

THE DUKE AND THE THIEF

PART 3

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Outside the carriage snow began to fall, large puffy flakes of white drifting down from above. The night was calm, no wind disturbed the gentle snowfall. With the Duke sitting across from her Bryn would've considered it an absolutely perfect night, if not for where she was.

Their carriage sat in the middle of the courtyard of Lord Angus' keep. A man that she and the Duke suspected to be behind a recent attempt on the Duke's life. They were here at Lord Angus's behest, a surprise invitation for a friendly visit; or perhaps a chance for him to finish what he started.

Sitting across from her the Duke squeezed her hand. "Let's Begin" he said voice full of authority, as he pushed open the door of the cab and stepped out into the open.

Through the side window she watched two rows of well armored men carrying fearsome halberds form up on either side of the carriage, turning to face the center and standing at attention. Outside the Duke turned back towards the door he'd left ajar, and raised an expectant hand. It was time for Bryn to emerge.

With a deep breath Bryn braced herself, not sure how she would handle the recent changes to her body. During her time with the Duke she'd gotten used to how fluid his magic could make the human body. Over the course of several weeks her bust had developed from nearly nothing, to the two pumpkin sized masses of soft pillowy flesh that rested on her lap now. But her breasts were not what concerned her, it was her behind.

As part of their plan to infiltrate Lord Angus's inner sanctum, Bryn had offered to seduce the noble, much to the Duke's displeasure. The Duke, knowledgeable of the Lord's love for women with abundant posteriors, had enhanced Bryn's body to suit the man's tastes. Unlike the changes to her tits which she'd had days and days to adjust to, this change had occurred all at once, and only hours earlier.

Now she sat on an ass that filled the back of the carriage, her cheeks two round balls of flesh, spreading out behind her and to either side of her by quite a large amount. Her hips sloped away dramatically from her waist, further emphasizing her slim midsection.

Grabbing a hold of the edge of the door, Bryn pulled hard to stand. She found the motion surprisingly easy. She let out a sigh of relief. The Duke's magic had not just given her an enormous rear end, but it had strengthened and enhanced her legs to support it. Her calves bore fresh muscles, as did her thighs though you could hardly tell as above her knees they widened dramatically to meet her new hips. Taking a tentative step forward, she found moving natural, though with each step she could feel the large bulk of her rear end wobble beneath her dress. Reaching out through the door she took the Duke's waiting hand, and she stepped down into the courtyard.

She looked about the open space. There was no sign of Lord Angus, or at least no one that she could easily recognize as a noble. Just the honor guard that stood flanking them, and a number

of men perched on the surrounding walls. The enormous white fur coat she wore covered her silhouette, but with how bulky she appeared it was obvious she was covering some serious assets. Still holding the Duke's hand he led her forward, when a noise pierced the night air. One of the guards had wolf-whistled at her.

Bryn blushed as she looked about. She'd been so used to living life at the Duke's keep where the only man was him, and he treated all his ladies with utmost respect. She'd forgotten that the average man wasn't so respectful. The members of the honor guard all wore full plate, with face masks up. It was impossible for Bryn to tell which man had catcalled her.

Before the echo of the whistle had dissipated from the night air, the Duke acted. His head whipped around and, in a flash, he lifted his free hand, not letting go of the delicate grip he maintained with Bryn. The fingers in that free hand flexed, and the 5th soldier on the left was suddenly jerked into the air, his halberd dropped to the ground as his hands desperately clawed at his neck.

Bryn watched passively as the Duke defended her honor. As a noble consort, the role she was fulfilling, she would have expected the Duke to act in this way, and so she watched with disinterest as the man suffered. Personally, she didn't want a stranger to die just because he found her attractive, no matter how boorish he acted, though she couldn't help but feel a thrill at how quickly the Duke had stepped in on her behalf.

A cast iron door in the side of the keep swung open, and a man emerged, laughing uproariously. "AH HA HA HA. Fenny, you old grouch. Let the poor sod go, he's learned his lesson!"

Bryn looked across to the newcomer. There was no mistaking that this must be Lord Angus. He wore fine clothes, navy blue and lined with gold, to match the colors of his seal that Bryn had seen as they'd travelled through his lands. She had to admit he was not how she would've pictured him. Fenrod had described him as being intelligent and arrogant, a schemer. She'd imagined a wiry little fellow, similar to many thieves she'd known in the past.

This man was nothing of the sort. He was short, and broad, only an inch or two taller than Bryn, but with wide set shoulders and a barrel chest to match. He walked with a confident swagger, arms swinging jovially. Said arms were impressively large; she would've guessed that each bicep was as big around as her thigh...or at least her old thighs. His face was round and warm, with an eager smile upon his face. A thick golden beard covered his chin and cheeks, matching the long golden hair on his scalp, that was currently tied into a loose bun on the crown of his head. Lord Angus didn't look like a schemer, he looked like a champion gladiator.

Without a word the Duke released his hand, and the man fell to the ground hard on his behind, taking in deep ragged breaths.

Angus stepped up before them and pulled the Duke into an aggressive bear hug. "Ah, Fenny, it's been too long! I see you're still strung as tight as a violin?" Angus clapped him on the arm in a friendly manner as he pulled away.

The Duke gently straightened his clothes, ruffled from Angus's friendly assault. "Your man damaged my Lady's honor, I simply did what was required to restore it." Bryn felt a flutter inside as he referred to her as 'his Lady'.

Angus frowned at the Duke. "Oh, come now, can you blame the boy? Look at her! You bring a beautiful rose into a hive of bees, and expect them not to buzz?" Angus stepped over to stand before her, bowing deeply. Taking her hand in his, he gently kissed her knuckles. "My Lady" he said with a smile as he rose. "You are simply enchanting; truly, truly breathtaking"

Bryn let out a small giggle "Why, thank you, Lord Angus"

He nodded "When I'd heard news from Pine Wood Falls that the Duke was indeed coming, and with a stunning new consort in tow, I was filled with excitement. But seeing you before me now...Ah, stunning simply doesn't begin to cover it"

Bryn gave him a demure smile and a nod of thanks. Lord Angus turned and gestured for them to follow. Once his back was turned, she looked over and exchanged a knowing glance with the Duke. She hadn't missed the subtext of Angus's casual remark. Their caution on their trip had been wise; Lord Angus indeed had spies within the Duke's lands.

Taking the Duke's hand once more, they followed Lord Angus back to the small iron door that he'd exited from minutes earlier. Lord Angus entered first, with Bryn following behind. She flushed with excitement as she felt the side of her hips brush the door frame as she passed. The Duke had indeed given her a remarkably large ass.

She moved with surprising grace beside the Duke. As she walked her body fell into a gentle rhythm, her hips swaying with each step, causing each round cheek of her ass to jiggle slightly as they shifted back and forth. A confident smile formed on her face, as she got more and more comfortable with her new form.

Shortly after they entered the brightly lit stone hallway, they stopped walking as a servant rushed forward to remove her coat. The lad bowed before her and held out his hands subserviently. Bryn carefully undid the clasps and slung the coat off and dropped it into the young boy's outstretched arms; the heavy mass of white fur and cloth nearly making him bowl over.

Bryn gently ran her hands over the fabric of her dress, smoothing it out. As she'd expected the Duke's magic had also infused her dress; large amounts of fabric had been added to the bottom to accommodate her expansive behind. The dress flowed out and away from her waist in all directions, making it look like she was wearing a bustle.

Lord Angus looked over at her, and cracked a smile. "Oh, Fenny, you put the poor girl in a hoop skirt just to impress me? I appreciate the sentiment, but you know I prefer the real thing"

The Duke said nothing, as Bryn gave a mischievous smile towards the blonde noble. "Oh, But I am the real thing, My Lord"

Lord Angus laughed "Very funny, My Lady, but no one-" he stopped mid-sentence, as Bryn bent over and grabbed the top of her skirt and lifted. She exposed her legs to just above her knees, where her thighs began to slope out dramatically to support her gigantic ass.

Lord Angus said nothing as she lowered her skirt once more. He looked back and forth between her and the Duke, face dumbstruck. Finally, he settled upon Fenrod "Fenny, you bastard, when did you start doing asses!?"

The Duke opened his mouth to speak, but Bryn spoke first. "He doesn't my lord. My bust is his work of course, but the ass is all mine" She gave the Duke a sweet smile, who nodded to her, supporting her lie. Bryn didn't know how suspicious Lord Angus was, but if she showed up, with a freshly swollen behind, and immediately attempted to seduce him, it would make certain men skeptical. If her large ass was simply happenstance...well then it was just a happy coincidence.

"Really!?" Lord Angus said in amazement. "I've never seen a woman with such curves! Where do you hail from? What family?"

Bryn hesitated, a lord's consort was typically of some form of noble birth; not a high lord, but often a minor regent or earl. Bryn didn't know any of their family names, and didn't want to risk guessing. Thankfully she didn't have to.

