

Gryph in the Gullet 4

Jayri could feel Olfrin wiggling around in his belly, limbs pressing out to massage his gut from within. He couldn't help but wag his tail and press his belly to the ground, contentedly soaking in the gentle waves near the shore. He exhaled long and deep, his frost breath forming a thin layer of ice on the surface of the water before having it break up under the current of a tiny wave.

“So tell me, Jayri, what's next for you?” Ceylon asked, still licking herself clean of the thick juices that coated her. She had gotten most of them off with the burst of fire and smoke she emitted, but there was still some clumps under her arms and in the base of her wings.

The dragon rolled onto his side and lifted his leg up high, exposing the gentle bulge in his belly as well as his moist nethers. “I don't know, really. You said you're going to see what you can do about getting me into the Vore House, so I guess that's my next great adventure. I can't imagine a whole lot of other things fulfilling me right now, not if I don't have a belly full of prey.”

Ceylon shook herself off before prancing her way into the water next to Jayri, her wings partially spread to keep from going too low and getting caught up in the surf. “Well, I still have a few friends I want you to meet. It was kind of dumb luck that you actually managed to meet Olfrin today, so that was nice, but there are so many more who I'm sure would love to see you. Like I said before, Lady Talba to the northeast of here would likely be curious to have you in her court. I'm sure Ilorek and Keran would enjoy investigating your unique body, and Venosa would have a fun time with you, if she would allow herself to be prey.”

His ears perked up and he grinned. “You have a lot of friends, do you?”

“I've been around a very, very long time. It's hard to not make friends when you've been traveling the world as long as I have been. Yes, I have many friends and acquaintances all over the world of all races. Who knows, some might love you. Though he has no interest in vore, Vaulix would likely be a great friend, and he lives in Arrenthen with Talba. You know, that place I keep trying to make you visit.”

“You want to go to Arrenthen? Why not just stay here and relax? I've enjoyed our night together. We've tried a lot of things and you've helped me be comfortable with my certain interests. You've helped me realize my own self-value, and for that I appreciate it.” Jayri cooed, his head lowering to just above the water's surface as his wings splayed out in a show of submission or bashfulness. Ceylon couldn't quite tell.

She shrugged and clicked her beak. “Well, it's not so much about what I want. I usually just want to be left alone, or cuddle with Leera, but when I see an opportunity to help someone, I do what I can. From the moment I met you, I kind of knew that you were the kind of person who would flourish under my influence. Besides, I always love to help people out with similar interests. If you were an aggressive, nasty dragon who preferred hurting others, we would have gotten into a fight. I don't appreciate bully types.”

A gentle churr escaped Jayri's gullet as he smiled. “I'm glad to hear that. I don't like those types either. I don't like fighting or conflict, but my size has allowed me to stand up for myself in times when I wouldn't have been able to in the past. When I was young and tiny, I used to get picked on all the time; now I'm bigger than most and few like starting problems with me. It's a great deterrent and a great way to enjoy all the noms!”

Ceylon leaned in close and rubbed her beak against his neck fluff, preening and nipping the fur with a series of gentle hoots. “Well, I wouldn't worry about it. We all find our place in this world, and I'm pretty sure you'd make for a great predator.” She brought a single talon up to caress his shoulders as she continued. “But I have to ask, how is it that you knew you were into vore if, before me, you didn't have access to the magic or potions needed to make your body habitable to prey?”

The dragon lowered his head and flattened his ears to his skull. “It's kind of complicated, really. A combination of swallowing air, some biological components similar to your friend Leera's, and a peculiar ability to actually consume while offering them reborn. I don't know the details of it, but after enjoying a meal, that person can come back at a later time, as if nothing happened. I'm really not sure, but it works.”

“So you eat them, digest them for their nutrients, but also absorb their life essence to recreate them later? I didn't even know that was physically

possible.” She marveled, rubbing her beak and glancing off into the distance, hypnotized by the dancing reflection of the moon off the water's surface. “Very, very interesting.”

Jayri slapped at the water, trying his best to distract Ceylon from her deep thoughts. He wasn't ready to talk at length about that element of his anatomy, at least not in depth. “Oh stop it, you. It's not as bad as it sounds.”

She dismissively waved him off. “No, this is very, very interesting. This might actually help us with the research we've been doing into the soul, the spiritual, and the astral plane. Long have we held a belief that a person's life essence lived on after death, at least for a while, but there's been no proof of it until now since we never had a vector for testing it. Even we dozen, with all our seemingly infinite power, were never able to bring a person back from the dead.”

“But I-”

“Listen, Jayri, I know you're shy and bashful, but I really think the world would be made better if you let us experiment on you. Find out how you do that, and if we can recreate it.”

