

**Sirius, Book IV**  
*A Slave's War*

*Comments or Questions?*

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**Chapter 17**

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Neph tried to catch up to Ceriss as she moved rather quickly into the forest toward the small, sheltered camp that they thought had been a complete secret, but they had not accounted for someone who knew so much like Wahkeme seemed to. Was it an act? Surely it could not be. He knew very specific things, and even the priestess seemed alarmed. Neph panted softly, arriving back at camp finally, to find it nearly empty. Ceriss looked furtively around, seeing only Kaji sitting at a very small fire with thick palm leaves over it to disperse the smoke to a point. He was heating some water.

"Where are Neit and Lunaris?" she asked, seeming displeased that anyone had ventured off while they were investigating the nearby town. Kaji murmured softly,

"It's alright, they're heading to th' stream ta gather more water, and t' bathe. I sent Lunaris to keep an eye on our young lady friend 'cause I didn't want her bathin' alone with whatever dropped that tooth possibly lurking about." He noted. There was a soft shuffle of the leaves overhead, signs that the wind was changing to a night time land breeze. "Who's your friend, Neph, she's kinda cute." Ceriss grumped.

"You know full well who I am, Kaji." The priestess crossed her arms.

"I like what ye've done with yer ears." The captain of the lost ship stated coyly. Ceriss shook her head.

"We will have matters to discuss when the others get back." The faux-fox stated. Neph sat down beside the priestess. "For the time being, we will wait here. It's pointless to start discussing these matters when I will just have to repeat them in full when the others get here. You should have stayed together, I do not care to waste time. The Sons of Sorrow are not likely to be without other plans to cause harm to the city, and are likely pretty angry about the crystal." She sighed, leaning back against a tree, sitting on the soft, spongy ground of the tropical forest they found themselves camping in.

"You kin change back ye' know." Kaji murmured in a tone that might have been intended to be helpful. It came out as slightly uncomfortable. Ceriss raised an eyebrow.

"Do I not make a lovely fox?" she asked. Neph looked back and forth between her and his captain, watching the pair.

"Yer a fine fox, Ceriss, ah jest..." He looked at Neph, then looked down a bit, and chuckled softly. "I was hopin' to still get my hands on you, a promise an' all, and like this... It's like I'm takin' advantage of Neph's mum." Ceriss' eyes went wide at that, and Neph went scarlet. Not much could embarrass the fox, but that was more than enough. Ceriss did not look much like his actual mother, but that it caused Kaji issues was, he felt, pretty funny. He got over the embarrassing shock of the revelation and laughed. Ceriss spoke up.

"And here I was about to grant you that favor, but I have to stay in this disguise in case we are watched from afar..." Ceriss grinned icily at Kaji, who widened his eyes in distress.

"Tha'taint fair at all, an yew know it!" Kaji whimpered. "I'll ner' cash in my favor under them circumstances. It won't feel right!" He looked with a panicked expression to Neph, perhaps for support. The fox grinned stupidly. This was a very funny thing to watch. Kaji was kind, if sometimes crude and rough with him, but it was good to see him get some licks.

"Well, I can't go denying my promises, and these circumstances are what caused such a promise in the first place. You cannot complain given the opportunity?" Ceriss asked, slipping up a little closer to the dark-furred wolf.

"Yeh kin offer all yew want, but I kin wait!" he barked.

"It'll be fun, Kaji!" Neph laughed. "She's small and easy to handle! You like short girls in town, I have seen you chase them!"

"Petite! Petite!" Kaji barked. "This one's yer size! That's tiny! How's she e'en able to get that small as a disguise?!" Kaji scooted back a little, sitting against a leaning tree that had been half pinned back by a fallen tree that he was now sitting on.

"I put my mass in these ears and in my tail, and pull some of it to my core." Ceriss noted. "I still weigh the same. I'm still a wolf, and I'm still a Letai priestess. If I want this moment to be when I grant your favor, it will be." She grinned coldly at Kaji.

"Not if I'm sayin' no." The former captain crossed his arms defiantly. He was smiling, so Neph began to think this was a bit of banter whether the captain

really wanted that or not. Still, if he didn't want Ceriss to enjoy him in this form, there was not much she could do to him. At the moment, at least, the captain was two heads taller than her, and he was always physically larger, even when she was a wolf. Neph looked at Ceriss again, his ears perking. Did she have a good comeback to that? Sometimes it was fun watching how others interacted. Neph preferred simple interaction, and the somewhat forced pairing between the thief and the fox had been ideal to this end. He didn't have to think about it, he didn't have to chase Neit, he just had to pleasure her, and she did the same to him, and because of that, their friendship worked nicely. He suspected that if Kaji and Ceriss did the same, they might get along better. Ceriss narrowed her eyes, her grin on that lovely foxy face going from cold to absolutely wicked. Her eyes glowed violet. There was a soft 'gLk' sound from Kaji. Neph turned his head quickly, and he cupped his muzzle, having not expected what he'd see.