"She's the daughter of Orion" The Duke said matter of factly.

Angus turned to the Duke, "Orion? Where's he from?"

"You remember those island chiefs I kept complaining about a few years back? Orion is one of them" The Duke replied.

Lord Angus rubbed his chin "Ah...I see. The ones way offshore in the reefs? Well apparently, they grow beautiful women on that island!" Lord Angus bowed and gestured down the hallway, before he began to walk in that direction himself.

Bryn fell into step beside the Duke. Her ass kept bumping into the side of him as they walked; she wasn't used to how wide her new figure was. "Do I need to know any details about Orion?" She whispered to the Duke as they followed Angus about twenty paces behind him.

The Duke imperceptibly shook his head. "No. He...doesn't exist. The chiefs on those islands never gave me their names, so I made him up. I just picked a place that I knew Angus wouldn't have spies"

She smiled approvingly "Well played, Fenny" The Duke's mouth tightened at her use of Angus's embarrassing nickname. Bryn held a mouth up to her hand to stifle her giggle at his reaction.

At last, the hallway ended before a large set of wood double doors. "I'm sure you two must be starving. We were just about to start the feast. Wouldn't you know it, you two aren't my only guests this evening!"

Bryn and the Duke exchanged a look of confusion as Angus pushed open the doors before them. The main hall of the Lord's keep was a large room with high vaulted ceilings. A large rectangular table filled the center of the room, with place settings for at least 20 currently upon it. Around the room milled several groups of people in fine clothing engaging in deep conversation with each other; lesser nobility from the Lord's lands. Several hearths set into the walls blazed with fire, keeping the room stiflingly warm. The reason why became quickly apparent to Bryn.

Amongst the groups of nobles walked serving girls, each wearing the same uniform. Just as how Fenrod's maids' dresses were cut to emphasize their chests, these were designed to highlight their rear ends. Each was a navy-blue dress that fully covered their torso and arms, however instead of a skirt each had a only long swath of fabric running down the front and back. The garment covered their personal areas, but left the entirety of their legs exposed up to their hips. Each woman had a full round ass, far larger than what Bryn would consider average, though none of them came close to her current curves. As they walked around the hall carrying trays laden with food, their butts bounced freely with each step. For some of the girls with particularly large behinds, the strip of cloth meant to cover their backside had been fully pulled into their crack, eaten by two round cheeks the size of roasted hams.

"Come, come!" Angus said with a smile. "There's an old friend here I want you to speak with, Fenny!"

The broad-shouldered noble led them around the edge of the crowd. Bryn walked arm in arm with the Duke eyes straight ahead, though in her peripherals she could easily notice the gapes and stares she received from the nobles she passed. She smiled serenely. *Let them stare, I am worth staring at!*

With her hand wrapped on his bicep, she felt the Duke stiffen as they approached the far wall. She looked ahead to see what had triggered this reaction. In front of them, Lord Angus had stopped beside an elderly man standing alone before one of the Hearths. His back was turned to them, but he swiveled around as they approached. He was a wizened old man, with no hair on his head but a few white tufts. A long white beard covered his face and reached his chest. He wore a plain robe of simple gray, and leaned on a wooden staff. None of these details registered to Bryn, who only focused on one thing; his eyes that blazed with white flames.

What surprised her even more so was when the Duke at her side, removed his glasses and bent low at the waist. "Master. It has been some time" he said, voice quiet as he rose.

Master!? Bryn struggled to keep the shock from her face. Could this be the man who taught the Duke his magic!?

The old man gave them a genuine smile "Indeed it has, Fenrod. The years have been good to you. Not as good as they have been to me, I fear. And who pray tell, is this vision of heaven that you've brought with you?" The old man's eyes turned to rest upon her. Though his compliment had been kind, she still felt intimidated by his flaming stare. So similar to the Duke's and yet...there was something off about it.

Remembering herself, she curtsied before him "Lady Brynnifer, My Lord"

The man chuckled, his eyes squeezing shut with mirth. "Oh, I am no Lord, My Lady. Simply a wanderer of these fair lands. My name is Hemfort. I'm sure the Duke has made mention of me"

Bryn nodded, "But of course." She lied with ease. The Duke hadn't mentioned him, though he hadn't needed to. Everyone, from noble to peasant, knew of Hemfort. It was rumored that he was hundreds of years old, a figure of legend. It was even said that he was present at the forming of this very kingdom, over a century ago. To think that the Duke had trained under *the*

Hemfort was both shocking, and yet expected. Of course her enigmatic Duke had trained with a mythical historical figure; who else would've trained him.

Angus nodded excitedly "He showed up a few weeks back! It was his idea to invite you to visit, not that I'd need a reason to spend time with my oldest chum."

The Duke said nothing, his eyes were locked upon Hemfort, who held his gaze, a simple smile upon his face.

Angus reached out and clapped them both on the shoulders. "Come, let us sit and eat! The food is waiting!" With a gentle push he directed them towards the table. Bryn turned to follow them, when she felt a hand on her backside. Angus squeezed tight one of her cheeks, with a throaty groan from behind her. Brynn felt a chill of fear run through her from the unexpected touch on her sensitive area, but she pushed it down. She needed to be receptive to Angus's advances if she'd hoped to get into his chambers.

"I had to see if you really were real" He growled in her ear. She turned her head to look at him, plastering a coy smile on her face, though her insides churned. "I hope My Lord is satisfied?" She whispered.

He gave her a feral grin, releasing his grip only to give the cheek a hard slap. She could feel the expanse of her flesh ripple from the strike, sending painful tingles across her skin. From where he was seated at the table, the Duke's head jerked toward her, eyebrow raised in anger. She subtly gave him a wave indicating that she was ok. At last Angus stepped past her. "Very Satisfied" he said over his shoulder as he made his way to his seat.

Taking deep breaths to calm herself, Bryn hurried over to her place in between the Duke and Angus at the head of the table. The servants, having been made aware of her presence, had replaced her chair with a wide bench laden with cushions. Gently she sat upon it, resting a hand upon the Duke's thigh at her side. The wood of the bench creaked under her weight. With how much flesh her juicy ass lifted her up, her head was almost at the same level as the Duke's.

With a clap of his hands, Angus summoned a flood of serving girls who emerged from the kitchens with the evening's dinner. Bryn watched them as they walked, hips swaying enticingly with each step. Angus had certainly been busy finding young women with the figure he so appreciated. He must've had at least 4 times the staff that Fenrod employed.

The feast began and music filled the room. Wine flowed and plates were emptied. Bryn savored each bite of the succulent meal. The Duke's kitchens could learn a thing or two from whomever had prepared these dishes. Bryn quickly finished her first plate and set down her fork with a contented sigh.

Beside her the Duke was restrained with his eating, never taking his eyes off Hemfort who sat across from him. It was obvious that he didn't trust his old master, though Bryn had no idea why.

After the meal, the lesser nobles rose from their seats and began to dance to the music, filling the room with raucous laughter. Soon only Bryn and the 3 men seated around her were the only people left at the table.

"Alright" Angus said, leaning in. "I suppose you'll want to know why you're really here"

Bryn's ears pricked up, though she tried to keep her eager curiosity off of her expression.

The Duke turned to face Angus. "Oh? Was this not just a friendly visit? Where my Master, who I haven't seen in a decade, just happens to also be present?"

Angus rolled his eyes "Yes, yes, Fenny, you're very clever. Well done. Something serious is afoot in the kingdom and we need to discuss it with you" Angus flicked his eyes towards Bryn. "Will she..."

The Duke rested his hand upon hers, where it lay in her lap, wrapping it with his long fingers. "She will not. Anything that you discuss with me can be said in front of Lady Brynnifer" Brynnifer squeezed his hand back, looking at him with a smile. The Duke met her eyes for a brief moment, his lips twitching, before he turned back to Angus. Bryn felt her heart jump in her chest as his warm hands gripped hers.

Angus shrugged "As you wish. You always were very trusting of your ladies"

Hemfort folded his hands upon the table, wasting no more time "A deadly plot is in motion within the kingdom."

"Do tell?" The Duke said, voice unconcerned.

His old master nodded. "Someone is going after the nobility. Assassination attempts have been made against several high lords"

Bryn felt the Duke's hands squeeze hers tightly. She kept her lips pressed tight, as she listened eagerly. She leaned forward as their voices grew quieter, the edge of the table leaving an indent on her breasts.

"Who?" The Duke asked, as if they were discussing mild gossip.

Angus crossed his arms and rested them on the table. "Me, for one. About a month ago. Thankfully I keep a sword under my bed and am a light sleeper. I took a few cuts but the three of them fared much worse" He imitated a stabbing motion with his hand, a grim smile on his face.

