... I'm so much more."

“Fuck... you...” Chana replied, the light of life slipping out of her eyes, her consciousness very soon to follow. Her hand, now soaked, fell away from her throat, letting her life’s blood spurt freely onto the floor while she watched, horrified and no longer able to blink.

“How very sad for the beauty of history that your last words should be so uninspiring, Chana. I know you have but seconds left, but let me fill them with one little thought. My freedom to come here was given to me by the power of the one you would have me kill. His hands are clean, but Chana... Alps was your undoing after all.”

As the fox spoke those words, she sheathed the knife and placed it in her robes, watching the light of life fall into shadow in those horrified, dying lupine eyes. Silently, the vixen left the dark, quiet house. Dried autumn-kissing deciduous leaves rustled in the dark of night in the distance, marking, quiet and uncaring, the passing of Luca’s regional matriarch