Prisoner of Progress Prolouge

 Three quick knocks on the metal door breaks the dark silence and the door to the royal bunker is opened by a group of soldiers. The soldiers all looked tired and injured. Their armor was broken in places. Their signature Miqo appendages, their cat like ears and tails, were singed and matted with blood. Queen Tara and her daughter Eranor emerged from the bunker and walked out to meet with the king, King Trynamor. He stands tall over many of the Miqo around him, his blonder hair was puffed out and long to deliberately resemble a mane. The fact that he was the one greeting the two meant that the Miqo had won the battle, but one would not even have to ask to know that the losses suffered to get this victory were devastating.

Tara and Elanor appeared small next to the king, but matched the average heights of the Miqo around them. Tara brushed past everyone, her fiery red hair matching the quick determination in her steps as she reached her husband. Eranor was slower to walk, taking in the battle damaged troops and silently wishing them quick healing.

“How many did we lose?” Tara was all business as she talked to the king.

“Most of three whole battalions,” he said in a tired voice. “The navy’s in shambles, all of the costal cantons have been destroyed, and we were only able to destroy but a few of their airships.”

“It was that one sided.”

“They came at us with everything they had,” Trynamor growled defensively at the accusation. “We knew they had better technology, but we could never have imagined. Whole battle groups of walking armor, a fleet of air ships. It’s a miracle we were able to win at all.”

Eranor peeked around a broken section of wall in the building they were in to look out onto what once was a road, but was now a battlefield. The neat path was littered with craters, bodies, and remnants of the hulking mechanical magic armors the elves attacked with. Eranor shuddered thinking that these giant robot suits were so close to her. Several Miqo were circled around one, examining it. It was a black metal monstrosity, vaguely resembling normal proportions with two legs and two arms, though each arm ended in a magic firearm, and the chest opened up to reveal a massive magic artillery cannon. These things could cause some damage and looking around it was apparent they did.

Several of the Miqo buildings around were either damaged, destroyed, or on fire. Gaping holes were in the sides of the multi-level cantons, and the bridges that connected their upper levels were all destroyed. Looking out to the ocean Eranor could see that, where once there were several floating cantons just off the coast, there was now a field of debris. The whole of the floating village was decimated. The beautifully designed Miqo cantons, were destroyed. Now their distinct levels like their shipping level at the bottom, residential, and market levels higher up, and their top level gardens, were now nothing more than floating debris clogging the ocean.

“How were we able to win at all,” Tara said also overlooking the destruction.

“With help from our neighbors in Vas Naga,” Trynamor said solemnly.

“The Naga?!” Tara suddenly grew a little angry. “How could you accept help from them? There’s no telling what they’re going to want in exchange.”

“We didn’t have a choice,” Trynamor said flatly. “If they had not come to help us we would have lost.”

“Without asking what their demands were?” Tara huffed looking away from her husband.

“There was not a lot of time to discuss it dear,” Trynamor said exasperated. “Look around. We do not have the luxury of negotiating anymore.”

“So we just submit ourselves to the whim of the Naga?”

“Yes!” Trynamor screamed in frustration. “Because the elves will attack again, and when they do we will be utterly destroyed unless we get help,” There was a heavy pause over the room. The already tired soldiers stared at the ground with defeated looks on their faces. It hurt to hear they king already admit defeat but they all knew it was true. Even fighting at their best as they did today, it destroyed most of their resources. They just didn’t stand a chance against the rune powered magical machines of the elves.

Eranor stared at the ground with the soldiers, she also felt their hopelessness in defeat. She had thought, perhaps naively, that this conflict could be stopped if everyone just stopped to talk to each other. Obviously the time for that had long since passed.

“Sir!” a Miqo from outside the building.

“Come,” Trynamor said quickly to his wife and daughter.

“What’s happening?” Eranor said in a panic fearing another attack.

“Calm down princess,” Trynamor commanded. “We’re moving further down the gold coast,” he said as the group walked out of the heavily damaged canton. “The capitol isn’t safe anymore, our scouts are already reporting heavy artillery being set up within range of the city, so we have to move.” Tara was already following her husband but Eranor lagged behind.

“This was our home though,” Eranor said with melancholy.

“Our home is gone,” Tara said with anger.

“I know,” Eranor said meekly. Trynamor sighed and turned to his daughter.

“I’m sorry my dear,” she said grabbing her hand gently. “I’m sorry this had to happen. The world is cruel and unfair. I had hope to raise you here safely, but that’s no longer an option for us.”