Hemfort continued "To the south, Baron Galwain was killed two weeks ago. He may not be the high lord of the region, but he was their biggest supporter"

The Duke contemplated this, his mouth a thin line. "That's all, then? Two attempts hardly form a plot"

Angus leaned further in. "Oh, don't play coy with us, Fenny. We know about the attack, that someone broke into your keep 3 weeks ago"

Bryn froze, eyes darting back and forth between Angus and the Duke. The conversation was incredibly tense, as the Duke carefully navigated what he did and didn't want the other two men to know. Bryn said nothing, as they would expect her to know nothing.

The Duke was still for a moment, before he raised an eyebrow at Angus. "How?"

Angus shrugged "I have my sources. All that matters is the assassins failed"

Hemfort nodded "Of course they failed. Three men against a sorcerer? You might as well try and kill an ox with a spoon"

None of the men looked at her. Either they had no idea about her involvement in that evening, or they were very good at hiding it. The Duke squeezed her hand reassuringly, causing Bryn's heart to dance in her chest.

The Duke finally relented "Very well. Your informants, whoever they are, were correct. I was indeed attacked in my chambers, and I indeed dispatched them with lethal force. What do you suppose it means?"

Angus sat back in his chair "I was hoping you could help us with that. I wasn't able to keep any of my assailants alive long enough to question them. Your methods have a higher degree of control to them. Were you able to question any of them?"

The Duke shook his head "No, I slaughtered them" He had in fact questioned one, but that man had laid the blame at the feet of their very host. Bryn took another sip of her wine to help quench her rapidly drying mouth. This was a very dangerous game they were playing.

Angus nodded understandingly "I'm not surprised. You always did have a temper. So...that brings us back to the beginning. Who would want us dead?"

Hemfort interlaced his fingers and rested them before his mouth. "That's a question with an unending list of answers. Rebellious peasants, upstart nobles, foreign agents, even the King is not above suspicion. Perhaps he's grown tired of your attempts to rule the kingdom for him?"

The Duke simply nodded. Then without a word he stood. "Thank you for your hospitality, Angus, but the hour has grown late. We spent a long day on the road and My Lady is tired" He looked to Bryn who nodded her head to him with a thankful smile, following his lead.

Angus stood and gave them a bow. "Of course, of course. We will discuss this more on the morrow. Good night, Fenny." Then he took Bryn's hand and kissed it once more, though this time he subtly stuck his tongue out between her fingers licking them suggestively. Bryn felt the urge to squirm, but repressed it, instead only smiling charmingly at the Lord.

Then with a tug on her hand by the Duke she rose, and followed him towards the exit. Before they left the hall the Duke rested a hand on the small of her back, then slid it down the slope of her ass until it rested on the outer curve of one of her cheeks. Then, in clear view of the room, he gave it a firm squeeze. Bryn gasped at the Duke's brazen act. His hand sunk into the soft cushion of her flesh, his touch warm and strong. Unlike Angus his grasp was firm but gentle, not an attack but an invitation. She felt her breath quicken, her chest beginning to heave slightly

as his hand held firm to her backside as he guided her out of the room. The double doors swung closed behind them, and at last he released his grip on her behind.

The Duke walked off down the hall, while Bryn struggled to catch her breath. "Oh...goodness!" She said panting. "That was unexpected! What was that about?" She asked as she rushed to catch up to him, her ass and thighs jiggling with each quick step.

The Duke kept his eyes forward as he walked, refusing to look at her. "Forgive me for that, Lady Brynnifer. I know Angus. The man is a hunter. He likes to take things that don't belong to him. I did that so he could see me 'lay claim' to you. I felt that it would increase your likelihood of success with seducing him"

He stopped mid stride and turned to look at her. "I know I promised I'd never lay a finger on you. I apologize that I broke that promise. I hope my rashness can be forgiven" He hadn't yet redonned his glasses, and so his eyes blazed brightly as he looked down at her.

Bryn, still feeling flushed, shook her head. "There is nothing to apologize for. Your instincts were good."

The Duke nodded "I just don't want you to think I'm some brute, like Angus. I saw him touch you...I was able to control myself, but...I didn't like it. Are you ok?" He reached out and rested a hand on her shoulder as his eyes bore into hers.

Bryn's heart melted as she looked up at him. Though his face was unmoving, she could feel the hurt in his words, the care. She looked at him with a loving smile "You are nothing like him, My Lord"

"Fenrod" The Duke corrected her.

She laughed "Yes, yes, sorry, Fenrod"

The Duke turned to face down the hall once more, offering his arm to her. "Well, thank you, Bryn. I do appreciate that" She linked her arm through his and walked with him. He'd said her name, and hadn't corrected himself. That on its own made her head spin with joy, let alone everything else he'd said.

A short walk later, the Duke opened the door to the chamber they'd been staying in. Bryn had done her best to memorize the path they'd made to reach their room, as it was likely at some point during the week she'd have to find it on her own.

The room was a large well furnished space. Thick gold rugs covered the floor while various tapestries and paintings covered the walls. The wall to their right featured an elegant obsidian fire place that blazed with light. On the left was a large desk with a well cushioned, low backed chair before it. Directly before the door was a sprawling king sized bed, piled high with pillows and thick blankets.

"Lovely room" Bryn said as she stepped past the Duke. He closed the door behind her, walking over to the desk and sitting heavily in the chair. He propped an elbow on one of the arms and rested his chin on his hand. Bryn walked over and sat down on the edge of the bed facing him. The mattress sunk beneath her, as she rested her full weight upon it.

“So...what do you think?” She asked him.

The Duke fished his black glasses out of his pocket and placed them back on his face. “I don’t know...” He said after a moment. “Hemfort’s presence is...unexpected. If Angus is indeed behind the attacks, trying to pin the blame on another entity is an expected move. But perhaps the Assassin lied. Angus was attacked as well...”

Bryn shrugged “Unless he’s lying?”

The Duke nodded “Unless he’s lying. Something did seem off about him tonight, though I couldn’t place it. Maybe it’s just been too long since I’ve seen him.” He let his head slump, hand moving up to grip his forehead. “Too many variables, not enough answers. And how did Angus know of the attack...unless of course he truly is responsible and it’s all a ploy. Maybe coming here...bringing you...was a mistake.”

Bryn stood and walked over to the desk, stepping around to stand behind him. The Duke sat up, his eyes following her approach, but he said nothing, and didn’t move. Standing behind his chair, her breasts gently rested against the upper surface of his back. Reaching forward over her bust she placed her hands on him and began to massage his shoulders and neck. The Duke’s body tensed at her touch, but after a moment he relaxed, settling back against her, letting her work on him.

“It wasn’t a mistake” she said quietly. “Don’t doubt yourself, my dear Lord. It would’ve been foolish to hide away in your castle until another attack came.” Her fingers slid against the tense knots of muscles that riddled his shoulders, gently applying pressure to ease the tension. The Duke’s breathing was steady, but occasionally he let out a quiet grunt as her fingers released a particularly dense tangle of muscles.

“Do not fear for me. I came of my own accord, to help you. You did not put me in danger, I willingly put myself there for you” her voice was barely a whisper, as she pushed harder against his muscles. The Duke’s head gently rolled back, resting in the valley of her cleavage as she continued to ease both his physical and mental burdens. Bryn smiled as the weight of his head rested upon her chest, her fingers continuing to work away at his tension.

She continued to gently massage his shoulders in silence, letting him rest upon her. He let out an involuntary sigh of relief as she pushed her way through the final knot of muscles. At last she stopped, simply resting her hands upon his shoulders, his head nestled between her breasts, enjoying this moment, the two of them together.

Suddenly the Duke sat up with a start, before leaping to his feet. He turned to stare at her, his cheeks flushed.

“Fenrod?” She questioned, giving him a gentle smile.

He shook his head. “My apologies, Lady Brynnifer. Forgive me for my...forwardness” His mouth was twisted in a frown, as his face took on even more colour.

She shook her head “There is nothing-My Lord!?” Before she could finish absolving him of whatever sin he’d thought he’d committed, he’d turned and bolted through the door. She rushed

to the door, but when she looked out into the hall he was gone. She frowned with sadness as she closed the door before her.

Gods damn that man and his stupid honor! She cursed as she got herself undressed. Standing in the room fully in the nude she looked down upon herself. She was the epitome of curvy. Her full, pillowlike breasts, sloping away from her chest, down past her navel. Her delicate waist, thin and toned. And then below it the dramatic flaring of her hips, supporting her wide thick ass, each cheek curving almost a foot away from her back. She sighed, as she pulled on her nightgown and got into bed. What good was having the ultimate hourglass figure, if the man she loved wouldn't have her.

She collapsed into bed, more tired than she realized. Despite the size of her backside, there was still space on the large bed for another person to lay beside her. She knew that wouldn't be the case tonight. Tears welled in her eyes as she laid in bed, until sleep finally took her.

She awoke hours later, to the sound of the door quietly opening. She lifted her head in fear, until she heard the Duke's voice. "You are safe, My Lady. Go back to sleep" he said gently as he walked past the bed.