Sitting there on the fallen, rotting tree was still his captain, but there was a band of bluish light that coiled around his neck, then down around the back of the tree that was half-down behind him, then around his arms. He was pulled back somewhat unnaturally against the tree behind him, as if the bands of light were rope. His expression was shocked.

"Funny thing about your essence, if handled directly..." Ceriss murmured, standing up slowly and approaching the wolf pinned to the tree. "Your body does not like being separated from it, and your muscles react accordingly. If I pull, your muscles push. It's not easy to do, but I had some nice food, and I think I can manage."

"This in't really necessary." Kaji's words were anxious, but he did not sound as strangled as he looked. The band of light was not squeezing him, it was just making his muscles keep him forced back. His airway was safe. It was more about visible paralysis than it was a physical force holding him back. This did not make Neph any less fearful of Ceriss' power. She had made her point though, right?

"It was never necessary..." Ceriss whispered to Kaji as she slowly untied the ribbon around the middle of her robes. Neph widened his eyes, as did the captain.

"At least switch back to the pretty white wolf..." Kaji whispered.

"No." Ceriss grinned, letting the robes fall away. They had been too long to begin with, so she was able to move easier without them. Her body was mostly petite, but as a means of distributing her mass, Ceriss left her chest a bit generous, where Lhap typically were not. This got a bit of a mouth-open gape from Neph. Kaji was less familiar with that being so unusual, but he looked mostly fearful about what this fox was about to do to him. He had mentioned that he'd prefer a wolf, but the sight before him was certainly not unpleasant.

“Ye’ really are gonna do this right in front of Neph?” Kaji panted out with some exasperation as small vulpine hands began to undo his trousers. Neph blushed, having not thought Kaji would be embarrassed by that, but ultimately, a few of the times at least, he’d watched the male fox play with Neit. It seemed strange that he would be embarrassed the other way around.

“Yes I am.” Ceriss’ reply was almost clinical, very calm and determined.

“I can’t stop ye can I?” asked the wolf, his eyes half closed as his trousers were drawn down slowly. Neph widened his eyes a little to find that ebon length more than half rigid. He was not able to hide his arousal at the situation. That length only swelled more and more as the humid afternoon air caressed it.

“Not without hurting yourself.” Ceriss answered, slowly pulling up Kaji’s top. The bands of light were unresponsive to the fabric, so they did not get in the way. It was somewhat odd for Neph to see. He watched as Ceriss prohibited any further questions from Kaji by cupping her mouth to his, smaller than a wolf’s, but her tongue pushed easily past his teeth, and he seemed to tense up a lot. Did Kaji actually dislike foxes, or was there something else causing him this glitch? Was it really about Neph? He could not look away. He could not believe that Ceriss was actually forcing herself in this form on his captain. Was he wrong to allow it without resisting himself? After all, Kaji was already getting aroused. Did he really not want it? Ceriss finally broke the kiss, and moved a hand down to the mostly-seated captain’s lap, stroking his swelling girth in her gentle, small white hand.

“Do you hate me for this?” she asked, her expression hard to read. Was it sad? Was it concerned? Was it teasing? Neph could not tell. He squirmed a little in his own arousal. He wondered if his captain would forgive him if he made an attempt on Ceriss when she was done with him. Was that taboo? He didn’t know enough about Amanian culture to be sure. It would be frowned on where he was from, at least, as it might dishonor his captain.

“Why would I hate you fer this?” he asked.

“There’s a reason you shy away from interacting with a Lhap this way. You can’t deny it.” Her words were sage and careful. Neph looked at Kaji more intently.

“Not in front of Neph.” Kaji rumbled slowly.

“I will give you that, but you would do good to address it eventually.” She stroked Kaji to full arousal in the time she was talking to him. The true fox blinked at that. She was doing what exactly? Letai were incredible lovers, he’d

learned that much so far, but they were also renowned healers. Was this part of the healing Ceriss was trained to do? He did not really view her as a healer.

“Ye wish t’ help an’ I love ye fer that, but it in’ all that bad, I assure ya.” Kaji tried to speak of this dismissively. The disguised priestess put her hand under Kaji’s chin, and then to his throat.