“I am not sure I-”

“Don't worry, we won't hurt you. We're not gonna be pulling an autopsy on your body or extract your tissue samples. No, we just need to witness your soul rending and re-attaching to a new body. We have to see it, to feel it, and to understand it. If you do this, it will make vore more interesting and engaging for everyone. You won't just be at the vore house, you'll be above it!”

Jayri kept trying to poke himself in so he could cut Ceylon off, but kept getting dismissed and ignored. When she finally finished, he slapped a paw down on the water with a bit more force and anger than he intended, even if he knew he needed to be stern. “I don't want people experimenting on me. I'm not a lab rat, m'lady.”

Ceylon stopped in her tracks, clamping her beak shut as she lowered her head and ears. “Are you sure? I mean, you're technically being

experimented on right now. In your belly, Olfrin is taking samples of your fluids and tissues for experimentation later.” She leaned into Jayri and grabbed a this lower jaw, forcefully opening his mouth to expose the quivering throat flesh that led to his belly. The gaped position of his skull opened his gullet to his belly, where Ceylon could see Olfrin inside.

That's when Olfrin gave a thumbs up and smiled, her cheek pressed tight against the open throat flesh.

Immediately, Jayri closed his mouth up and shook his head, the black and orange frills on the back of his neck standing on end. “I know, I know, but it doesn't make me comfortable knowing you're probing into my most intimate and personal functions. I just, I like being special. I've never met another that can do it, and I want to remain the only one.” He lowered his head a bit as he blushed, eyes glistening with what seemed like tears welling up.

“Oh, it's not like that, we're not going to force you into it, but I do wish for you to reconsider. If we were able to learn to emulate your skill, we can assure you that we would be the only ones to do it. Talba, Vaulix, Olfrin, Leera, Illorek, the others, and myself. Twelve people in all the world. We're the only ones who have the transformation ability and magic powerful enough to properly emulate your skill. Even if others knew how, they wouldn't be able to. Does that help?”

Jayri shrugged, his big wings splashing in the water on either side of his body. “I suppose so. I really don't like the idea of being a science project, though. I just want to-”

“You want to make people happy? Precisely. Imagine how happy you'd make the world if you were able to share your gift. Not by allowing others to do it, but imagine you have a sick or elderly bloke who's body is breaking down and can't survive much longer. Imagine if we could tweak your ability to allow you to refresh their body to match their spirit. Imagine if you were able to be the ultimate healer where even the world's nurse-mages failed? Imagine you had the key to eternal health where both science and magic cannot control. Just imagine it.” She leaned up close to Jayri and raised both a hand and a wing, as though she were painting a picture into the sky. “Imagine it.”

There was an awkward pause of silence as Jayri shuffled in the water. He knew she was right, that he potentially had a skill unlike anything else in this world, but at what cost? He could bring certain happiness to the world, but at what cost? In fact, there was no way the cost wouldn't be too high. As he thought about it and fantasized about a world where he was able to give people their health back after sickness ravaged their body, he came to realize one very important thing.

His abilities would be far too easy to exploit. "But what happens when some rich king or dictator finds out about what I can do? Wouldn't that create some sort of power struggle between nations? Would people have to pay for it? Who determines who gets my services? I just...I can't do it Ceylon. I'm sorry, but I just can't allow that sort of power struggle. Too much conflict." He plunged his head under the water and covered it with his front paws, bubbling up bits of frosty pockets of air from between his wrists.

But Ceylon was expecting this, so she reached below the water to raise Jayri's head so they could look at one another. "It's fine. Tell ya what, we'll keep it to ourselves. Others won't know. It'll just be the twelve of us. We won't share it, but we could definitely use it in the future, should we need to replace our bodies."

"Why do you get to learn and take advantage of my skill? Why can't you share your gift of immortality with me and have me live eternal next to you all?"

"That is a good question, Jayri. One I am not permitted to answer on my own. In order to permit such an invitation, I'd need unanimous agreement from the others, and I doubt that would happen. I know Olfrin and Satsierra both, neither would be too keen on sharing. That said, your first step is to convince Vaulix. He's the ambassador to the group, and the most likely to feel the compassion and empathy you do. If you can convince him of your sincerity and desire to help, then you have a much easier time convincing the others of your honesty."

It was kind of clear at this point that Ceylon was actively trying to cater to Jayri's desires, but it was hard to not see it from the gryphon's perspective. Jayri had a lot to offer – be it in the role as a predator to those

who just want to have fun and also as a conduit for one's soul to be reborn. One way or another, he had to offer his services to the world.

With great hesitation, he sighed in defeat. "Fine. I will happily offer myself and my skills to you, but in exchange I want some of that immortality you and the other deities possess. Is that possible?"