She watched him walk over and stand before the fire, before once again lying down on the stone floor just as he'd done the night before.

"Fenrod...it's late, you must be exhausted. Please... just come to bed" She pleaded.

The Duke ignored her, rolling over to face the fire. With a quiet sob, Bryn laid her head back down into the fluffy pillow, tears silently flowing until sleep came once again.

Bryn woke to the sound of the door closing. The room was dark; their chamber had no windows, and the fire had gone out in the night. "Fenrod?" She called to the darkness but heard no answer. She heard footsteps move across the room toward her left. Clutching the blankets to herself, she cried out in fear. "Who's there!?"

With a whoosh the fire relit. Standing before it was one of Lord Angus's maids who bowed her head. "Apologies my lady. I came to relight your fire"

Bryn nodded, cold sweat beading on her forehead. "Thank you. Where...where is the Duke?" She asked.

"In the courtyard with Lord Angus, my lady" The serving girl bowed once more, then turned to leave. Bryn watched the curve of her almost fully exposed ass shake as she walked out of the room.

Bryn wiped the sleep from her eyes as she got out of bed. What time was it? She'd definitely slept longer than she'd intended. Her eyes were still sore and swollen from crying. She stood before the fire enjoying the warmth of the flames for a moment, rubbing her hands against her arms to warm herself.

The Duke's rejection last night had hurt her. She'd really thought she was getting through to him, and his actions throughout the previous day had seemed to reflect that. And yet at the end

of the day, when for only a moment he showed vulnerability, he shut her out. Maybe she was a fool for loving him. This cold, unfeeling man, who pushed everyone away.

But he wasn't unfeeling. She knew that. He was a man, and all men felt. Just some buried it deeper than others. She'd seen glimpses of it in his apologies, in the way he'd defended her. She could see that he cared. He just couldn't get out of his own way.

Regardless, she was still angry at him. And there was still work to be done. They were no closer to figuring out who was really responsible for the attempt on the Duke's life.

She pulled out a sleek blue dress from her trunk, and slid into it. It had a deep slit up the side, showing off her legs when she walked. It was also backless, the dress tying up behind her neck, each breast resting comfortably in their own fold of fabric. She put her hands on her hips, and spun, enjoying how the dress moved with her.

The Duke had said he hadn't liked the way Angus had touched her. Well too bad. If Fenrod didn't want to touch her, then Lord Angus certainly would. Maybe then the Duke would stop being such a fool and come to his senses. Maybe then he'd finally let himself give in to his feelings. Bryn wasn't sure how much of that she really believed, but it didn't matter. She would do what she had to do.

She was easily able to retrace her steps, back through the twisting passageways until she was in the main hall once more. Turning left she walked to the iron door that led to the courtyard and placed her hand upon it. From behind she heard a rush of footsteps. She turned with a jolt, to see who was coming, but saw only a pair of legs emerging from a large mound of white furs. The little serving boy had returned with her coat.

"Oh, thank you" she said as she took it out of his arms. She slid the warm jacket on, reveling in its softness and comfort as she did up the clasps. Thought after it was on it just made her sad. It was just another thing that the Duke had given her, instead of his heart. Shaking her head, she pushed open the door and stepped outside.

She blinked at the brightness as the sun hit her. It was high in the sky, almost noon. In the center of the courtyard she immediately spotted the pair of men. Each wielded a sparring sword, as they danced about each other, exchanging swings and parries.

She watched them curiously as she slowly trudged through the cold snow towards them. She'd never considered whether or not the Duke was trained with weaponry. His magic was far more potent than any form of martial prowess. And yet the man she watched moving through the snow was no novice. Angus no doubt had the edge in power, his wild swings sending loud cracks through the courtyard whenever they met the Duke's sword. But the Duke moved with an unexpected grace, as if he was dancing, and the sword was his partner.

Bryn walked until she was at the edge of the sparring circle that had been carved in the ground, watching silently. Her white coat blended perfectly with the surrounding snow, only the soft pink of her face, and the bright red of her braids cascading down her front noticeable. The Duke was wholly focused on his duel with Angus, until the fight brought him to the opposite end of the circle, so he was facing her directly. His eyes met hers and he faltered. In that moment Angus struck. The Duke feebly attempted to block the blow, but the blonde noble's powerful blow blasted through his defense, the wood sword striking him on the shoulder.

“Aha! Victory!” Angus yelled triumphantly.

Bryn clapped eagerly from the sidelines “Oh, well fought, Lord Angus! Truly a noble warrior!” She added to her performance by excitedly hopping up and down on the spot, causing the entirety of her body to bounce in place.

Angus turned to face her with a wide smile “Thank you, My Lady! So kind of you to recognize true talent” With a flourish of his sword he bowed low before her.

Across the ring the Duke simmered, as he gently rubbed at his shoulder. Over his glasses Bryn caught his eyes locked on her, though she couldn’t tell with what emotion. She simply smiled calmly before turning back to continue fawning over Angus.

“Truly remarkable swordplay! I’ve never held one myself” she said as she stepped forward into the ring.

Angus’ eyes lit up. “You haven’t! Well, I guess I shouldn’t be surprised, it’s obvious Fenny here doesn’t get much practice in”

“No. I suppose I don’t. Too busy keeping my lands in order” The Duke said redonning his coat.

Angus scoffed. “Oh, don’t be such a sour puss, old boy.” Then he turned to Bryn, with the practice sword held toward her. “It’s dead easy, my lady. Here let me show you” With an eager smile Bryn took the sword by the hilt. Angus stepped around to move in behind her, then realized his mistake. With her mountainous ass in the way, there’d no way he’d be able to get close enough to help her swing the sword. “Ah...right...” He said, looking her up and down.

Bryn looked over her shoulder, flashing him a dazzling smile. With a free hand she reached back and laid a hand upon the upper shelf of her behind “Oh, is it too big my lord? The damned thing does get in the way sometimes”

Angus flushed and returned her smile “Nonsense, my dear, it, and you, are perfect! Here, I’ll show you by example. Fenny, toss me your sword”

Without a word, the Duke tossed his wooden sword across the ring, landing it point down in the snow at Angus’s feet. Then he turned and stomped off through the snow, back towards the keep.

Angus pulled the sword out of the drift at his feet, and frowned after the Duke. “What’s his problem?”

Bryn just shook her head “Oh, I don’t know, My Lord. Perhaps he’s just a sore loser” Bryn knew why he was really upset. Though he wouldn’t admit it, the Duke was jealous of her flirting with Angus. He’d been against the seduction plan from the beginning, and now having to witness it further incensed him. Bryn didn’t care. They’d agreed upon their plan, and that was that. If the Duke didn’t like it then he could tell her himself.

Over the next hour Angus taught her the basics of swordplay. Secretly Bryn already had a fair amount of experience with the sword; she was often chosen to be a sparring partner when she'd been part of her thieving crew. Being small and weak meant she was an easy target, and so she'd learned to be good to even the odds. Still, for Angus's sake, she played along, letting the man enjoy sharing his interest with her.

She spent the rest of the day with the Lord, letting him give her a tour of his keep and surrounding lands. Throughout it all she kept up her charming and flirty demeanor, peppering innuendos and suggestive comments into conversations at increasingly frequent intervals. Though his touch made her skin crawl, she kept that hidden; to Angus she appeared a doe-eyed lady who wanted nothing more than to please him.

Throughout the day her mind continually wandered to the Duke. She hadn't seen him since the morning duel, and though she was still annoyed and frustrated with him, she couldn't help but also be concerned. He was alone in the keep of the man who potentially wanted him dead. He could be in Angus's dungeons right now, shackled with Dimeritium and being tortured for information, and she'd be powerless to stop it. She did her best to push those thoughts away. The Duke would be fine, she had a job to do and she should be focusing on that.

Even though she'd spent the day reassuring herself that he'd been fine, it was still a great relief to her when she walked into the dining hall that evening alongside Lord Angus and found the Duke sitting with Hemfort at the long table, perfectly safe and deep in conversation. Angus led her to her seat by his side, then sat himself at the head of the table. "Well now, what have you two silly sods been up to all day?"

Hemfort nodded toward the Duke "This one wanted to study. I didn't think there was much left I could teach him, but he wouldn't take no for an answer. He always was a voracious learner"

Angus nodded "Hm, hm, hm. Well, that all sounds dreadfully boring. I'd much rather have my day, spent alongside this enchanting flower, that you rudely abandoned this morning, Fenny."

The Duke turned his head slightly to catch her in his peripherals. Bryn met his gaze, and waited for him to speak.

"Lady Brynnifer expressed an interest in getting to know you more, Angus. I simply didn't want to interfere" The Duke said, his voice flat.

Bryn wilted a bit. She didn't know why, but she thought maybe he would've apologized. Apparently not.

