

I always hated the rain. Growing up, it always made me think some impending disaster was coming that I was helpless to stop. Nowadays, there was less dread, but having to wander the roads of Edinmire in the dead of night during a storm wasn't any more pleasant. Being stuck with little more than a light cloak didn't help the matter either. All that was forced into the realm of afterthought when I saw my destination before me. Riftwall, a lit beacon amidst the dreary blackness and swaying trees. With renewed vigor I hurried down the road and into the shelter of the tavern's balcony acting as a canopy for the front entrance. Taking a moment, I tried to brush as much water off myself as I could. I had to look at least somewhat presentable.

Opening the front door, my face was greeted by the sensation of warmth from the fireplace, and my nose the aroma of old pine wood that always set me at ease. She was nowhere in sight as I hung my coat on the rack. Still, I took my usual seat at the bar. Before long, I heard the familiar sound of paw pads coming down the stairs.

"Sorry we're-- Oh!" And there she was, Adria of Riftwall-- probably the only other person in Edinmire that worked as hard as I did. She always carried herself with an air of majesty whenever I saw her, walking with a slow, sensual, but majestic gait. Never griping, never pouting, just working on through it. That was something I had always aspired towards, but never really managed. As she stepped down those wooden stairs, my eyes found themselves scanning her every detail. Those thick raven black locks, and those eyes, deep sapphire and telling of years of hardship. Her grey fur was nature's canvas, her spots, the paint. The spots across her head forming an unseen headdress with them as the jewels. Across the fine white chest fluff, a line of spots forming a necklace with the central pendant being a heart shaped spot. She was by both human and keidran standards a thing of beauty. I had seen even the most unapologetic of keidran haters cast a gaze at her when they thought no one was looking.

"There's my favorite patron! You're in a tad late tonight." She said as she strode in behind the bar counter. "Yeah, the guard has me bustin' my back late this week."

"That's a bummer." She said as she turned to the cabinet, the dinging sound of glass lightly teasing my ears. In the brief moment I looked over at her, I caught myself staring at her backside hiked in the air, with her long, luxurious tail twitching about. "The usual?" She asked, head sticking out from the cabinet, and pointing to an empty glass in her hand.

"Huh? Oh! Yes! Please!" I said sputtering over myself trying to draw attention away from where my eyes had just previously settled. Had she seen my gaze? I couldn't tell for sure, since her expression didn't betray any hidden emotions of surprise or disgust as she opened the spigot on a barrel, and expertly poured its contents into the glass. With a nod, I accepted the slightly foamy beverage. The rich ale was a mercy on my parched throat.

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So, what have the guards got you doing this time?" She asked as she leaned on the counter, arms folded in front of her.

"They're determined to have the Shepard's Square Wall repairs done by the end of the month, including the busted statue." "Ouch, that's gotta be rough." The snow leopard winced. "Eh, I'll get through it. Just like you do." I said passively. The leopard quipped an eyebrow at me. "What do you mean?" "Well, I mean you're up to your neck in patrons every day, and yet you just keep on trucking. Always smiling, always nice, that's more than most could ask for." And right on cue, there was that lovely smile. "My, aren't you sweet?"

“Well yeah! I’m surprised you’re not married.” There was a slight glint in her eyes, like my words had dug up and old wound. Before I could mentally kick myself, she just sighed.

“There was Maeve’s father, but... ..that was more of a one night stand.” She said looking off to some random corner of the tavern. “We were both young, it was that time of the year, one thing led to another, but he ‘didn’t want to be nailed down’ as he worded it. He moved on, and I found out I was pregnant. Been juggling the tavern and my little Maeve ever since.”

I swirled my beer in its pint glass for a moment of contemplation. “Shame, he’s missing out.” I visibly recoiled as I realized what I had just unthinkingly said aloud in front of her. That eyebrow was raised once again, her eyes scanning for intent. “What?” Was all she asked. I took the confusion in her voice as my cue to call it a night. “Uh, sorry! That’s the beer talking! Boy look at the time! Gotta go!”

“Wha? Wait a minute!” She called out as I was throwing on my coat. My attempt at a hasty retreat however failed at the moment I undid the latch on the door. The door rushed to greet me, nearly smashed my nose and the wind pushed it into the adjacent wall along with a medley of leaves and rain. It was only with our combined effort that we were able to reclose the door against the howling wind.