"It is. Come on, it's late. If we fly to Arrenthen, we might get there before sunrise. If we land while the moon is still in the skies, we'll avoid any panic of scaring the locals. Lots of felines and avians who fear dragons invading at night. The Tehgolian nation is mostly dragons, and those two countries don't really get along. So, that said, probably best to not mess around with it. We should get going." Ceylon then leaned in and spread Jayri's maw open wide. Just before diving in, she was stopped.

"Hey, what are you doing?" Jayri protested, snapping his jaws shut.

"You're bigger than I am. You likely fly faster so it'd make the most sense to have me curled up in your belly with Olfrin. Once inside we can communicate telepathically so I can guide you to Castle Arrenthen. Deal?"

Jayri slowly nodded as he twiddled his thumbs, looking bashful. "Can we have another round of fun times first, though?"

Ceylon couldn't help but laugh. "When we get to Arrenthen, okay? Man, you really are insatiable. Tell me, Jayri, how are you still horny after twice with me and once with Olfrin?"

Jayri blushed, but was unable to answer the question. Instead, he stirred in place as he churned over the proposition he was given. It was clear he was eager and excited but also had a bout of apprehension. He wanted to enjoy another meal of the gryphon - his belly could certainly hold her - but he still wasn't entirely sure if it was a good idea to head to Arrenthen just so he could be experimented on. In his mind he had to weigh out the good and the bad.

After only a few moments of self reflective thought, he realized that it would be selfish to not offer what he could to the world, and since his generosity would come with a pre-flight meal, he couldn't help but take advantage of the situation. Her question of his continued arousal made

him stir in the loins, but he instead opted to forego his sensual treats for a simpler pleasure.

He churred gently before standing straight up on all fours, wings splayed out to flap lightly, tossing droplets of water in all directions in order to dry the fur and membranes off. He stood tall, maw open and a billowing cloud of frost erupting from either side of his jaw to dance in the night sky around his horns. The dragon reared up on his hind legs and roared mightily before slamming down to make two splashes with both his front talons. When he glared intensely at Ceylon, he smiled and winked to show he was playing before lunging forward and engulfing her from beak to shoulders in one bite.

She squawked and flailed about with her wings splayed out and feathers bursting in all directions. She clawed and scratched while splashing in the surf before calming down a bit, accepting her fate. The glowing blue and black marbled flesh squeezed her beak shut, the muscles swallowing gently as his maw spread and teeth clamped down between her wing shoulders. As he extended his neck forward, his powerful jaws squeezed her front legs tight to her chest, his tongue massaging her throat with each attempted swallow.

Ceylon chuckled and kicked at the air as he lifted her high, aiming her tail end to the sky to let gravity slide her form down his gullet. Rather than resist, she pulled all her limbs in tight to her body and extended her neck downward into his gullet, allowing him to gulp her down, one swallow at a time. The gryphon wriggled and snaked her way through into his belly, chirping excitedly as her beak found Olfrin inside. The glowing walls slid over her, illuminating the ridge of her beak and the slick skin of her aquatic friend.

Olfrin shifted about and grabbed her shoulders, pulling her into the dragon's belly so they could cuddle up next to one another, both doing a tandem flip until both were nestled with hindquarters and tails curled up around, Olfrin nestled in Ceylon's protective wing. They couldn't speak to one another due to the lack of air, but their telepathy allowed them to communicate with ease.

"Welcome to Jayri. Please keep your wings folded around me and enjoy the ride." Olfrin joked as she nuzzled up into the gryphon's side, the soaked feathers and fur sticking to her slick, rubbery skin.

Both allowed the gooey mess of Jayri's insides to smother them, his gently shifting walls squeezing around them and pinning their bodies together. Ceylon nuzzled into Olfrin and snaked her tail up through the dragon's throat, tickling his gullet enough to make him cough.

"Hey, stop that!" Jayri protested as he hacked up flecks of glowing saliva into the water, his wings twitching with each cough.

"We have places to be, dragon! Now fly! Take to the sky! May you be forever high!" Ceylon sung to him, her voice chirping in his mind. She wanted to urge him forth while also conveying her desire to be pleasant and kind to him. The gryphon both wanted and needed him to go to Arrenthen if he was to subject himself to her experiments, and there he could teach Ceylon and the others the way of the soul conduit. Very useful for them, but also a great way to teach him how to utilize his skills to the greatest possible benefit.

Luckily, Jayri remained in good spirits, so he did as he was asked and spread his wings, hopping through the surf, over the sand bar, and onto the peninsula next to the palm trees before bursting into the sky. He flipped in midair, caught the slightest of cool drafts, and soared in a semi-circle around the land before gaining enough altitude to glide. Below him, the yellow-grassed plains spread out in every direction. To the south, the mountain ranges and plains; to the north, the great western branch of the TriQuatic lakes.