“What’s going to happen,” Eranor spoke with concern. “If the elves come back.” Trynamor sighed as he thought about the answer.

“The raptors are here,” Tara interrupted Trynamor’s thoughts. A Miqo soldier riding on a raptor was leading three other of the creatures behind it. The raptors were fairly large reptiles, and common mounts for the Miqo. They ran on two legs and had short arms, both with sharp claws at the end of them. Though naturally pack hunters, the creatures were otherwise not very intelligent and easily tamed if fed enough.

“As you can imagine our transportation network was destroyed,” Trynamor explained to his daughter as he mounted one of the newly brought raptors.

“Hopefully you remember your riding lessons,” Tara added as she settled onto the back of her raptor.

“I remember,” Eranor sighed as she clambered up onto her own raptor, gently scratching its leathery skin on the bank of its pointed head.

“Follow close,” Trynamor said quickly. “The way out is littered with war machines. I know the way but it’s a rough path.”

“I’m behind you,” Eranor confirmed. With a nod Trynamor gently kicked his raptor, taking hold of reins around the beast’s head it started quickly trotting down what remained of the road. Tara and Eranor followed suit following behind the king out of what was left of the capitol.

Prisoner of Progress Chapter 1

Eranor was watching with concern out of the window of the town hall turned government capitol she was currently in. The actual capitol of Pal Miqo, her home, was a warzone. Currently being shelled by magical artillery from the elves. The royal family, herself included, had fled to this small town on the opposite border, as far away from the conflict as possible. Though it was becoming increasingly clear that they could not avoid the conflict forever, they were, for the moment, safe here. Though the tension of the conflict was heavy in the town.

Eranor’s blonde cat ears twitched and her blonde cat tail swished in anticipation as she watched the Delegation from Vas Naga approach. Eranor was a Miqo, and like all of the Miqo who occupied the three nations along the gold coast, was distinguished from other races by her cat like ears and tail. She was wearing one of her more informal one piece dresses. A simple silver colored outfit with a slightly frilly skirt hanging above her knees for a bit of a sporty look.

The delegation rode up to the bottom floor of the canton riding their scale beasts. Large, girthy, quadrupedal reptiles adorned with hardy scales and a tail with a club like end. The Naga riding them were similarly armored, both with armor and their own skin. For as the Miqo were known for their ears and tail the Naga were known for their patched scaly skin and the horns on the side of their head.

Some Naga grew more scales than others though the growth areas were all the same. Along the long parts of their arms and legs and along their belly, the parts of their body that didn’t move basically. It was tradition in Naga warrior culture to not have armor covering their natural plates. Eranor noticed this as several of the Naga now entering the canton were wearing sparse armor, at least compared to the Miqo soldiers she was used to seeing. The leader of the delegation was basically wearing an armored bikini with how much of his body was covered with natural scales.

Eranor stepped away and readied herself. Miqo cantons were multi story affairs. The lower floors were usually filled with shops, shipping centers, or other mercantile, and the middle filled with residential areas. The top most floor, called the garden, was reserved for the most important function of the canton. Usually it was a large estate for the family that owned the canton, or sometimes a public park, but in this case the garden was occupied by the town hall. The approaching delegation would have to ascend the stairs up the canton for a while before they reached the garden where she was waiting which would give her time to prepare. She wasn’t invited to this meeting, but it was still important for her to put up a good first impression of Pal Miqo’s royal family.

Finally the Naga delegation ascended to the top floor, and it was clear that the one she saw earlier wearing an astoundingly small amount of actual armor was their leader. She was shocked that among the Naga soldiers was another female Miqo, wearing more simple clothes to her armored counterparts. She was fairly inconspicuous looking, but Eranor could tell, both by the fact that she was a plain dressed Miqo among a crowd of Naga soldiers, and the slim black metal collar around her neck that she was a slave.

It wasn’t uncommon for the different beastkin nations to take slaves from their neighbors during the many small conflicts they have had over the course of their existence, or even to indenture their own to pay off debts. Eranor was familiar with them. Though she, like many in her generation, saw the practice as barbaric, she was a royal. Thus she grew up around her own slaves. So it was not shocking for her to see a slave, what was shocking was that the Naga had the gall to have a Miqo slave among their diplomatic entourage. Eranor’s political smile turned into a heavy frown as she was hit by the insult. The Miqo in question tugged the arm of the Naga in charge and whispered something into his ear, and the two both looked at her. Eranor didn’t bother to hide behind a fake smile any more, the insult was too great. The Miqo slave began approaching her with a smile.