“I don’t think you want to go out in that, the storm’s only gotten worse and I doubt it’s going to clear up until morning.” She reasoned. “So what do you suggest?” “Why don’t you stay the night? On the house, of course.”

“You sure?” She gave a nod. I could see the sincerity in her eyes. I didn’t have any reason to argue, it’d be more exciting than trudging through the storm only to be rewarded with being at home all by myself. As I sat back down to finish my drink, I noticed Adira digging through the cabinet again before procuring a green bottle.

“Now normally me cracking open a drink for myself would be breaking code with the tavern, but...” she paused “...these aren’t normal operating hours.” she mused as she poured herself a generous glass of red wine. And she wasn’t kidding about that. In the two years I had been going to the tavern, never once had I ever since her take a sip from anything on tap or from the shelf, not even under the goading of the other patrons. With the glass in hand, she did something else I had never seen her do: she took a seat beside me. “Wait, it’s not normal hours?”

“I had been closed for about twenty minutes before you walked in. I just forgot to lock the door before I put Maeve to bed.” She said with a welcoming grin. And with that, I learned of another of her virtues: patience. I took an idle sip from my glass. \_\_\_\_\_ “

“So, is it true?”

“Is what true?” She asked while raising her cup to her lips. “That you were here during the attack by the wolves.” “Ah, that. Yes, I was there for it.” She said as she looked upwards, recalling those events.

“Everyone was so excited. The tiger nomads had arrived in town, and there was even talk of finally abolishing Keidran slavery. And then... ..the wolves struck.” Her eyes cast down as her expression darkened

“I almost lost Maeve that day...and then she almost lost me.” There was no need to ask how deep her love for her daughter was, since her eyes were telling me all I needed to know.

“Ever thought about sending her off to a school? Maybe try and get her away from all this?” Adira just smiled before looking down at her glass, swirling the red liquid within.

“I wish it was that easy. In keidran years, she’d have already outgrown all her classmates by the time they graduated, nevermind getting them to let her in in the first place. And all the keidran academies are too far to the east to travel to.” She took another sip. “And even if I could, they’re run by wolves. They wouldn’t accept her, simply because she’s a girl.” She looked over and spotted the mild distress in my eyes.

“Don’t tear yourself up over it, she’s set to inherit the tavern when I pass. She’ll have a better chance at a decent living than most keidran in the human territories. And besides, it keeps her close by.” She said with a relieved sigh. I could accept that, especially after what the two had apparently been through. For a long while, we made small talk: chatting about the current climate between Keidran and humans; war threatening to march over the horizon; her taking care of Maeve by herself. Then, just as I was noticing my pint was nearly empty, she asked a question I had secretly been praying she wouldn’t ask. “So...about that thing you said before you got up in a huff.” She leaned in close, almost dangerously so.

“Did you mean it?” Her whisper was like an inquisitor’s knife. Did I mean it? Was it the beer talking? I looked at her. No, I knew better. I had barely taken five sips out of that glass at that point.

“Yeah, I meant it. Still do.” I heard something akin to a purr when she gave me a surprise kiss-- or the Keidran equivalent of one, as she ran her tongue across my cheek. A bit rough on the skin at first, but by the end it was kind of...enticing.

“I should show you where you’ll be staying tonight.” She said as she stood up and motioned me to do the same. Obediently, I followed her up the stairs. We passed more than a few doors before she stopped at the one at the very end of the hall. Producing a key that may have come out of her cleavage (I couldn’t tell from behind), she unlocked the door. Initially, I couldn’t make out any details in the darkened room besides the momentary flashes of lightning through the window (though fortunately no thunder). Then, she lit a candle. The room was much more spacious than I had expected-- fully furnished with a king sized bed, and a large white rug acting as a carpet for the floor. Then, I spotted the full sized body mirror, and it started to click. This wasn’t a room for patrons-- this was her room. And right on cue, the door clicked as she locked it behind her. With a much wider walk than she had used previously, she strutted up to me.

“You’ve been a kind soul. Allow me to show you exactly what ‘he’ has been missing.” And with a playful shove, I found myself sitting in one of the cushioned ebony chairs. Meanwhile, she was busy setting up a manaphone.