More flapping, and he rose to the level of the low-hanging clouds that dotted the otherwise clear night sky. The cool blue light of the moon illuminated his wings as he spread them wide to catch as much air as he could. His belly was heavy with both Olfrin and Ceylon, but his large powerful wings were more than capable of keeping him aloft, even if it was a little exhausting.

"Okay, so keep flying along the southern shore of the lake. When you get to the vector where all three lakes meet - easily identified by the thin strait between them surrounded by tall cliffs and mountains - that's when you

cross to the northern shore of the eastern lake. Follow that until the northern bay. That bay has a river that flows from the lake that the castle rests on. Very easy."

Jayri shook his head in confusion. "Wait, what? How can you tell all this? How long will this take?"

Olfrin butted in before Ceylon could respond. "Don't worry about what Cey here can see or understand. She knows her way around Talba's kingdom and the central continent. Eastbound on the south shore of the western lake, then when you hit in the middle, transition to the north shore of the eastern lake. Great bay with a river flowing into it. Follow the river. Come on, it's easy!"

The great dragon huffed and belched a cloud of frost in frustration, accented by a drawn out sigh. "I'm not familiar with these lands, forgive me."

"There's nothing to forgive, Jayri. We're just being silly. No need to be upset. Just keep following the shore for now and we'll let you know when something needs to change. For now, we're comfortable curled up here. Through the mental link we've both bridged to one another, we can see what you see, and we can guide you."

Knowing they were confident in their navigation, Jayri sighed and followed the instructions.

Nearly an hour passed before they reached the vector where all three lakes met. The northern lake was high in the mountains, with a waterfall cascading over a series of steps strung together by a wide, powerful looking river that coursed through the highlands. At one point, it split between a tall cliff that sliced the river in half, one side going to the western lake, the other half feeding the eastern lake.

Ceylon insisted that Jayri take a moment to rest after a long, drawn out flight. They landed on the top of the sharp cliff that split the river, so he could see all three lakes in all their glory from one place. It was a beautiful sight, with the cool moon rippling off the gentle surface of the northern lake. He opened his maw to capture some of the billowing mist that the

waterfalls created before spreading his wings and following along the northern shores of the eastern lake.

The rest of the trip didn't take nearly as long. As it turns out, the great bay was only a half hour's flight from the vector. From there, the rest of the flight was literally a breeze. The gentle gust of the wind was flowing northbound off the slope of the mountains that lined the opposite end of the lake, so it carried him over the river that snaked its way through the Arrenthen jungle.

Jayri's keen eyes could see a tall black and gold castle jutting out above the trees on the crest of the horizon to the north. Ceylon assured him that was Castle Arrenthen, and that was his destination. The moon was nearly down, but the night still had a few hours left in it, so he pumped his wings and angled himself down so that he could skim along the tree tops the rest of the way, no longer bothering to follow the path of the river below him.

He flapped hard to gain altitude again so he could enjoy a good vantage point of the castle, its courtyard, and the city that surrounded it. Right down the middle lie a large scar of nothingness that connected the castle to a nearby lake. There were bridges and some buildings lining the open space, but to him it looked like a landing strip.

"Yeah, that's actually the marketplace. Talba likes to keep people as close to her castle doors as she can, so the biggest social gathering is within range of her at any time. People bring their carts and wares to the marketplace and keep the strip clean for easy transportation. It also works great for flyers to have a place to rest their feet. Land there by that bridge with the little cart next to it." Ceylon instructed.

"If you say so, captain." He angled his wing tips to the side to glide in a circle before lining himself up with the strip. He soared over the castle and descended quickly, briskly flapping before landing heavy. The dust blew out from under him as he flutter-hopped and came to a stop. Next to him, a pudgy red and blue avian merchant with purple bands around his head plumage flipping patties. He stopped what he was doing to glance over at the large blue and yellow dragon, but then shrugged and carried on with his work.

“Good evening, my friend.” He commented as he sliced a bun in half. He wasn't phased by the sudden landing of the massive dragon. “You hungry for an early morning snack?”

Jayri spun his head around, nearly hitting the man's cart as a thin stream of cool frost billowed out of his nostrils. He smiled and went to answer, but felt a belch coming along so he turned away and lowered his snout to the ground to release the burp. Bashful and ashamed of his outburst, he covered his face with his paw as he answered. “N-no thank you, I'm pretty full as it is.”

Ceylon and Olfrin both started writhing about in his belly, causing his abdominal walls to shift and slide out against their forms. This made the sandwich vendor glance over in confusion, then shrug. It wasn't his place to judge.

“You could probably let the two of us go in the river under the bridge so we can get cleaned off, Jayri.” Ceylon insisted, her tail sliding backwards up his gullet to tickle the back of his throat.