Angus smiled "Oh, then thanks are in order! We had a lovely day together, didn't we, my peach?" Under the table he reached across and pinched the side of her ass, the sharp pain making Bryn want to shudder. Instead, she turned to face him with a saccharine smile. "That we did, My Lord"

The rest of dinner was a relatively quiet affair. There was no more talk of the murderous plot, an unspoken agreement to let it rest for a night. The four of them ate in relative silence, only Angus occasionally asking Hemfort questions of various far-off lands, the wanderer happy to relate his tales.

Bryn was only halfway through her meal, when the Duke pushed away his cleaned plate, standing suddenly. He bowed to the two men "Master, Angus. I fear I'm still tired from the road. I regret that I must retire."

Angus frowned "Pity, I thought tonight we could break out the strong stuff. Ah well, you're here all week. Rest up my friend!"

The Duke nodded at him, then turned and marched away, not speaking a word to Bryn. She watched him walk away, heart aching. His ignorance stung her fiercely. Though she was still upset at how he'd rejected her, she didn't want things to be frosty between them. Perhaps she would go talk to him after dinner and apologize. She hadn't needed to be so aggressive with her flirtation, when she knew how uncomfortable it made the Duke.

After finishing her own plate, she sat silently listening to Angus and Hemfort talk as she sipped her wine. She'd never been much of a drinker before, and she liked the way the drink made her feel. Her mind a buzz she absent mindedly ran a hand across her chest, then down on to her laps, tracing around to her backside, her fingers idly pressing in, feeling her soft cushy flesh. When she'd agree to these most recent changes, she hadn't given it a second thought. She'd been willing to do whatever she could to play her part. She definitely hadn't thought she'd enjoy it so much.

Perhaps it was the wine talking, but she really liked how she looked with a big fat ass! The way it exaggerated the swing of her hips, the way it filled out a dress, how it jiggled at the slightest touch. It all made her feel so sensual. Not to say that she didn't also love her breasts. She could never forget about those. They'd been her first love, and she cherished her soft mountainous mounds dearly.

Perhaps a little too dearly this evening. Her wandering hands had started to get her excited, and her already prominent nipples began to press more insistently through her dress.

Lord Angus clearly had noticed as he leaned across to address her. "My dear, are you...feeling well?"

Bryn nodded, with a tipsy smile. "Yes, thank you, Angus. Just...too much wine. I think I should be off to bed"

Angus gave her a sly grin. "And which bed would that be, my lady?"

With a laugh she slapped his arm "My own bed! Lord Angus, you terrible flirt!"

Angus laughed with her "Guilty as charged my dear! Well...if you change your mind, my door is always open...for you" He snatched the hand that had smacked him and laid a kiss upon it.

Bryn stood and curtsied unsteadily, before she turned and tottered off towards her room. Slowly she made her way back through the halls to the room she shared with the Duke. The grouch was probably lying on the floor, like a sad little dog. The thought made Bryn giggle as she approached their room. She reached out for the door handle, when she paused. She heard voices echoing from inside the room. High pitched female voices...

Twisting the handle Bryn slammed the door open. In an instant her pleasant tipsiness vanished, the scene before her filling her with pain, as it tore her heart into pieces. There was the Duke, *her* Duke, with three young women that Bryn recognized as members of Angus's serving staff. All of them showed signs of the Duke's magic.

One lay in the carpet before the fire on her back, moaning with pleasure as she groped and pawed at breasts the size of Bryn's own, though her nipples were much more petite. One lay on the bed, or at least Bryn assumed there was one on the bed. All she could see were feet sticking out from beneath two pale mounds of flesh, filling the bed from side to side and piling at least two feet high off the covers.

The final girl was engaging in intercourse with the Duke himself. Her eyes rolled back in her head as she moaned with pleasure. He had bent her over the table, pounding his impressive cock into her from behind, bouncing off her own thick ass. With one hand he gripped her waist to anchor himself while he thrust. The other he held overhead, blue light glowing at his fingertips. Bryn watched with deepening misery as the breasts of the girl he fucked slowly began to grow. They'd been the size of Vantica and Sashy's when Bryn had walked in the door, but now they slowly crept across the table, growing fuller and fuller. "Oh god yes!" She moaned as her breasts grew over the edge of the tabletop, their expansion unceasing.

It was then that the one on the floor addressed her with an excited grin. "Oh, Lady Brynnifer! Won't you come join us! Your Duke is ever so much fun!"

"Oooooo, soooo biiiiig" Came a voice gripped with orgasmic pleasure from the head of the bed, behind the wall of breasts.

The Duke looked up having heard the girl mention Bryn's name. He stopped his thrusting as his eyes of fire met hers. The colour of the flame shifted to a deeper shade of blue, like the ocean after a storm. And for the first time ever Bryn saw emotion alter the Duke's face; Sadness, and Shame.

"Bryn...I..." He stammered, his voice hoarse.

Bryn's tears were flowing freely, cascading down her cheeks and onto her chest. "Why..." Was all she could get out, her voice a meek whimper.

The Duke opened his mouth to speak but no words came out. No words could excuse him and what he'd done. With a loud sob, Bryn turned and slammed the door behind her, running off down the hall.

She cursed herself as she ran aimlessly through the halls of Lord Angus's castle. She was stupid. She'd been stupid from the beginning. Who did she think she was? A silly little thief, messing around in things far bigger than her. She'd known who the Duke was, how he operated. He had an entire wing in his castle, dedicated to his debauchery and hedonistic ways. She'd been a fool to think that she could just waltz into his life and change him.

Had he even really cared for her? She didn't know. Maybe it was all just an act, playing a part for their facade. Maybe she'd misjudged him from the beginning. She thought playing hard to get, being a tease, would make him want her more, but it hadn't worked. If anything, it had done the opposite, pushing him into the arms of these servant harlots.

After walking through the passages of the castle for what felt like hours, she found herself in front of a set of large wooden doors with Lord Angus's sigil painted upon them. She knew these doors; she'd seen them earlier in the day on the tour he'd given her of his keep. These were the doors to his personal quarters, he'd told her, before bobbing his eyebrows suggestively. She remembered as well the words he'd given her after dinner. *My door is always open*

She wiped her hands across her face, more smearing her tears then drying them. Then with a haggard breath, tears still welling her eyes, she reached up and knocked.

She waited, sniffing in the hallways for what felt like an eternity. Maybe he was still in the hall, drinking the 'strong stuff' as he'd planned. With a sigh she turned away, when from the other side of the door she heard footsteps.

"Who the bloody hell could that be..." She heard him mutter from the other side of the door, as the sound of a key turning in a lock emanated through the door. He pulled the door open, a suspicious look on his face, which immediately morphed into one of joy, and then one of sadness. "Lady Brynnifer! What happened?! Oh, you poor thing, come in!"

Without hesitation she fell into him, burying her head in his chest as she felt his burly arms wrap themselves around her. "Lady Brynnifer, I'll admit this is not what I had in mind when I had suggested that my door was always open" Bryn pulled her head back to see if he was serious. A warm supportive smile was on his face, to which she weakly smiled back.

"Sorry, My Lord. I...I didn't know where else to go" she said wiping at her eyes once more.

Angus shook his head "Nonsense, this was the perfect place to come." He reached up with a calloused hand and cupped her cheek. For the first time his touch didn't make her shudder with revulsion.

"Will you tell me what happened?" He asked after letting her go and giving her some space.

She shook her head "It's nothing, really..." Angus pulled a gold handkerchief from his pocket and handed it to her to dry her eyes. She accepted it with a thankful nod, before wiping off her cheeks.

He shook his head "I seriously doubt it's nothing. Let me guess, something to do with our mutual friend?" Bryn nodded silently, fresh tears forming. Angus gestured for her to step into the room, after which he closed and locked the door behind her.

Angus nodded "Yes, he's a bit of a challenging one to deal with. Always so bottled up. Never really know what that one is thinking. Come...come sit"

Bryn let herself be led across the room to the large bed on the right wall. Sitting upon the edge of the mattress she looked about his chambers. It wasn't a very large room, considering he was High Lord of these lands. The bed she sat on dominated the floor space, with a fireplace and tall window on the back wall. Beside the door was a simple low dresser to hold his clothes. Across from the foot of the bed the entire wall was a low desk, with rows and rows of shelves above it. Some were stacked high with books, others with various artifacts and relics. Upon the

top shelf were a series of large crystals stacked in a row, though a few were missing from their stands.

Angus sat upon the bed behind her, his hands gently rubbing her shoulders to help calm her. "You know, My Lady, you don't have to return with him. There could be a place for you here in my court. I could easily make a deal with Fenny, and then you'd be free of him"

Bryn said nothing, making no noise beyond the occasional snuffle. Was that her way out? Her way to free herself from Fenrod's influence? Angus had certainly been kind, though she didn't know how long that kindness would last if the Duke took away her assets after he left.

"You and I" Angus continued "We could have such fun together. I could show you the world, take you places you've never imagined. Places that poor old Fenny can only dream of" his hands had stopped rubbing her shoulders, and had started undoing the knot at her neck that held her dress up.