“Let me be blunt, captain...” Her words were icy, and the dark wolf’s thickened shaft twitched a bit in her hand. Neph backed up a bit. Priestesses were scary. She leaned in close, “... I am not doing this to honor a bet or any special heartfelt lover’s promise. There will be plenty of time for *that* when we are safely back on friendly shores. But things will be very dangerous for us soon if we are to get anywhere, and I need your *life*, not your approval. And the best energy I will get from you will be gained when you are not lamenting your personal reservations about how I look at the moment.” She put her claw-tips around the wolf’s scrotum. Neph gritted his teeth, and Kaji gasped. Oddly, he only perked up again, rather than deflating. Ceriss folded those huge ears back curiously, looking down. She then grinned wickedly at what the effect had been. Fully aroused, his dark flesh did not look like it would even fit inside a fox, easily 11 inches, and quite thick as it twitched against her palm.

“Shit...” the captain grunted as those claw-tips seemed to tighten.

“Oh, I see...” Her hand slipped back up that dark shaft and slid back down, drawing a nice coat of slick pre down his length with it. Ceriss leaned forward a little and growled to him as she stroked him generously, making Neph just a little jealous. “So *that’s* what happened. Chose the wrong time to show up on the wrong island.” She pushed her claws up along his chest and rather abusively pinched one of the wolf’s dark nipples through the lighter fur along his chest. He winced, writhing, seeming to be agonized by that. Neph was dumfounded. What, by the lifestream itself, was the priestess doing? They weren’t supposed to delight in hurting people.

“Quiet, ya couldn’t know.” Kaji validated, at least somewhat, the words that the priestess uttered. Ceriss leaned in and *bit* Kaji’s shoulder, making him grunt in pain, but that was followed by a groan that Neph could not mistake as her palm cupped his wet cock-tip. The actual fox stepped closer. Did his captain like being hurt by Ceriss? That was not what he expected. Ceriss spoke softly.

“I have heard, even long ago, the Lhap had an island where those who wish to suffer their mother’s moon in private can do so. It’s disruptive for them to stay in such a state because it’s hard for Lhap to resist the allure of those beauties when they want them the most, and if several fall prey to that timing regularly, it’s easier to keep them together where they won’t cause, say... accidents and other issues...” Neph blinked. She really did know about the Lhap. He was astonished that she could have known that. He spoke up.

“Our island fer that is called Karacota. It’s right b’side m’ own island.” He cupped his muzzle. “Kaji, ye didn’t go *there*, did ye’? Tha’s a terrible idea, they woulda been...” He then went scarlet. They would not have wanted Kaji there because it was a very private, sacred place where Kaji should not have been, and for a wolf to be there it would break so many taboos, but they would have been unable to help what they really needed to do to him. If he got stranded there in one of his failed expeditions, he might have been both abused, and ravaged, for weeks. The reality of it snapped into focus for Neph, and his ears burned from the level of blushing. Kaji sighed out with disdain.

“So yeah, ye kin make fun of it all yew want now, nosy little – HNNnn...” Ceriss twisted his nipples both in her fingertips as she growled to cut him off. Neph could understand what was happening now. He spent weeks with several of them, they likely went back and forth between beating him silly for his trespassing there, and fucking him raw because he was a wolf and they knew there would be no consequences while satisfying their primal urges that would have been painfully intense at the time. Not all the Lhap had such a physical problem with it, some could more or less ignore it, but there were always three or four or so that became quite distressed and uncomfortable. Those would definitely have been the ones on Karacota. Did Kaji mentally link Ceriss’ abuse with the aggressive sex he found there? That was just shameful. Another realization dawned on Neph as he watched Ceriss twist her cupped palm over his sensitive wet glans.

“Wait, you came back.” He looked stunned at Kaji. “You came back to the islands and that’s when you met me. It weren’t the first time you had been there. Ye’ said ye were recovering from bein’ sick, but you was flat *exhausted*, you dog! Ye been to Karacota takin’ advantage of the foxes!” Kaji groaned. Neph was a little taken aback, but the wolf had otherwise been pretty straight with him. He was coming to his islands for business and pleasure. But why take a fox crewmate? He knew the answer before he even finished asking it in his head. “Ye’ took me on as ah crewmate so ye had a right proper reason t’ be goin’ back!” He crossed his arms, and then grinned a bit as Ceriss gave him another pinch to his nipples as he tried to explain himself to the fox. He deserved it!

“You’ve been a very naughty thing, knowin’ those foxes were not able to resist.” The priestess slipped down onto her knees before Kaji. Neph narrowed his eyes. Why was she still pleasuring this wolf, he had insulted the sanctity of his homeland. Did she intend to just tease his arousal to a fever pitch, and drop him? Kaji panted, speaking up.