Again, the dragon coughed against the invasive tail before he hopped over the short stone wall to land at the shore of the gently babbling brook; he hobbled over to under the bridge for solitude. There, he gaped his maw open wide like a snake before a powerful contraction squeezed his belly, forcing the two inside him to shift and slide about. They both came feet first up his esophagus – Olfrin first - to slide down his tongue and land in the water with a dull splash. The creek was maybe half a meter deep, so it was very shallow and gentle. Next came Ceylon, her soaked feathers glistening in the moon light.

“You two get cleaned, I'm going to head back to the strip there. Get myself acquainted with the area.” He then turned and climbed back up the embankment to hop over the stone wall again, leaving the two prey in the water to clean themselves.

“That was fun, eh?” Ceylon commented as she got to all fours and aimed her head upstream. The gryphon lowered her body flat so that she water was flowing over her, cleaning her of Jayri's bioluminescent slime as she shook and poofed her feathers out.

Olfrin had a much easier time due to her skin being smooth and rubbery. The fluids slid right off her with the help of a bit of water. “Yeah, more fun than I expected. Comfy, cozy. No idea what makes you love it so much, though. Nice novelty, but not really sexually exciting.”

“You say that now, because you haven't had someone kiss you so deeply you disappear into them. You say that now, because you haven't had someone go down on you so deep that they disappear into you. You've been swallowed once and carted around in his belly to another location. That's not the fun part. You should have enjoyed yourself while inside. The walls of a belly – or other orifice – smothering your whole body is like an all-encompassing orgasm!” She lifted her front talons to the sky and spread her wing in a pop as she said 'orgasm'.

“Well, I guess so. Makes sense, but I'd need more experience before I can say one way or another what I think about it. Try anything once. Test twice more.” She declared. That was one of her many mottos, what she felt to truly enjoy everything the lands had to offer. Done, she hopped up to the bank of the river and glanced up over the stone wall to see another dragon descending down on the strip.

This dragon was green, with yellow and red frills down its back and a nasty rack of horns atop its head. At first she thought it was perhaps another night time arrival, but he kept descending, and as he got close to where Jayri and the others were, he extended his claws out forward as though he were a bird, hunting.

Jayri was watching the whole time, tail swishing and ears flicking. He didn't realize until it was too late that this smaller dragon was in an aggressive mood. At the last second, he turned to dive out of the way of the oncoming saurian, only to be hit in the side at full force and knocked over. The two dragons tumbled around until Jayri hit the stone wall, breaking a portion of it to crumble into the water. “Hey, what the hell's wrong with yo-”

He was cut off by a loud roar accompanied by the other dragon standing over him with mouth open wide and an orange glow emanating from his gullet. A second later, a powerful stream of sizzling magma-like fluid burst from two glands in his cheeks.

Jayri was quick to respond with his own intense frost breath. He growled and roared back as he blew a concentrated stream of his counter-magic back. The two extremes mixed and caused a burst of steam and frozen magma chunks to splatter over one another in a glorious mess before Jayri kicked the attacker off and rolled to his feet. "I don't wish to fight, what are you doing?"

The other dragon didn't respond, instead he leapt forth with maw wide and claws bared to attack. He landed on Jayri's side, only to have the larger dragon flip his wing out and knock him off. Still, the tenacious saurian pounced back again and again, always being deflected.

It was clear that Jayri didn't want to fight, since he wasn't attacking back and was doing little more than to stop the aggressive dragon from attacking him. Both were large, but Jayri was larger, and could have easily destroyed the aggressive one if he so chose. After an attempt at his throat, Jayri's self control melted away as he blasted a powerful wave of frost breath at the dragon, temporarily freezing him in place before he tackled him, slamming him to the ground with one talon, the webbing between fingers holding his neck in place.

The fight looked over, until a glow started to build under Jayri, followed by another explosion that made him soar away and land on his back on the bridge Ceylon had been washing under. A split second later, as Jayri was still trying to get to his feet, the other dragon kicked himself up and into a leaping pounce, only to be stopped in midair and knocked away by an invisible force. He slid back in the dirt before shaking himself off and getting up for another attack.

That's when Ceylon revealed herself from under the bridge and shook her head slowly. "Come on Dolus, you should know better than that." She chastised the dragon.

"Ceylon? What are you doing here? Why didn't you..." Dolus shook his head and lowered his frills in shame. "I'm so sorry, I didn't realize you were an ally." He lowered his upper body in a bow.

Jayri got to his feet and shook himself free of dirt before glaring at Dolus, the corners of his mouth parting ever so subtly to let a stream of mist billow out. "You know, you could have just asked instead of blindly

attacking. You're lucky I'm not the aggressive type." He threatened, then snapped at the air with his chops, teeth bared.

"I said I'm sorry. I didn't know. You were with Ceylon and....I don't know who the noise is." He looked over to Olfrin and raised one of his ears. "But she's a cutie."