After a moment of tinkering with it, the room was filled with the sounds of soft rhythmic drums, the magic of the mana crystal making the sound as crisp as if the musicians were performing in the room. Grabbing a chair, she positioned herself in front of me. In a slow, smooth motion she swayed her arms to one side, then to the other. The move made one of her knees bend while her other leg was stretched to its maximum extension as she alternated between the two angles. While she was low, one of her claws looped into the top of her skirt. And then, when she began to rise back up with the rhythm of the drums, the skirt was pulled from her hips and fell to the floor. Even when Adira was fully dressed it wasn’t hard to get a decent view of her legs, but now nothing was left to the imagination. I took in the lovely sight of her slender but toned thighs, ending in generous hips.

She wasn’t going to turn and show the all goods just yet, though. This girl was going to give me a full show, as I was about to find out. Her hands didn’t stop with the rest of her body as they continued to

rise until she had them stretched to the ceiling in a “V” shape. Then, the song changed to something a bit faster paced, and with that change, she began a dance. Her hips were shaking at a speed I honestly didn’t think was possible. She was a graceful thing even when she walked, and that hadn’t changed when she danced. The way her legs and body glided from side to side was like a grey tide on the ocean. When she’d spin, I’d get a brief moment’s peek at her backside. It was hard to discern the fine detail in the blur of spots, but one thing I knew for sure, it was round, and there was some fancy underwear covering it. After a minute of her teasing dance, she stopped. Her grin renewed, she started to turn around. And with a slow sweeping motion, she brought her butt into view. My previous momentary observations were quickly confirmed-- it was the shapeliest thing I had ever seen. Adira’s tail complemented her backside perfectly with its mesmerizing swishing motions to and fro. Her undergarments of choice were a very stylish pair of black lace panties with lace floral patterns. Unfortunately, in my addled haze, I was less appreciative of it’s detail and more aware it was covering the other bits. I made a reach, wondering if maybe I could pull them down just a bit...

And was promptly met with a slap to the hand. Snapping my head back up, I met her gaze again from over her shoulder. She wasn’t mad, but she wagged a finger at me. “Not so fast, Mr. Voyeur.” She purred before her hand traveled up to her corset bindings. “There’s a method to the madness.” And with that, she undid the knot holding it all together, causing the fabric to sag off her body slightly. Her hands slowly came up in front of her, grasping the edge on the cloth that normally covered her chest and pulled down. Like a butterfly shedding a cocoon, the laced fabric split and fell at her feet, revealing the small of her back. I should have known the teasing would continue when she turned to face me, as one hand was strategically wrapped over her breasts. So close, and yet just out of reach. Her dance wasn’t finished either as she resumed her seductive shuffling back and forth to the music. Then, I noticed she had stopped, right in front of me. From my last attempt I knew not to reach, so I let my eyes drink her in. The slight squishing of her breasts from her hand, and that pink nose. Then, she hopped behind the chair out of sight. One part of my brain wanted to stand up, but the other knew this was all part of the show. Right on cue, one of her legs draped over my shoulder. Craning my neck back, I was able to catch a glimpse of her, leaning on the bed while she teased me with her appendage. Chest still covered, she gave a wave. This was all...not something I was expecting, nor what came next.

“No peeking.” She hummed. Humoring her, I looked straight forward again. Her leg disappeared, and was replaced by her tail, wrapping around my neck like a glorious scarf. But what truly had my attention, was the sensation against the back of my head. It was something soft, but at the same time a bit firm beneath that layer.

And then it dawned on me-- if Adira’s tail was all the way around my neck, then that meant behind me was... ..her behind. A strange revelation, but a pleasurable one. The rubbing of her butt on my head and neck continued for a minute before the warm pillow was pulled away along with her tail. She came back around from the opposite side, her back facing towards me. Her arms raised, and her hips starting shaking once again. Then, in one fluid motion, a few things happened all at once. She bent low-- lower than I had ever seen, her butt still gyrating. Then she turned while simultaneously rising back up and approaching the chair. When she stopped, there they were. After all that teasing, her chest was finally revealed, level with my eyes. What a sight that was-- those wonderful white orbs on display before me, with the pink flesh of her areola and nipples. She must have noticed my stupor of a stare as she giggled and jiggled her breasts a bit. It was hypnotic.