“I’ll have ye’ know, Neph, I’m good friends with more’n a few of tha’ ladies I met there, and I were requested back by them. I came back cause they wanted me t’ be comin’ back, not cause I like havin’ no respect fer them.” Neph crossed his arms uncomfortably. He could not be serious. “After th’ first time, I learned m’

lesson, and stuck to trade with the correct island, but one of em tracked me down at port, and there we go. I never intended to be insultin' no one or breaking rules and customs, Neph, if'n ye don't believe me, I kin take you t' see the three that invited me. Honor o' the sea, Neph. They needed me, an' I shore liked being needed." Neph sighed. If the wolf had been banned from doing it again, he supposed he would have heard of the incident, but nothing was ever said. That meant that the ones it happened with kept it a secret. The best reason for them to keep that secret is to allow it to happen again.

"When we git back, I will be askin' them, so you know, but yer off the hook for now. But Ceriss, you don't gotta be gentle with Kaji. He likes his foxes just... like... this." Neph grinned icily at his captain. He found some personal enjoyment in this. Ceriss immediately drew her shorter form up against Kaji and growled pleasantly. The bands of light glowed a little brighter, her 'grip' on him apparently tightening as he seemed to flex against that energy.

"There we go, that little bit of unpleasantness is out of the way in a moderated fashion. Now then, we can move forward with this..." She reached under her lap, grasping Kaji's masculinity as she slipped up tighter against him, stroking him against the bare pink flower of her desire. Neph swallowed, having not been prepared for just how alluring Ceriss was when aroused as a fox. He didn't have the guts to ask if this play extended to him, since Neit had drained him so nicely already.

"How did you know... there was an issue with foxes?" Kaji asked breathlessly, his feet parting and planting tightly against the leafy ground. Ceriss bit at his shoulder softly, giving a honey-sweet growl before sinking back, pulling him back and forth over those petals and pushing and lifting her hand under herself. She stroked him against herself with the apparent intent of pleasuring them both, and for how wet she was, it seemed to play its effect out nicely on her as much as it did the slick, twitching member of the former ship's captain.

"I didn't." Ceriss growled back to the wolf, who tightened up a bit. "But, everyone's got interesting secrets and the way you looked when you saw me in this form, I just had to know. You see..." Ceriss leaned in and pumped Kaji a little faster, her hand wetter with her heat and his pre. "... Before the war got bad, before it was obvious that the Letai were not handling it well, my purpose was to purge dark emotions, to strike down desperate sadness. I was the one people went to when they were hurting, and I would help heal them, through talk, through touch..." Her hand sank down and she gripped Kaji's sack, claws pushing into the flesh tightly, making him wince and whine loudly. "... Or through abuse if that's what it took." Kaji's leg was shaking as Neph watched her hand glide back up to stroke his cock again, a mixing of pleasure and pain.

"Aye, then ye've done this b'fore?" Kaji asked, huffing out in pleasure before grunting again with a bite to his shoulder, Ceriss teasing her sex with his

wet tip again. Neph inhaled and exhaled in deeper, longer breaths. He could smell her. She even smelled of fox. The musk was unmistakable. He had assumed that she might have taken the form she had with little experience, and that was amazing to him, but how close she got things like her scent, the real fox began to think that she might have been around the Lhap island foxes quite a bit. Perhaps she had intimate knowledge of them. The idea of it made him only hotter still.

Kaji did not try to speak again. It seemed everything he said was immediately punctuated by the infliction of pain. Still, Ceriss seemed happy to mix the two whether he spoke or not. She would lean down and cup his cock against her tummy as she nipped his nipples or she would pull his hair back, exposing his neck and biting him as she pushed his masculinity a bare inch into her tight sex, or she would grab his throat and push him back and growl at him threateningly as she mashed her puffy aroused folds against the underside of his trapped member.

What Neph became the most aware of in the process of this was that Ceriss was not just taking her time, she was drawing it out. Every time the wolf would seem to be getting too much pleasure out of it, or begin breathing harder or pushing his hips to meet the pleasure of whatever little bit of intensity the priestess was allowing, she would slow, stop outright, or inflict pain upon him. This was a practice that he had never seen before. Was she still teasing him, with no intent of letting him climax? The fox was not mad at Kaji anymore, so he would not want to see Kaji suffer that kind of fate. On one of the downgrades of attention that the fox-disguised priestess forced upon the excited captain, he gave a long and plaintive, frustrated whine that Neph could understand because even he felt frustrated, as if it was his own arousal that was being tortured.