"Wait..." She said, leaning away from him, but before she could stand up his hand wrapped around her neck and pulled her back down. A sharp pang of panic ripped through her, as his hands tightened on her "Where are you going, my little peach?" He said his voice with an unexpected edge to it. He finished untying the knot and tossed the fabric forward, the top of her dress falling down to her lap, leaving her entire torso exposed. With a whimper her arms immediately jumped to cradle her breasts, hiding what little of them she could from his leering gaze.

She tried to stand once more, but his firm hand on her shoulder held her down. "My...My Lord" She pleaded "I've had too much wine, I...I should get to bed"

Angus's other hand reached down into her backless dress, fingers caressing and squeezing the upper curve of her ass. "Mmm, nonsense. I don't think you've drank too much at all. You came here, to my room, broken hearted, and Angus was here to pick up the pieces. Don't fight it, my little peach, I know you want it." He leaned forward pressing his nose into the back of her neck, taking a heavy sniff against her skin. Her aversion had returned in full strength, and she arched her back trying to get away from him, but her efforts were fruitless.

He removed his hand from her shoulder in an attempt to get a handful of her breasts. Bryn, her mind panicking, used the opportunity to escape. She pushed off of him and stood up, lurching forward off the bed. "No! I...I don't want this, My Lord. I want to go back to bed" She said, voice trembling with terror. Angus's previously warm and jovial face was dark and menacing. He swung his legs off the bed and advanced on her.

"Yes, you do, you whore. You're a consort, all you want is Sex. So let me show you how a real man Fucks" He stepped towards her, hands held out in a welcoming manner, though Bryn knew otherwise. She backed up hastily, her tears still flowing, as she bolted for the door.

"It's locked, Brynnifer." Angus said with an evil grin as he moved closer. "But even if it were open, where would you go? You're in my keep. You're mine"

Bryn found herself with her back against the wall, terror building to a fever pitch. She had been playing a dangerous game with Angus, and she feared she may have just lost. "The Duke..." Was all she could get out.

Angus tilted his head to the side questioningly “Fenrod? He isn’t coming, not for you. He doesn’t want you. I’ve watched you two, the way you look at him, the way he...*doesn’t* look at you. Fenrod has always played his cards pretty close to the chest, but know him as long as I have and you learn to tell the signs. He’s deliberately pushing you away, though for the life of me I can’t understand why... As soon as I first laid eyes on you I knew I had to make you *mine*” His voice lowered to a growl as he stepped closer, hands inches away from her.

“Don’t!” She cried “Don’t touch me!” She shrunk back against the wall as far as she could, but there was nowhere for her to go. Her eyes flitted around the room to try and find something to fight back with. The shelves were covered with nothing but books and knick knacks. Maybe one of those crystals? But they were so high up she’d never reach them. Wait...those crystals were a shade of dark purple she recognized. And there were three of them missing from the display...

Angus’ rough hands fiercely grabbing her breasts snapped her focus back to him. Without thinking she slapped him across the face as hard as she could. His neck barely shifted as her blow glanced off of him. His brows furrowed and his frown deepened. “So, you want to play rough?” He said through gritted teeth “I can play rough”

He struck her twice in quick succession, a back hand across the cheek sending her reeling, then a devastating punch to her gut, causing her to instantly double over. She gasped for air as she tried to recover from the blow, but before she could right herself she felt his hands grab her braids where they flowed from her scalp, and then pulled, dragging her back towards the bed.

He tossed her face down on the bed. As she struggled to catch her breath, she heard a rip as he tore the rest of the dress apart, leaving her fully nude before him. She tried to crawl away across the bed, but his caught her at the small of her back pinning her in place.

“Please, My Lord!” She wailed. “P...Please, don’t do this!” His hand held her in place as she struggled to escape.

“Scream all you like, my little peach” he said as he began to undo his pants. “No one will hear you...”

BOOOOOM

A thunderous explosion rocked the room, as Bryn saw the double doors to Angus’s chamber crash into the wall on the far side of the room, their hinges blown clean off. The weight of Angus’s hand disappeared from the small of her back as he stood and turned to see the cause of the interruption. Bryn, wasting no time, scrambled across the bed, sliding off the other side onto the floor. She clung to the side of the bed to keep her upright, body trembling from fear as she watched her man, Duke Fenrod, step through the door. His eyes of fire were a shade of crimson, and actual tongues of flame rose from them, rising past his eye brows. His face was twisted into a snarl of fury.

“GET YOUR FUCKING HANDS OFF HER!!” He roared. Bryn choked a laugh through her tears, as she watched him approach Angus.

Angus held up his hands innocently “Fenny, old boy, no need to get so excited! Lady Brynnifer came to me, I was just comforting her!”

"He's lying!" She cried from where she knelt behind the bed. Angus turned and shot her a furious glare, before he faced the Duke once more.

The Duke nodded "Don't worry, Bryn, I know" He contorted his right hand and thrust it forward toward Angus. A gout of white-hot flame shot from his palm with frightening speed towards Angus. The blonde noble made no attempt to dodge, as the flame guttered out and vanished a foot before him.

Giving a soft laugh, Angus opened the collar of his shirt, revealing a gold pendant with a large chunk of Dimeritium set within it. "So predictable, Fenny. Always so reliant on your magic, when it's often so easily thwarted"

Wordlessly the Duke reached over his head, and from a sheath he'd slung over his back pulled out a sword. But this was no practice sword; the hilt was bright gold, the blade was pure and sharp. Holding it in one hand he raised it, point first towards Angus.

Angus gave him a feral grin. "That's more like it." He crouched down, reaching under the bed until his hands found what they were searching for. From underneath the mattress he pulled out a sword of his own. "I wasn't lying when I said I always keep one by my bed."

The Duke slowly stepped forward, bringing his blade down into a defensive stance.

The two men circled each other, searching for an opening. "Are you sure you want to do this, Fenny?" Angus taunted. "You didn't fare so well in the sparring ring today. You could just walk away. Return to your keep, and take all that you brought with you...Well...not all. Brynnifer stays with me"

The flames in the Duke's eyes flared "Her name...is Bryn!" He shouted as he lunged forward. Angus raised his sword to meet the Duke's and the dance began.

Bryn watched in fear as the furious ballet of steel unfolded. It was clear that both of the men had been holding back in the ring earlier, as their swords moved in a blur about each other. Angus moved like lightning, each strike unbelievably fast, and hitting with the force of ram, pushing the Duke back each time their swords struck. On the contrary the Duke was like mist, constantly in motion, his movements fluid and sure. Frequently he didn't even try to block Angus's strikes, instead simply moving out of the way, letting them whoosh by him, sometimes with only inches to spare.

After another clash of blades, they both backed off for a moment, their breathing heavy but controlled.

"Such ferocity, Fenny" Angus said between panting breaths. "I never knew you had it in you!"

Fenrod nodded "Never had something I needed to fight for"

Across the room, Bryn's heart leapt with joy, while she watched in fear.

Angus turned to look at her "The Girl? Really? She's just a whore!"

The Duke's face twisted with rage again as he danced forward. Angus raised his blade to meet him, swinging a wide horizontal slash. With a gymnast's elegance the Duke leaped, flipping up over his own head, letting the sword pass underneath him. He landed standing next to Angus, a look of shock on the shorter man's face. Continuing his momentum, the Duke thrust his sword up, slicing through Angus's shirt and sliding the tip of his blade through the chain of the Dimeritium amulet. With a flick of his wrist, he twisted the blade toward him, and the Amulet broke free falling uselessly to the floor.

Angus tried to bring his sword back around, but it was too late. Mid swing he dropped the sword as his arms and legs were pulled to his side, his body lifted into the air by magic. The Duke brought his sword up, resting the tip against Angus's neck. With a snarl he brought his arm back, to make the lethal strike.

"Wait!" Bryn cried "Don't kill him!"

The Duke held his sword back, turning to look at her. "Why the fuck not?" He asked, his voice returning to steadiness.

Bryn unsteadily rose to her feet. She was still naked, so she pulled a blanket off the bed to drape over herself. Now covered she rounded the bed to stand before the wall of shelves. Turning back to look at Fenrod, she pointed up to the top shelf.

"The Crystals! There are 3 missing!" She said.

The Duke's eyebrows raised in surprise and sudden understanding, as he turned to look at Angus. "So, the assassin wasn't lying...you *were* behind the attack!"

Angus said nothing, his eyes wild as he glared at the Duke.

"I don't understand..." The Duke said, lowering his sword and stepping back.

"Couldn't have you meddling" Angus spat.

"Meddling in what?" The Duke demanded. He lifted his hand and squeezed, the invisible constrictions on Angus tightening. The blonde grunted in pain, but refused to speak.