But the revelations didn’t stop there. Still in close proximity, she stood up and turned back around. Her hands grabbed her lace underwear. It was time for the final reveal. She pulled them down, her tail swinging with her hips as they were freed from their confines. The panties landed on one of her paws,

which she promptly hiked up and caused them to launch right in my face. I took a moment to free my eyes from the ornately designed undergarment-- I didn't want to miss the rest of the show. With her back side completely bare, her palm caressed the side of one of her cheeks before giving it a hearty slap, nearly causing me to jump out of my chair in surprise. Then, she took the other palm and held it on the other cheek, bring it in close and giving it a shake. I swear I could see her folds between the spread cheeks. I didn't have much time to dwell on what I was seeing, as she suddenly leaned back and thrust her butt against my chest. Once the slight reverberation ceased, she began to rub her posterior up, down, and across me, her tail occasionally teasing my face. It was strange, my mind kept subconsciously expecting the smooth feel of flesh, but was instead greeted by soft fur. I could smell her now that she was this close to me, with the most prominent scent being lavender. There was another fragrance hidden beneath, and it was almost pungent but not unpleasant. In a moment I began to realize it was the smell of her arousal-- was she marking me with it?

And just as quick as her display started, it abruptly ending as she suddenly knelt down, right into my lap. And just like that, she delivered a lick right up the front of my face. Her tongue was rough but not unbearable. And any lingered irritation immediately left my mind as she jiggled those glorious breasts right in my face

She draped her arms over my shoulders, and swatted me in the face with her locks. Not quite what I was expecting, but I wasn't about to argue with this kind of view before me. Those arms came around and pulled me close, her chest sandwiched against mine, and her head nuzzling against mine. Wrapping her arms behind her head, she leaned back and arched her back, bringing her chest in close. All the fur around her erogenous zones was conveniently "highlighted" in white against the rest of her silver fur. I reached out, my eagerness getting the best of me, but quickly remembered what happened before, and withheld it for a moment. My host was having no such thing as she immediately snatched my hand and placed it against her chest. "Don't be shy." She purred, wrapping her other hand around the first. "It's been a long time since I've been touched." She said, guiding my hands down her body. My fingernails grazing a nipple as I went down. Her sides, her hips, it was all on display for my curious hands to explore in its entirety. With minds of their own, my fingers slowly traced down, exploring every curve. The give of her supple flesh wrapped in the splendor of fur, what a wonderful sensation it was!

Even now I'm a bit bashful to admit, I found myself holding her by her rump more often than not in those few minutes of unabated exploration. That, and her glorious tail...there was only one natural response for such a luscious thing. Like a cat, I found my hand playing with the twitching appendage, occasionally and very deliberately scratching at its base, prompting a deep purr and more than a few moans from her. Meanwhile she enjoyed herself by rubbing her body against mine. After a time, she seemed to become more conscious that I was still in my clothes, and that would not do.

"Pity that only one of us is naked, no? We're going to have to fix that." She said as she gently pulled me to my feet...and promptly pushed me onto the bed. In haste, she undid the buttons on my shirt and discarded it onto the floor. Then, in a reversal, she began to undo my pants almost painfully slow. Before long though, her prize revealed itself, rising to attention. I have no clue how I measure up to a male keidran, but the smile on her face told me she wasn't disappointed as she pulled my pants all the way off. However, I wasn't quite prepared for what came next.

"Scoot back a bit, there's something I want to show you." Dutifully, I nudged back until my head was resting on the sumptuous pillows. Sitting on the edge of the bed, she brought her feet about level with my crotch. Before I could question her, she rested her paws on my erect member. Now the idea of a handjob was no foreign concept to me, but this was another tier entirely. The occasional feeling of claws gently brushing the tender flesh, soft pink pawpads making for a unique combination of texture

and stimulation. Despite the unusual method, the results were more than satisfactory as I found myself responding powerfully. My breathing starting to hitch and my body began to prepare for the finish as her toe made circles, teasing my engorged head. But then, she stopped her ministrations. A moan reflexively escaping my mouth at being denied release.

“Rather than let this go to waste on the sheets, let’s put it somewhere...proper.” She said as she crawled up the bed and over my chest. And in a moment, we simply looked at each other, before pulling each other in for a kiss, this one of the human-style that I was a bit more familiar with. Any doubts this was more than some simple peep show were long gone-- this was going to be something else entirely. We broke this kiss and looked each in the eye. No words, we both knew what came next.

With any sense of subtly having left out the window, I began to enter. A muff surrounded and covered in soft, sumptuous fur was a strange but pleasant change. However, I had more important priorities on my mind. Once I was halfway inside the velvety passage, I began thrusting. Claws found their way into my back as she gasped, arching her back in the process. Adira’s toes splaying in reaction to her sensory overload. I was in no better state at the sensation of her confines engulfing the entirety of my length. There was a pause before I pulled back out slightly, and drove right back in. The poor leopardess must have been longing for companionship for quite a while, as she was practically hanging onto me for dear life. At that moment, it didn’t matter what we were. Human, Keidran, we were both going at it like animals with reckless abandon. I thrustured beneath her while she oscillated her hips up and down the length of my shaft. A harmony of moans and cat-like noises flooded the room.