“What’s wrong, Kaji? Do you want to be inside me?” Ceriss asked with a caring, tender, but very thickly teasing voice. Kaji audibly swallowed. There was a hot shiver through his body, and he nodded vigorously, as much as the band of light restraining his neck to the leaning tree would allow. Ceriss growled pleasantly. “What do you think it feels like in there? How hot and tight is a vixen’s body when compared to a wolf, Kaji?” Her voice drew out the last letter of his name to an apparent begging tone. Neph shivered at that. Foxes were about two degrees warmer generally than wolves because of their size, making them quite a bit warmer, and he could only imagine how much tighter Ceriss might seem in this form. Kaji whimpered again, not daring to speak lest he offend his captor.

“Foxes are warmer.” Neph offered since no one else spoke a moment while Ceriss ran her thumb in quick little circles at the underside of the tip of the wolf’s thick, soaking cock, pre dribbling copiously as the lady fox teased him. She gave an icy look to the fox, making it obvious that he did not need to answer for his captain. He stood up strait to look obedient and then winced, his arousal

not favoring standing straight, making him bow again. Kaji began to push his hips up and down slowly into the pleasure that the almost invisible motion of that thumb was causing. Ceriss grinned sinfully at the wolf pinned against the mossy tree.

“Feeling nice? Enjoying thinking about being pushed deep inside me Kaji?” she asked lustfully. He nodded emphatically. Ceriss leaned in closer, whispering, “Would you like to feel it now?” she asked, drawing out the last word again hotly. Kaji nodded immediately, a heated whine escaping his lips as he visibly throbbed in Ceriss’ grasp. The temporarily fox priestess growled in a darker tone, “Would you still want it even if I hurt you while I was doing it?” Neph felt an almost painful wave of lust pulse inside him, his cock straining against the fabric of his trousers. He sat right down on the leafy ground, unable to stand. The fox folded his ears back with disbelief. He was shocked not only at the suggestion from Ceriss, but also in how intensely aroused it made him. Was this priestess joking? Surely he would not agree to that. Kaji whimpered pitifully and nodded his head again.

“Oh my...” Neph half-whispered. Ceriss leaned forward and the fox held his breath as he watched her bite Kaji on his left arm near his shoulder, hard enough to make him cry out, but her hips pushed down slowly and evenly, and that dark cock-flesh spread her puffy pink folds wide around it and vanished entirely into her squeezing, clutching depths. Neph felt almost dizzy with arousal. The wolf-turned-vixen pulled her hips up slowly, teeth still tightly gripping Kaji, making him groan as his mind obviously seemed to cycle between the pleasure and pain. Those vulpine hips pushed wetly back down, the squish of that penetration clearly audible to Neph’s large ears. Then again she rose and fell, and again, keeping a deliberate and slow pace. If he moved his hips, Ceriss either stopped with just his tip inside her, that thick dark wolf-cock twitching as she seemed to bite him harder, at least from the sounds he made. The priestess had complete control of the speed at which she pleased Kaji. Neph could not help but push his hands together in his lap, rubbing his arousal slowly, his tail flitting back and forth behind him in pleasure. It was impossible to watch this otherwise. Ceriss pulled her mouth away from Kaji, and held her hips, positioned solidly just above his lap with his tip still wedged in her steamy depths.

“Did you like that, Kaji? How did I feel pushing you to the hilt inside me, lover?” she hissed. Her words sounded almost angry, but her sadistic smile suggested great enjoyment. Kaji weakly wagged his tail, his cock twitching hard again and again with the tip inside Ceriss. The twitching continued to stoke his pleasure, but not enough to raise it. The white-furred vulpine in his lap lifted off of him fully, and went back to slowly stroking his flesh. He whined as if she was inflicting pain again, but it was merely brought on by the end to his pleasure.

“Please take me again...” Kaji begged. This struck Neph pretty hard, as he was used to hearing his captain give orders, not plead with someone. This

only made the Letai Priestess seem more powerful. Ceriss put a hand to Kaji's throat, making him actually squeak. Her bands of light did not make it harder for him to breathe, but her hand certainly did. She seemed very unnaturally strong for her size. Neph pushed hands into his lap harder. His need for pleasure was becoming almost painful, and it was impossible to hide that. Fortunately, Ceriss had her back to him, so neither she nor Kaji could really see he was grinding away at his still clothed cock.

"If I take you again, I shall hurt you again. Is this what you desire, Kaji? Do you want me to hurt you?" she whispered into the essence-restrained wolf's ear, seemingly intentionally loud enough for Neph to hear. Kaji nodded. Neph blushed hotly as he realized that he had also nodded. Ceriss lifted Kaji's head, hand under his chin, looking sternly into his eyes. "Don't nod. *Tell me.* Tell me you want me to hurt you." Neph's heart raced. This was both the darkest, and most arousing thing he'd ever seen. He thought he had known the greatest heights of lust with Neit on the raft, but Ceriss was in a completely different world from Neit. He felt the soft thrumming pleasure of his building climax, and he rubbed himself a little more evenly as his hips rolled slowly. He barely had to do anything, and knew that he'd climax. He didn't care if he'd be taking his trousers to the sea in a few moments. Kaji paused a bit, seeming not at all certain how to ask for something like that, but when Ceriss' sex was drawn away from his cock again, he croaked out in a strained voice,

"Please hurt me, Ceriss... If it means bein' deep in you, I want you to hurt me, keep hurting me, I dun care, just dun stop touching me." Ceriss grinned at him.