"That's Olfrin, one of my eternal allies. Anyway, there's really no point in arguing much here, we should probably head out." Ceylon advised.

Olfrin disagreed. "Actually, it's pretty late. I bet she doesn't want to be bothered. Should probably stick around here until morning."

"Or we can just go use the guest chambers. Her castle can fit Jayri, I think. Plus the guards know us." Ceylon countered.

Dolus and Jayri were both too busy apologizing to one another to participate in the discussion, so the four of them decided to spend the hours until dawn on the bridge over the brook.

The four of them all sidled up next to one another on the arch bridge, the quadruped dragons laying their chins on the soft stone of the barrier, while Ceylon and Olfrin both rested their heads on their arms.

"So tell me, Dolus, what brings you to Arrenthen?" Jayri asked as he glanced over. He was purposely avoiding eye contact with the other dragon because of the scuffle they had gotten into. Adrenaline was still coursing through his veins and the chill of his frost breath was tickling his cheeks.

Dolus smiled and chirped back, trying his best to douse the flames of potential conflict between them. "Actually, that's kind of a long story. Few months ago, I finally got out of my shackles under my master. I traveled the world, eventually settling in Klyneth where I was introduced to Ceylon."

"Klyneth? I know that place! I was there recently as well!" Jayri spoke up, neck frills standing on end.

"Yeah? Well it is the capitol of the free world. Anyway, while there, Ceylon and his lady friend Leera took me in and taught me many things about

magic, science, and other certain pleasantries. I was there for a while, but when they said they had to go on a business trip, I was instructed to head to Arrenthen. The queen here has a coin bank to rival any nation in the world, so she was able to fund my future research. So, of course I used my friendship with this gryphon here to foster a relationship with the Royals of Arrenthen!"

Ceylon scoffed and flicked her ear in annoyance. "Really? You used my name as a way to wiggle yourself in here? You could have just asked, you know. also, when did that translate into you defending the castle with such vigor? Last I saw you, you weren't exactly the aggressive type."

Dolus smiled a bit, ignoring Ceylon's disgruntled tone. "Actually, I was asked to keep an eye out overnight. Talba said she'd be happy to fund my research, but she would expect some sort of compensation for her coin. I offered her my services, and she said this was how she could use me, at least for a month while much of the army is on the northern border between her and Tehgol. Something about a border dispute, could turn into an armed conflict. She says not to worry, but she still needs some extra muscle and magic here at the castle. Since I'm able to live on minimal sleep due to my ademane, That makes me perfect for night watch!"

"I guess you aren't wrong, but it still feels weird with you in such a role. You and I both know your magical skills are quite volatile. You nearly scalded poor Jayri here." Ceylon reprimanded him. "But I guess it's okay now. Still not an okay thing to do, though."

"Sorry." He apologized, hanging his head. He only kept his snout hanging over the side of the bridge for a few moments before perking back up, not letting the shame get the better of him. "But we're all here now! Tell me, what brings you three here?"

Jayri puffed out his chest and stood tall. "Well, actually, we're here for a somewhat similar reason. I hear the Queen has the resources to help investigate my unique ability to store and repurpose people's life essence. I can actually absorb a person's body and soul, then give birth to them anew, and I guess Ceylon and Olfrin both want to learn how to emulate it for future generations!"

"Sounds admirable! So, you're a lover of vore, as well?" Dolus inquired, sidling up closer to Jayri.

"Why else would I have been in Klyneth? I was trying out for the Vore House as an employee. One of their revered predators!"

Dolus chirped again, raising all his frills and one of his eyebrows. "Wait, that's a real thing? I thought it was a joke, or an elaborate prank."

Ceylon slipped in closer to Dolus and nuzzled her shoulder to his. "You sure? I thought I told you about that place. My mate Leera is the one who runs the place; she and her naga companion Yetzer have been running what is essentially a whore house for lovers of vore. Pred and prey alike."

"Oh, I remember you telling me that, but it sounded so outlandish that I didn't think it could possibly be real. Is there an actual market for that kind of thing? Do people actually pay coin to...well, you know. Be eaten? I can't imagine that went over all that well for the first little while. I know it's safe, but I doubt most people do, so no amount of curiosity would actually entice people to give it a shot." He was making motions with his hands, manipulating the air before him as though he were putting pieces of the puzzle together.

Rather than let him go on, Ceylon placed her talons on his to stop him. "It's real, and it's quite popular. Niche, sure, but they're very good at what they do. People who have that...peculiar interest....literally come from across the globe to try it out. It's such an outlandish thing that it has the benefit of novelty as well as sensuality. So yes, it's real, it's successful, and it's a lot of fun."

"I just...I didn't realize that there was enough of a market for such a thing. Seems quite silly, doesn't it? I mean, I like it, but there are always people out there who enjoy even the strangest things." Dolus stuttered, clearly a little uncomfortable talking about his very personal interests.