I don’t know how long it went on, maybe a few minutes, maybe half an hour. But eventually, I could feel it, that final heat building within. Bracing, I grabbed onto her hips and thrustured deep, lifting her off the bed slightly. Even with my load spent, I continued to thrust as best as my weary body would allow. She had pleased me, and I was to make certain she got hers as well. Fortunately, she wasn’t far off from where I had been. Biting into my shoulder, she let out a muffled screech, her insides clenched, and her body spasmed as her well-deserved orgasm wracked her body. As her body stilled, I gently placed her onto my chest. For a moment, she didn’t stir beyond her quiet breathing. Then, she cracked an eye open at me. A faint tender smile on her lips. I met it in kind as I brushed a stray lock out of the way of her face. They may not have been the right words, but I was going to say them anyway.

“I-“ But I was stopped by a finger covering my mouth. “Shhh, I know. Let’s not spoil this moment with words.”

And with that simple request, we laid there, her nuzzling against my chest. Our energy spent, we listened to the sound of the rain as I slowly drifted off to sleep with Adira in my arms. \_\_\_\_

I awoke to the sunrise antagonizing me through the window. With a groan I rose from my pillow. Was that all a dream? No, because this clearly wasn’t my room, or my bed. The space to my left was vacant. Adira must have gone downstairs already. Fetching my clothes off the floor, I followed suit. As I opened the door, my nose was greeted by the aroma of cooked sausage. As I walked down the stairs, I was greeted by the sight of a plate full of scrambled eggs and freshly cooked links. “Perfect timing.” Came a familiar voice from behind the bar.

“They just came off the burner.” Adira declared as she placed a cup of coffee by my plate. I was smiling like an idiot I’m sure. “Thank you.” “Of course.”

After a minute of eating we wound up making eye contact for a moment. Figured I might as well say it first. “Last night was... ..amazing.” I said softly.

“It’s been so long I’d forgotten the comfort of sharing a bed with someone.” My feline hostess replied meekly. Even though she was covered in fur, I could tell she was trying to suppress a blush. Seeing Adira like that was yet another first in this past twenty four hours of firsts. “So, where do we go from

here?" I asked, She looked off to the side "Hmm... Same time tomorrow?" Did she really mean it? I certainly wasn't going to decline her. Not with the way I felt about her. "Oh, sure! Of course!" I stammered. She merely giggled.

"Glad to hear it." She purred before she came in for a kiss. There it was again, that rough tongue.

However, I was getting used to it already. Perhaps I was even starting to enjoy it? It was then I heard the pitter patter of small padded feet coming down the stairs. Adira must have heard it too, and we both simultaneously snapped back up like nothing had happened, just as Maeve rounded the corner and hopped in one of the chairs beside me. "There's my little snowflake!" Adira chirped as she nuzzled her daughter and set her a plate. "Good morning Mommy!" She replied before noticing me. "Morning, Worker Man!" "Morning, Boss Lady. What's the word?" "I made three gold coins the other day!" she said beaming

"Good, good! Be sure to save up so you can buy nice things."

"Hang on, I'm gonna get some more coffee" Adira called as she walked out of sight. I had just went back to eating when Maeve jumped me with a question. "So what were you doing last night?" I nearly choked on my fork. Mind racing, I decided to play dumb. "What do you mean?" "Well, I kept hearing noises." Oh. crap. "I think it was...music?" the little snow leopard amended. There was my out "Oh! That was your mom showing me her manaphone! It's really nice!"

"Yeah, she's really proud of that thing." The little girl said as a matter of factly before whispering "It's kinda loud though."

"Yeah, I noticed." Laughing a bit nervously as Adira came back. The mother leopardess must have heard most of our conversation, since she gave me a knowing wink that I returned in kind.

And in that moment, I felt a possibility. I looked over at the two snow leopards, chatting away. Last night I had been let into the private life of a tavern keidran, and I was still there. And now, I was being given the option to take it further, to become more than just a one night fling.

Could we really become a...family? I looked over again, seeing the two smile at each other, a mother's tireless love for her child.

Yeah, I liked that idea.