"Good Kaji. Remember that." She then pushed her mouth opposite of the side she bit before, planted her hands at his back, and ripped her claws tightly over his flesh through his fur as she bit into him, making him cry out loudly in pain. Then her hips sank again, and this time she used heavier, faster strokes for a while. His barks of pain were mixed with frantic panting and groans of pleasure as she alternated between clawing his back, bouncing her hips, holding still on top of him with his cock in deep or barely in at all. Every time his breathing seemed to suggest he might be near climax, the fox riding hard in his lap would increase her painful attentions, or just decrease the pleasurable ones. Ceriss would snarl or scold Kaji to punctuate certain pains or pleasures, and if he tried to move himself, it was always punished.

"I can't keep..." Kaji tried to speak but was bitten quite savagely by the fox on him. She held her hips up, keeping only his tip inside herself, and moved a hand down to stroke his sack, then up and down his member. She took her teeth off of him, but drew him out completely again, getting a loud whimper from the captain. However, she did not stop pleasuring the wolf. She rubbed the tip of his cock rapidly up and down at her slick, sticky folds. Her hips shuddered

suddenly, and the wetness tripled in an instant as the priestess climaxed, using Kaji's cock as a toy to finish herself off.

"Oh by the lights..." groaned Neph. Kaji tightened up.

"I'm about to..." he cried, obviously fearing punishment if he let go without permission. Ceriss growled out coldly,

"Don't you dare." She played with his cock harder, strumming her clit with the tip side to side, up and down, grinding it tightly to her sex, shaking hotly as she perhaps released again, but Neph could not be sure.

"Ahaah! I kinna hold it!" he cried.

"I will absolutely wound you if you don't!" Ceriss' tone was murderous. Neph groaned. "Same goes for you, fox!" the priestess hissed. Neph whimpered and moved his hands back behind him. As the male vulpine watched, she turned around in front of him, her eyes upon him, not caring to bite or savage Kaji anymore, only to threaten him as she continued to rub him against her. His legs shook uncontrollably. "Take your trousers off, you little sneak." She was panting openly in pleasure. Neph did as she was told, glad to have them off, but fearful that it would just open him up to abuse. Kaji might like pain, but he did not think he cared for it. "On your knees, and put your hands behind your back and hold the base of your tail as tight as you can. Don't let go of it."

"I'm gonna..." croaked Kaji, still being fluttered against fox pussy.

"Neph. Watch." Ceriss' command was very clear as she lowered her hips suddenly, taking the wolf all the way in, hitting him inside her with a loud slap of her thighs, and then bouncing fully off of him. She gripped his cock just outside her sex, waited for a couple of seconds as a strained squeak came from behind her back, Kaji's legs tight, barely shaking, muscles painfully seized, and then a long, powerful blast of thick pearly lupine seed splashed Ceriss' pink folds copiously as a roar of pleasure escaped the wolf, and he was pushed in as deep as he could be again. Dark lupine thighs pushed up to meet downward mashing fox hips. There was another loud slap as they met, and he was pulled back out, sending another powerful streamer of thick fluid onto her splattered sex. Ceriss stroked Kaji's gushing cock once or twice in her hand to make him squirt all over her sex, and then took him in deep again, listening to his sinking groan. He strained against the bands of light that held him, perhaps wanting to grab that fox in his lap and fuck her within half an inch of her life, because that was sure what Neph wanted to do. His own member twitched violently as he watched the incredible release of his captain. Then, something unique happened. The band of light holding Kaji's throat release him and whipped forward, wrapping itself around the real fox's pink, twitching cock.

“Ceriss, I-“ he was going to tell her that he was not moving, but the next thing he felt was heat and stroking. The exact thing he assumed those bouncing thighs were making his captain feel, even though that ribbon of light was stationary, just wrapped around his cock. Regardless of how the illusion worked, Neph gave a silly-sounding squeak and fired one volley after another of his potent ribbons of fox seed all over the leaves between himself and Ceriss, his release so hard he could feel it in the base of his bushy fox tail as he gripped it tight and obediently. He watched Ceriss’ cruel face soften to utter bliss as she climaxed again around Kaji’s thick, throbbing meat, still likely squirting inside her.