That's when Olfrin decided to pipe up, since she likely had the most outside-looking-in view. "No, it makes sense to me. We live in a world where science and magic both can work together to create and live one's fantasies. If we have the ability to help as many people as we can live out

the most outlandish fantasies we can, why wouldn't we? Especially when coin is on the table."

"Makes sense, it just seems like such a niche subject matter. I never thought it would be enough to have an entire subculture or business model after it. Good for you guys, though. I might have to partake once or twice in the future; I can certainly afford it!" He grinned and rattled his neck frills with excitement, teeth bared.

"Well, well, well! If it isn't the Nom Squad!" A voice came from down the strip. When the group all turned to see who it was coming from, they saw it to be Queen Talba Ebonoldty of Arrenthen, flanked by two massive - but still smaller than her - equine guards in heavy armor. "So a little birdie tells me you're here to dip your toes in my bank again, are ya?"

Dolus lowered his chest to the ground, frills flattened to his spine. "Your highness! I'm sorry to have woken you!"

Ceylon and Olfrin both glanced sidelong at one another and rolled their eyes. They were as royal to one another as Talba was, so they felt no need to bow. Jayri, on the other paw, emulated Dolus by nervously lowering himself as well.

"I apologize, your highness. This was my fault, I should have made it more clear I came in peace when I landed!" He apologized profusely, a gentle whimper accenting his voice.

The queen stopped in her tracks and laid her hands on her hips, tail raised in agitation and ears flattened to her skull. She seemed genuinely angry to the point her two guards knelt behind her with polearm weapons raised in a defensive pose. "So, let me tell you a story about the Jade Empire here. Once upon a time there was a queen who wanted nothing more than to sleep in on her weekends. She was a good queen, a generous queen, and a kind queen. Then, one morning while she was comfortably curled up around the king, she hears a screeching growl followed by a clash of claws and a bellow of two dragons."

"Your Highness, I-" Dolus started, only to be cut off when Talba raised a hand and snapped her fingers.

“And so she wakes up to see my loyal dragon mount here in a tussle with a foreign dragon. Now, her first thought is as it should be. She is glad to see that her saurossin ally here is defending the castle as he should. But then, she focuses her groggy eyes to the twin titans and sees something familiar. She sees another pair of allies standing next to the bridge, just watching. Now, the queen has a few options she can imagine to be true in this situation. Either she lets them fight and hopes that her steed does his job, or she comes out to attend to the issue herself.”

Jayri chattered and pressed his chin to the ground even harder, covering his skull with both hand paws in shame. He didn't know what he could say – if anything – that would rectify this great offense he offered the queen. He knew he had something to offer her, but dare not interrupt her tirade.

Behind the two dragons, Ceylon and Olfrin remained standing tall, each with a grin on their faces as they listened to their friend's long-winded rant.

“Furthermore, she decides the best course of action is to get dressed and have a couple of guards accompanying her to the site of the tussle. She certainly could have just sent her allies out to take care of the situation without her, but instead she decides that it's best to see it herself. After all, her husband wants to sleep, and many of the royal knights are deployed north. And what does she get? Two stupid friends of hers who couldn't be bothered to give her a damned hug!” She slipped in between the two dragons to grab at Olfrin and Ceylon, pulling them in together for a three way embrace. “Seriously, you couldn't have just come to the gate? You both are always welcome in my home!”

Both Jayri and Dolus squeaked in confusion as the queen stepped between them, glancing nervously at each other with their heads still pressed tight to the ground.

Ceylon fluttered her wings gently behind her as she was squeezed tight, her tail swishing back and forth against the hippogryph royalty. “We know, just thought it would be a little more dramatic, and like the other two, we didn't want to wake you!”

“I'm not much of the jungle type.” Olfrin confirmed, idly pushing herself away from Talba. The hippogryph was a head taller than she, but they

were still both quite large compared to most. “So yeah, Castles are kinda boring unless it's underwater. When's the last time you came to my keep?”

Talba held her at arm's length and clicked her beak. “You know I can't breathe underwater like you can. Would be very difficult.” When she was done chastising the aquatic one, she then turned back to Jayri and Dolus, walking between them before kneeling down and placing a hand on each one's head. “You two can stop bowing now. Come on, let's get out of here. I'm tired and I'm sure you are, too.”

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The group collectively made their way inside. To Jayri's delight, the walls and ceilings were high and wide enough to accommodate his massive size. Most places had walls that were three meters high at most, but Castle Arrenthen had five meter tall ceilings, ten in the main hallway. This was perfect for him.