“Princess Eranor I presume,” the Miqo said in a friendly tone. “I am Rosewood,” she said with a practiced curtsey.

“What are you doing here?” Eranor spat out in anger. “What is the meaning of this? Why have your masters brought a Miqo salve to this …”

“Miss,” the leading Naga had approached quietly, especially considering his large size and interrupted Eranor whose voice was growing involuntarily loud. “I would ask you politely not to disrespect the emissary.”

“General Aldyn,” the Miqo said with a calming hand gesture. “Allow me.” Eranor’s eyes jumped between the two of them in confusion. “I am Queen Tialla’s personal handmaiden, the closest among her court to her. Thus she has entrusted me with the honor of representing her at this meeting.”

“You’re the queen’s emissary?” Eranor said in disbelief. She didn’t believe this at all. It was unheard of for a slave to have any kind of title, much less emissary to the queen.

“I would again ask you to treat the queen emissary with her due respect,” general Aldyn said seriously. Rosewood couldn’t help the smirk and grinning look gave back to Eranor. It was probably the most satisfying way to prove her point.

“I’m sorry,” Eranor quickly apologized.

“I understand the confusion,” Rosewood said quickly. “Which is why I thought to come over here and explain things to you. The good queen regrets that she can’t be here in person, and I apologize for any perceived insult my status may have caused you.” Eranor was in stunned silence a blush growing across her face.

“Miss,” General Aldyn said lightly. “We’re due for out meeting.”

“Of course,” Roeswood said brushing the skirt of her simple green dress. “Let us hope that the royals are not similarly confused.”

“They likely will be,” Aldyn said gruffly. “Not that they have much room for offenses at this point.”

“General Aldyn I would remind you to appreciate that ears of present company when you’re talking,” Rose wood gestured to Eranor. Now it was Aldyn’s turn to blush.

“Ah sorry princess,” Eranor though it was quite the sigh seeing the intimidating Naga don an embarrassed blush.

“Let us continue on,” Rosewood declared stately. “It was an honor meeting you princess Eranor.” The two rejoined the group of waiting soldiers and made their way inside the town hall.

“Why did you bother with that?” Aldyn said, making sure he was out of earshot of the princess this time. Rose wood shot him an aggravated look.

“A little compassion, general, can go a long way. I pity the girl and the situation she’s been placed in.”

“It just seems pointless considering,” Aldyn growled.

“Such a military mindset. I think you are about to soon find out that you catch more sizzle bugs with dire bee nectar,” Rosewood said knowingly, giving Aldyn a look that dared him to disagree. He did not. “Besides you need to be more concerned with explaining my presence to Trynamore and Tara, if they are as perceptive as their daughter is.”

“I’ll handle it,” Aldyn said confidently, as the group walked into a medium sized meeting room, probably the biggest this small town hall actually has, where Trynamore and Tara were already waiting. Whether they were angry because a Miqo slave was at the meeting, or because their country was actively under attack and they were pushed into a corner, neither Aldyn nor Rosewood could tell. The truth was that it was a bit of both. Aldyn snapped to attention to break the silence, and hopefully the tension.

“King and Queen of Pal Miqo, I am general Aldyn and this is the emissary to queen Tialla Rosewood.” Rosewood gave a polite bow. Trynamore and Tara briefly glanced at each other upon hearing the news but seemed to move past the obvious confusion.

“Let us skip the pleasantries,” Trynamore said seriously. “Time is of the essence.”

“Quite,” Rosewood agreed. The soldiers that had followed the two in left to wait outside.

“What is it you want from us?” Tara said quickly. “We know that your assistance does not come without cost.” Rosewood and Aldyn shared a look.

“Indeed,” Rosewood said with a bit of solemnness. “Well then. I shall get right to it. In exchange for assisting in the defense of Pal Miqo, Queen Tialla requests princess Eranor as a personal slave.” There was a momentary silence at Rosewood’s rather serious request.

“You can’t be serious,” Trynamore said in shock.

“That is the queen’s demand,” Rosewood said flatly.

“The audacity!” Trynamore said angrily standing up. “I cannot believe queen Tialla would stoop to this level.”

“As I’m sure you know the queen is very busy preparing Vas Naga’s own defenses,” Rosewood said defensively.

“That’s not what I mean and you know it!” Trynamore cut Rosewood off.