“Good boys, both of you.” She spoke in a slow, savory tone, and the true fox flinched a little as he opened his eyes to see that hers were glowing. She was drawing essence heavily from them both. She had not been kidding about needing their energy. He wondered to himself just what it was that they were going to have to face.

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“You seem like you have a lot on your mind, Luna.” Nita’s feathery tone shook the priestess from her musings. She looked back to the queen and smiled wistfully. Everyone was far better rested after a couple of days on the river. “Is everything alright?” Nita was very caring and obviously grateful to the priestess for doing all that she had to help her friends when they had been injured. The white-furred lady lupine sat up and spoke after a moment of reflection.

“It’s not a bad thing, no. I’m thinking a bit about where we are going. It’s somewhere I did not think I would be going so soon, and I know how much it would have changed, but to me it feels like I was just there a few months ago. I held onto my memories my homeland the most.” Nita put her hands in her lap and looked across the table to the priestess.

“Where are you referring to? The forbidden lands?” She spoke of areas that were completely under the dark one’s control. Luna shook her head slowly.

“No, not that specifically. I am referring to the temple where I used to live.” Nita perked her ears, regarding the robed priestess seriously.

“The Temple of Life? Do you think it still stands?” asked the Amanian queen. Luna leaned forward, resting her cheek on her hand, seeming comfortable and casual. In their respective terms, they were fairly equal in standing.

“That would be it. And enough still stands, I am sure, to suit our purposes. It’s not a place that travelers would generally happen upon by accident. One

must directly go there, and I think few would have reason. It would seem a small island in a very large, very cold, very deep lake. Without the essence that we used to have in such a vast quantity there, I suspect that place would have lost much of its greenery. The area would seem somewhat dead and dreary, but I am sure that the courtyard is still there and obvious. Much of the temple was destroyed when I attacked... When I attacked Vhale after Alps was cast into the Shadowfall. But the outside was likely left largely intact.” Nita smiled at that. It meant a lot to her that she would be married to Alps in his former home, broken though it may be.

“Actually...” A voice rang out from the other side of the open door. “Your temple is possibly in better shape than you remember.” Nita looked up, her heart racing a bit when she realized Vhale was standing there. Luna had just spoken of one of his worst acts.

“I am fully aware of how much damage I did trying to splatter your carcass all over my island, Vhale. I’d be surprised if anything still lived there.” Luna did not seem angry, however. She seemed to treat Vhale as if it were just a bit of a falling out they had, not the near genocide of their race.

“Actually you did kill every living thing but me.” He sat at the table to Nita’s right. The queen tensed up a bit. Luna seemed to forgive Mannus, but she did not. “You used a forbidden essence ability as a last hurrah, if you will.” The queen looked back to Luna, who did not seem fazed by the comment.

“Direct drawing, yes.” She answered a bit sullenly. “Certainly not proud of that one.” She leaned back, arms crossed. “And the effects were devastating. I saw the roof was missing and the back wall was crumbling before you even tossed me into the Shadowfall a moment later.” The green-furred lady lupine clutched the edge of the table. They were talking about an incident that even history had not recorded that was one of the worst day for the Letai. The fall of that temple represented the waning of their empire.

“What is direct drawing?” Nita asked curiously. She wanted them not to talk about killing one another.

“It’s one of the biggest taboos we have.” Vhale replied. “We are only allowed to draw the essence that the lifestream has pulled away from an individual naturally, charged by the mood that person is in to attract it to us. But it is possible, for some of the most powerful Letai...” Vhale paused, seeming to feel he had no place to really explain what Luna had done.

“I can draw the essence from someone that the lifestream has not worn away. It can harm living things, even kill them outright. It’s barbaric and unforgivable. Near the end, some of our taboos were broken pretty recklessly in our desperation. That was a pretty clear indication of when we actually lost. It

should have killed Vhale because I would be attacking him with his own remaining lifespan. But..."

"But I knew her capable of such a thing, and I had a seal on a crystal I was carrying that prevented my energy from being drawn. All she did was reduce every living thing on the island, and for a half mile along the edge of the lake, to ashes." Luna was crestfallen at that.

"So yes, I am well aware of what it must look like by now." The priestess frowned at that.

"Or what it would look like if I did not choose to live there for the remaining few months that the dark one continued the illusion that my cause was my own." Vhale shrugged at the stunned-looking Luna.

"You ... repaired the temple?" she asked incredulously.

"Not to say seven centuries have not just pushed it flat again, but as I stated, I lost something when I took stock of what happened that day, and I was no longer useful to the dark one after that. That's how I ended up in the Shadowfall myself. The push, for me, would have stopped there. What few Letai remained would have likely hunted me down, and when they caught me, I imagine that would have been the end if it were not for the dark one finally revealing himself and finishing the job I made so much easier for him."