As his body contorted under the Duke's power, the back of his shirt, which had been tucked into his pants, was pulled loose. As the fabric fluttered, Bryn momentarily saw black marks on Angus's back.

"Fenrod" She said, walking over to stand beside him. He looked to her, his face softening "Yes?"

She pointed at Angus. "Turn him around" With a simple twist of his wrist, Angus rotated in the air. Bryn stepped forward, and grabbing the neck of his shirt pulled it off of him. The Duke's face darkened at what he saw. Down Angus's spine was a series of black sigils, as if they'd been painted on with ink.

"Are those..." She asked.

The Duke nodded. "Magic seals. Like your own, though these are marks I've never seen before" From his back pocket the Duke pulled out his red handkerchief, then stepping forward he placed it against Angus's neck and then dragged it down along his spine. As the red cloth passed, the black marks vanished, the magic wiped away. The Duke let the cloth fall from his hand and onto the stone floor as they waited.

For a moment Angus's body went limp, then he jerked awake. "What...what the fuck?! What the fuck is going on here?!"

Fenrod spun him back around to face them. Angus's eyes lit up with surprise and anger. "Fenrod?! What the fuck are you doing here! Is this a coup?! Are you here for my lands?! God damns you and your magic, at least let me down and fight you like a man!"

Bryn looked to the Duke confused "What's wrong with him?"

The Duke shook his head "Nothing, now. Bryn, meet Lord Angus. The real Lord Angus"

The change in his demeanor was suddenly obvious to Bryn. Gone was the charming, cheerful lord she'd met. This man was serious, gruff, his face permanently in a frown, eyes constantly shifting about the room suspiciously. "Fenrod what the fuck is going on!" He demanded "And who the fuck is this? Is she a gift?"

The Duke stared him down. "No, she is *mine*." His hand reached out and took hers in his "Now, I'll let you down once you answer one question"

Angus grunted in annoyance "Fine, what?!"

"What is the last thing you remember?" The Duke asked, watching him intently.

Angus paused for a moment to think. "It...it was the night of the fall Harvest feast. That bloody fool Hemfort had come to spend the night, and asked to speak to me privately. That's the last thing I remember. Why?"

The Duke released his magical grip on Lord Angus, gently lowering him to the floor. "So, it wasn't you. It was Hemfort..." The Duke muttered to himself.

Angus brushed himself off. "What are you talking about man?"

Bryn gaped as she put the pieces together herself. "Oh gods..." She whispered.

The Duke stepped forward and clapped a hand on Angus's shoulder. "The harvest festival was nearly 3 months ago. On that night Hemfort took control of your mind, with magical seals that I just removed. You've been doing his bidding ever since, including trying to have me killed..."

Angus said nothing, his mouth ajar. "Holy shit" He muttered after a moment. "But why?!"

The Duke shook his head "I don't know yet, but we're going to find out"

Angus nodded looking around the room in a panic. "I need...I need to get my house in order. Who knows what he's been doing with me and my resources! Excuse me Fenrod, I need to look into things immediately. You and your...friend, can stay here tonight. I don't think I'll be doing much sleeping for awhile" Pushing past them, he rummaged in his dresser for a shirt, which he donned hastily before he left the room in a hurry, rushing down the hall.

For a moment they stood in silence, hand in hand. The Duke's shoulders slumped as he released the tension from them with a loud sigh. His right hand, which still gripped his sword, went slack, the blade dropping to the floor with a loud clang.

Bryn looked up at the Duke, unsure. "My Lord?" She asked, her voice quiet.

The Duke turned to face her, and without speaking wrapped a hand around her waist pulling her against him, as he bent down to smother her lips with his. Bryn let out a moan of deep satisfaction, closing her eyes tight as he kissed her with more passion than she'd ever known before. His hands clung to her, holding her tight against him, as if he never wanted to let her go.

He pulled back his head back, Bryn's lips following him not wanting to stop. She opened her eyes to see where he'd gone, when she felt his arms reach around her knees and shoulders. Effortlessly he lifted her up into his arms. Bryn let out a squeal of delight as she was hefted into the air, as if she was as light as a pillow. Gently cradling her body, he carried her over to the bed, setting her down upon the sheets.

Bryn moved aside the blanket that she'd used to cover herself up, exposing herself willingly to the Duke. The Duke's flaming eyes shifted colour from crimson to pink, as he gazed down upon her. "Come to me" She beckoned with a crooked finger.

Without hesitation the Duke tore his shirt from his body, then undid his pants, freeing his behemoth cock from its prison, as it slowly began to harden. Bryn was laying with her legs spread wide, calves hanging over the side of the bed. The Duke bent over and began to kiss her thighs, gentle but loving pecks as he made his way up her leg.

Bryn let out a soft moan as she felt his breath upon her pussy. "You don't have to...Ohhhh" Words left her as his mouth made contact with her lips, his tongue deftly sliding amongst her folds. He lifted his head slightly, bringing his attention to her clit which he gently massaged and caressed with his tongue. "Oh gods...oh gods!" She panted as he continued to tease and please her. Bryn smiled to herself in between her exultations of pleasure. Heronia was right; the Duke *is* the best.

As he continued to rub her clit with his tongue, she felt something bump into the side of her thigh. *What was that?* She thought, then she realized there was only one thing it could be. It was his cock, fully erect and ready. *Holy shit...he's so big!* She thought as she could feel it brushing against her legs.

Upon her mountainous breasts her nipples had gone fully stiff, two large teats sticking into the night air. She desperately wanted to play with them, when the Duke beat her to it. Still bent over and licking madly at her gushing pussy, he'd reached up above his head with both arms and grabbed onto each nipple and began to squeeze them.

“Ahhhh-AAA” She gasped with ecstasy at this new stimulation. It’s what she’d been dreaming of for so long, and now that it was here it was better than she’d hoped. His hands were soft but strong, and knew exactly what to do to maximize her pleasure. It took less than half a minute of these combined sensations before she was a bowl of jelly before him, her whole body trembling as he teased multiple orgasms out of her.

Bryn had lost count of her climaxes when at last he pulled away. She lay on the bed eyes closed, breathless, as she felt the tidal wave of her releases slowly ebb away. She lifted her head to look at him, when she felt his hands on her waist. With a deft motion, he lifted and flipped her, setting her down on her knees.

“My Lord...I don’t think...My ass...it’s too big” She panted, finding it difficult to form words.

The Duke ignored her, as he began to slide his meat in between her legs. Bryn marveled at the sensation, as the tip of his cock slid past the jiggling mass of her ass and found her awaiting pussy. How long was he?!

With a gentle hand on her lower back, he leaned forward. “Are you ready, Bryn?”

She nodded fervently “Yes! I...I need it”

Wordlessly the Duke slid himself into her. Deep guttural moans echoed from within her chest “Hng...guh...Fuck...” He was so big, it felt like she was being stretched to her limit, but somehow she’d taken him, and it didn’t hurt. Slowly he began to thrust, pushing his girth further into her. Her breathing intensified as she struggled to handle it, it was too much, but gods it felt so good. At last, she felt his legs bump into the back of her ass, pressing into her cushy flesh to try and push himself as deep as possible.

Then he pulled out and began again. His motions were slow and deliberate, as each thrust split her pussy wide. Bryn gasped and grunted through the sensation, the incredible fullness of his cock, the pleasing jiggling from her ass each time he collided with her.

After a minute of this, she turned her head to try and get his attention. He paused his motions. “Too much?” He asked softly.

Bryn shook her head. “Harder” She grunted.

The Duke nodded, and thrust in quickly. “Hng! Oh fuck...” She moaned as he did as promised, and fucked her harder. His pace quickened, as his body slammed into her ass more insistently, desperate to ram his cock in deeper. Her pussy emanated waves of pain and pleasure as his cock continued to stretch it further than it’d ever been stretched before. The stimulation became too much for her body and her arms failed her, her upper body resting only upon her tits, while she buried her face in the mattress.

Suddenly she felt her face lifted, as the Duke grabbed both braids with one hand and pulled her head back. “Oh fuck, yeeees!” She cried as he tugged hard on them while he continued to pound into her.

Bryn lost track of time, lost in a sea of sexual pleasure, and emotional release. She'd done it, the Duke was hers at last, and gods it had been worth it. Behind her she felt his thrusting become erratic, as she felt his Cock throb within her. "Come on..." She cried breathily "Come for me, My Lord!" The Duke grunted like a bear, letting go of her hair and instead grabbing tightly onto her hips to anchor himself as his hips moved involuntarily. At last, he let out a gasp and grunt of release, as he pushed himself in as deep as he could, and held it there. Bryn felt his warm seed fill her cunt and let out a sigh of happy relief. Pulling out of her, he stepped back off the bed, his own legs unsteady.

Bryn dragged herself to the other side of the bed, leaving space for the Duke to lay down. He did so promptly, collapsing into bed beside her. Immediately she rolled over and draped herself across him, head resting upon his chest and shoulder. His arm that she laid across wrapped up behind her and pulled her tight against him.