Inside, they all parted ways. Olfrin and Ceylon went to the normal sized guest room, Dolus returned to his own quarters in the tall tower overlooking the kingdom, and Talba returned to her chambers. Jayri was planning on going to his own room next to where Ceylon and Olfrin were headed, but his neck fur was grabbed by the queen and dragged down the hall with her.

“M-my queen?” Jayri stuttered, not sure what to do, but lacking the fortitude to resist her allure.

“Come with me, dragon. Now, I'm sure by now you know who and what I am. I'm more than a queen, and like your friend Ceylon there I can communicate nonverbally in a way unlike most. While we were walking, she and I had a nice, long chat telepathically, and I'm very well educated in what you are capable of doing and what you plan on doing.” She kept a tuft of his hair as she lifted her talon to her door handle, kicking the gates open to show her chambers. “But I am not a Queen of passivity. I expect a demonstration, or at least a pledge of your allegiance, same as Dolus.”

Jayri blushed and tried to hide his eyes. “C-Ceylon referred to me as a friend?”

She spun and grabbed both his furred cheeks and held his gaze to hers. "That's what you took from that? Focus, Jayri. Come on." She gave him a gentle shake before pressing her beak to his snout. "I want you to want me. I want to see what it is you fools keep talking about with this vore thing. I don't want to keep rolling my eyes at you weirdos. Ceylon says you're passionate and kind, so what better beast to teach me the sensual ways of your fetish?"

Behind him, the door slammed shut, barely missing the Jatail maw, which swung around to cradle his sides. "But, I don't know if I have enough in me right now. I've had so many creatures pass through me this night that I-

"Don't worry about that. I have you covered. But, in the mean time, let me take advantage of what you have to offer. I mean, if you and Dolus want to use my funds to further your research into your respective bodies, I at least expect to have a thorough inspection on whatever it is I'm funding. So, Jayri, now is the time to impress." She turned from him and unclasped her red and gold dress to let it fall around her talons, tail hiked up as she glanced over her shoulder at him. "Oh, and don't make me wait, I'm quite tired and would greatly love a comfortable place to sleep."

Jayri watched closely as her rump swayed from side to side, long golden haired tail glistening in the dim light of her chamber lanterns. A familiar, sweet aroma billowed out from her as she leaned over, exposing her pink vulva between her thighs. If he were able to sprout a nosebleed from such a clear and curvaceous invitation, he would have spouted a geyser from his nostrils. He wasn't used to anyone so willingly or eagerly encouraging his lust, let alone the divine or any queens. This was all quite foreign to her, but his time all night had his adrenaline flowing and his confidence boosted just enough to keep him from blushing and bolting out the room.

He tentatively padded forward, his huge frame filling the room quite thoroughly so that his shadow cast itself over her form, blocking out the light that would have reflected off her moist lips. The dragon caught himself drooling before he licked his maw clean of the saliva that formed at the crook of his jaw.

"What's the matter? Big boy like you too shy to finish what you start? My royal chambers eagerly await your presence." She leaned over to press

her chest to the bed, tail raised and pussy winking in excitement. "It'd be a shame to waste such an interlude to my slumber."

The dragon whimpered gently as his loins stirred, the bulge in his sheath growing to the point that his blue-striped tip was poking out. He knew there was absolutely no way that his anatomy would work with hers, but that didn't stop him from fantasizing about it and dripping excitement. After a full body shudder of anticipation, he leaned in to nuzzle under her tail, massive snout pressing to her thighs as his jaws parted and his tongue slipped out to taste her.

The queen cooed at him as she looked back over her shoulder, flowing mane rippling along her spine and ears sleek to her skull. She smiled and chirped gently before leaning back against him, rubbing her sex over his snout and grinding her hips against him. "See? It's not so hard. I'm sure you have lots to offer me." She reached down between her legs to cradle the underside of his tongue, guiding it to her lips and forcing the tip of it to penetrate her, her talons curling at the touch of his prehensile tongue massaging her from within.

Jayri closed his eyes to revel in her taste, leaning in hard to press his lips to hers and bringing one of his front paws up to rest on her haunches. He was large enough that his hand splayed across her whole back, and she was a massive creature at over three meters tall herself. That tasty pussy of hers would be quite snug for him if he managed to mount her.

She lifted one leg up to part her lips, giving the dragon some better leverage before flipping onto her back with knees up and legs spread. She had the most wonderful golden brown fur and feathers dotting her chest. Her eyes closed slowly as she smiled at him, inviting him to do his worst. "Come on, Jayri. I wouldn't invite you into my bed if I wasn't confident I could handle you. Feel free to offer more than your tongue, I'm sure there's a lot of fun to be had."

The queen grinned and cooed at him, slowly shuffling back on her bed while never breaking gaze with Jayri. Her tail flicked gently to blow some more of her scent his way before she closed her eyes with a smile, waiting for him to make his next move.

He couldn't dare disappoint royalty.