"If it's likely flat anyway, why would we believe you did this?" asked Nita, voicing her opinion. Regardless of how misguided the Letai male was, he was still responsible for giving power to and bringing about the existence of the demon that took away so much from her. She would hold him accountable no matter how much they had to cooperate with him or her future life mate wanted to prove the grace of the Letai to him.

"You don't have to, but what good would it do to lie about that?" he asked Nita, seeming simply passively curious.

"Do gain favor with the priestess." Nita barked in a scolding tone. She had seen how much he seemed to try to be nice to her.

"And this helps me how?" he asked. Nita fumed. Was he daring to mock her?

"It helps you because her favor would give you power and make life after all this is done perhaps more comfortable for you." Nita growled. "I'd have you drowned in vomit if Alps had not decided to show mercy, just so you know." She was only getting angrier at the feeling that Alps had been fooled by Vhale's sad

story of folly and regret. Her lover was pure and kind, and meant well, but he did not understand what kind of evil he was dealing with.

“Nita, that does not help anything.” Luna of course supported her son’s decision, however misguided it might have been.

“It’s alright, she is right to hold ill feelings, but Nita, Luna finds peace in not loathing me. Feel as you wish, but do not begrudge her this step of her recovery for what I have done.” Sometimes Nita forgot that the monster was a scholar before things went to pieces.

“We are *not* on such a familiar standing that you can call me by name, Mannus, and I am not angry that you might have her fooled, I am spitting fire furious that you are taking advantage of Alps’ kind heart. I will still make sure you pay if you are responsible for any harm that comes to him.” The queen growled.

“Me harm him? Are you kidding?” He seemed genuinely shocked at the notion. Nita gritted her teeth.

“Not to belittle his contributions here, but his loving nature makes him what Nidaja would call a soft target.” She gripped the edge of the table.

“Your majesty...” Vhale said in a deeper, more serious tone, “... Has it occurred to you at all that Luna’s son scares the very life out of me?”

“Vhale, don’t...” Luna whispered. He held up a hand.

“For all the taboos that Luna has broken, no one has been exposed to the kind of darkness that Aris has.” Nita’s blood went icy. “Alps remembers little of his journey into the places beyond his Shadowfall, and that is a fortunate thing because he will have known things there worse than those we intend to face, and he took them on as a child of maybe seven summers. The nether does not spare your life like the Shadowfall does, Nita. You can be killed. You can be eaten. You can be torn to pieces by merely being there, and he came back. As a child.” Nita had known that the place Alps went would have been hard, but she had scarcely considered what it might take for him to survive it. She had always thought perhaps he had hidden until he managed to slip out, maybe having some close calls, but he was a child. He didn’t have the ability to actually fight there.

“Vhale, we don’t know what actually happened to him in there.” Luna voiced Nita’s opinion clearly.

“But I know what was waiting for him there. I got to see it when the dark one separated itself from me, in some of that creature’s memories. So Nita, before you consider the best way to punish my treachery, which I promise you will never come, I would take some time to try to figure out what you intend to do

to Alps when he finally remembers what it took to survive there, and what it means to live not as the hero of the story, but as the most powerful monster of it instead.” Luna jumped up but was not able to prevent Vhale from being cast hard into the wall, Nita’s blast was not a fireball but just a powerfully aided punch to the chest. She had never, in her memorable life been more furious.

“You don’t get to call *anyone* monster, Mannus. Especially not him!” she barked, and walked out, slamming the door behind her. She passed Mytan in the hall, who seemed deeply concerned, but did not dare speak up. She went out onto the balcony, down the stairs and along the deck of the river boat to the aft section and down into the belly of the vessel. There, as she knew he would be, was her ‘monster’. He was tirelessly heaving coal into the fire. He did not immediately notice her watching him, which was good since she was able to stop crying. She composed herself. His love was the most genuine, pure thing that she knew. He could not possibly be any different, even if he did remember having to do terrible things in the nether. That was not his life. This was. Soon, he would be bound to her forever, and she knew him better than anyone, she felt. But deep inside she wondered if he could really tell her about every wound he suffered. She had been aware that Chana was unkind to him, but he never spoke of the level of abuse until Nidaja saw it in his memories. Could he tell her when he was really suffering if he thought it would harm her to know? Would Alps suffer alone just to protect her? In her heart, Nita knew that he would.

As the boat puffed along, a newly trained Lira at the helm, Alps toiled on, acting very much like the young slave that Nita fell in love with, and her heart made it clear that no matter what was in Alps’ memories or what wounds she had yet to discover, losing her would not be a wound that would ever be added.