For minutes they lay there unspeaking. They didn't need to speak. Their actions had said enough.

At last, though the gravity of their situation returned to them, and Bryn spoke first. "Gods...I can't believe that happened to Lord Angus!"

The Duke nodded, resting his lips against the crown of her head. "It is extremely disturbing. Mind control magic is incredibly difficult and incredibly dangerous. If you don't make the spell strong enough the victim can fight it. Make it too strong and you control too much; their breathing, their digestion...their heart. Most attempts at Mind Control end with a corpse. To precisely control someone, like was done with Angus, requires an extremely powerful and skilled sorcerer...which Hemfort is"

Bryn pressed herself against him "Terrifying. And you couldn't tell he was being controlled?"

The Duke shook his head "No, the magic itself is imperceptible. Though I did notice his behavior was strange. I couldn't put my finger on it earlier, but I understand now. He was acting like himself when we were in the academy. Fenny was his nickname for me when we were boys; I don't think I can remember him using it even once for at least a decade. I thought it was strange that he'd started again, but was too focused on other things to puzzle over it."

Bryn listened intently, as her hands idly played with the hair upon his chest "But why would he act like that?"

The Duke kissed the top of her head gently "That's the only time that Hemfort really spent a lot of time with Angus. He set his personality off of what he knew, not of what Angus really is."

Bryn nodded "Wow...so what now?"

The Duke said nothing for a moment. With his free hand, he grabbed the end of one of her braids and gently rolled it between his fingers. Bryn smiled gently as she watched him play with her hair.

"We need to find out why Hemfort did this. Angus...well, the *other* Angus... said they didn't want me meddling. We need to know what it is they didn't want me interrupting. Hemfort will be long gone by now, and his trail will be difficult to follow. I don't relish what's ahead of us."

Bryn nodded, nestling in against his chest. They laid there together for a few more minutes in silence. Not opening her eyes she asked him, voice a whisper. "How...how did you know I was in trouble?"

He squeezed her shoulders warmly "Your seal of course. It lets me feel if you're in distress. Once I began to feel you panic, I came as fast as I could. I'm sorry I couldn't come quicker."

"It's ok..." She said kissing his chest. Then something occurred to her, bubbling up from within. She sat up and stared daggers at him. "Wait a minute, I'm mad at you! You were fucking strangers just hours ago!"

The Duke pushed himself up to face her. "...I know, I'm sorry Bryn. I was just lost; I didn't know what to do. Watching you with Angus, knowing I couldn't have you, it hurt. And I foolishly tried to drown the hurt in the arms of other women. It was pointless though. I couldn't escape the hurt, no matter how many I fucked, or how big I made their breasts"

Bryn sighed, sensing his feelings to be genuine. "But you *can* have me, you always could"

The Duke shrugged "You rejected my advances, I figured that meant you didn't want anything to do with me. It was all very confusing, it felt like you were sending signals that you were interested, but then denied my offer. I knew my only choice was to play it safe, not risk crossing a line I couldn't uncross"

Bryn leaned forward and kissed his cheek. "That's very sweet. Stupid, but sweet. Do you really think I would let you rest your head between my breasts while I massaged you if I wanted nothing to do with you?"

The Duke's lip twitched up into a small smile "Fair enough"

"So, what changed tonight?" She asked.

The Duke lied back against the pillow "When I saw how heartbroken you were when you walked in on me...I knew I'd made a terrible mistake. I decided I would give you space to cool down, and then talk to you in the morning. But then when I felt your fear and terror, I knew I had to help. And then standing beside you afterwards, well I couldn't help myself. I hope you didn't mind my forwardness?"

Bryn swung her leg over to straddle him, resting her breasts upon his chest as she leaned down to kiss him "Not at all, My Lord" Then she rested her head against his collarbone, tucked under his chin. The Duke wrapped his arms up around her, holding her tight against him.

"So, what do we do next" She murmured, feeling his heartbeat against her skin.

The Duke gently rubbed his fingers up and down her back "Now...we need to plan. We'll return to my keep in the morning and begin strategizing our next move. I can set up magical wards there to keep us protected from attack. We'll get you set up in the Consort's wing, and then summon our allies. I don't know what Hemfort is up to, but we need to get ahead of it."

Bryn pushed herself off his chest, a terrible rage suddenly blooming her chest, a furious frown forming on her lips.

"Bryn? What is it?" The Duke asked, looking at her confused.

"You...you...you Fucking Ass!" She screamed as she pushed herself off of him.

"I...don't understand?" The Duke asked voice tentative.

"Clearly not!" She shrieked at him as she got off the bed "How can you not get it! I love you! I fucking love you, and you don't love me back! You stupid, immature man! Are you kidding me?! I do not want to be your goddamn consort!! I will not be your fucking toy to take out and play with when you desire, just one amongst many! I definitely will not end up like Heronia, a sad, pathetic woman, desperate for a man to return her affection! If that is the fate that you offer me then I refuse! YOU CANNOT HAVE ME!!!!"

Before he could react, she stomped over and picked up the red handkerchief that the Duke had dropped on the floor. Picking it up she stared at him defiantly, as she held it against the skin on her chest, and slid down. Just as easily as wiping away condensation from a window, the black ink on her chest vanished.

All at once Bryn felt a great lightness as her body morphed before her eyes. Her skin tightened and shifted as pounds of flesh disappeared from her. She watched as her breasts slid back up towards her collarbone, returning to the small little buds she'd bore two months earlier. Her legs shrank to their original form, lithe muscular stems. Finally, her braids undid themselves as the great lengths of her hair receded until it stopped at her shoulder. She took a deep breath as she accustomed herself to her old body.

"Bryn..." The Duke said, but she cut him off. "Fuck you! I don't want to hear whatever it is you have to say!"

She walked over to the dresser that sat beside the door. Pulling open the drawers she removed a simple man's shirt and pants, and put them on. They were loose on her, as Angus was much burlier than her, but they were roughly the same height so they fit well enough. Enough that they would cover her until she could find some clothes of her own.

Putting on her pair of slippers she walked over to the discarded items from the scuffle. First, she slung the sheath over her back and placed the Duke's sword within it. Then she reclasped the gold chain of the Dimeritium amulet around her neck "I'm taking these" She said, her voice cold. She turned to leave, stopping at the doorway only when she heard the Duke's voice.

"Bryn..." He said once more, his normally steady voice strained.

She whipped her head around to glare at him "I never...EVER...want to see you again" She said, her fury like hellfire. Then she entered the hallways, first walking then running away. Tears once again began to flow, as a hollowness opened up inside her. This time was different. This time she knew it was over.

She made her way back to the entrance hall, where she found Lord Angus deep in discussion with several servants. She tried to walk past him, not wanting to draw any more attention to herself. Unfortunately, her bright red hair stuck out and she caught his eye.

“Hey, wait! Who the devil are you? And are those my clothes?!” He walked over and caught her by the arm.

“Hey!” She cried as he pulled her around to face him. His face took on a look of confusion mixed with recognition.

“Oh...you’re Fenrod’s friend...you’ve...changed. Sorry to accost you, I’m a little on edge after learning I lost 3 months of my life.” He released her arm and nodded his apology.

She shook her head. “It’s fine” She turned to leave when he held up a hand for her to wait.

“I never offered my thanks...for freeing me from that sorcerer’s grasp. I assume you had some involvement with it?”

Bryn shrugged “Yeah, a bit”

He nodded “Then it is only fair I recompense you. How may I be of service?”

Bryn opened her mouth to refuse him, but thought better of it. The road ahead wouldn’t be easy and she shouldn’t refuse aid from a High Lord.

“I could use a horse” She replied.

He waved over one of the servants that he’d been in conversation with. “Bring her one of my finest mares. Go!” The servant ran off to fulfil the order, not looking back.

She nodded “Thank you, Lord Angus”

He held his hands up “No, no, the thanks are mine, Lady...?”

She shook her head as she began to walk away “I’m not a Lady. Just Bryn”

She approached the large iron door, and pulled it open. The winter wind raged in the courtyard, as she spotted the Lord’s servant lead a majestic white mare across the courtyard for her. She shivered as she felt the cold creep against her skin, when she heard footsteps behind her.

She turned, preparing for the worst, but instead once again found the young servant boy from the day before. He carried a familiar bundle of white fur; her coat, given to her by the Duke.

She sighed. She didn’t want to keep anything related to the Duke whatsoever, but she also knew she’d die from exposure without protection. Offering her thanks to the boy she slung on the warm overcoat before stepping out into the night. The garment was far too large for her now, but that didn’t matter. It would keep her warm until she found her way to a place she could sell it.

With the servant's help she got herself up into the saddle of the horse. Then with one last look at the keep, heart full of sad resignation, she kicked the horse into motion. The only sound as she left was the gust of the winter wind, and the echo of hoofbeats in the snow.

END OF PART 3