“Sir I would ask that you treat the emissary with respect,” Aldyn stepped in to stop the screaming king but to little avail.

“Respect?” Trynamore scoffed. “Respect this display? Respect this queen who sent a slave to come make a salve of my daughter. I’ll show you respect.”

“Dear,” Tara spoke calmly but loudly. Stopping her husband in the middle of screaming.

“You need to think about this seriously,” Aldyn added once the king had gone quiet. “The elves are gearing up for another attack. You do not have the resources to stop them a second time.”

“And I don’t think we need to tell you the reason they are attacking to begin with,” Rosewood added in. “They will make slaves of you all as they pillage through your country, and despite what you think of my master, we all know that the elves are not as kind to beastkin as we are.”

“Some fat load of crap this is,” Trynamore huffed. “You warning me about the elves coming through and taking slaves, while telling me I need to send my own daughter off to be a slave.”

“What exactly are you offering in exchange?” Tara cut through the tension. Rosewood looked to Aldyn to explain. He cleared his throat and began talking.

“We have two divisions making camp in the forbidden forest,” he explained strategically. “If you agree to our terms they will move in on the elven artillery, and help fortify the capitol once it is clear. I will have to go back, but I will return with another division of reinforcements to help hold the line.” The king sat back in his seat and Aldyn understood to continue. “Our intelligence believes that this is the beginning of a large scale invasion of the beastkin nations. The elves will not be able to move a significant number of troops through the forbidden forest, they need to go through Pal Miqo to reach the rest of the beastkin. They are trying to take your country to create a staging area for slaver raids. We want to help you, but we also cannot be seen as weak during these times.”

“I would also like to add,” Rosewood cut in. “That perhaps you had not considered the safety of your daughter. If she were to come with us she would be safe in Vas Naga, and well cared for.”

“She would be a slave!” Trynamore spat back.

“Yes just like me,” Rosewood countered. “And here I am as queen emissary.” Rosewood let the two draw their own conclusions from these two statements.

“Dear,” Tara cut in calmly. “I don’t think we have much of a choice.”

“Firefeck!” the king swore tossing his chair aside as he angrily stood up. He looked out of the window to the conference room in anger. “Just. just,” the king breathed deeply in thought. “Promise to take care of her.”

“You have my word,” Rosewood said seriously. “The princess will be a valuable asset to the royal court, and she will be well cared for. As the queen’s handmaiden her daily care will be my responsibility, and I promise I will treat her fairly.”

“Fairly and well are not the same,” the king spat.

“I think perhaps you should leave us for a moment,” Tara stood up herself.

“We will be returning with the princess to Vas Naga as soon as we are done here,” General Aldyn said calmly. “I will direct you to Colonel Trist. She is in charge of the advance forces until I return. I take it we have permission to take Eranor into our ownership.” Tara gave a half glance to Trynamore who was still seething by the window.

“You do,” Tara said plainly. Aldyn and Rosewood got up to leave the room.

“Would you like to say goodbye?” Rosewood offered as they opened the door. Trynamore and Tara both turned away. “I see,” Rosewood noted. Somewhat surreptitiously as the Naga group was preparing to leave Eranor was coming up.

“Excuse me,” she said politely trying to pass through the group but she was blocked by the soldiers. Rosewood stood silent and solemn as the soldiers surrounded Eranor.

“Princess Eranor you are coming with us,” Aldyn said sternly grabbing Erarnor’s shoulders.

“What?” Eranor struggled to little avail against the giant Naga. “No! Let me go! Mom! Dad!” she shouted out down the hall, but got no response even though she knew they were in there.

“Don’t resist princess you’ll only make it worse,” Aldyn forced Aranor’s hands behind her back while another soldier helped secure her into metal shackles binding her hands together behind her back. As this was happening several Miqo soldier sprang into action to save their princess but they were stopped before they could intervene.

“Let them pass,” Trynamore said stepping out of the room. The soldiers wavered slightly but obeyed the king’s command.

“What?” Eranor managed to turn around to face her father. “What do you mean? What’s happening?”

“I’m sorry Eranor,” was the only thing Trynamore said.

“Sorry?” Eranor’s mood started to shift as things started to come together. They had gone into that room to discuss the terms for the Naga’s aide, and now that that discussion was done, her father was letting her be captured by the Naga. “Sorry!” the question turned into a biting accusation. “How could you? You. You.”

“Quiet!” Aldyn commanded, forcing Eranor down to her knees while another soldier approached with a thick black metal collar. They fastened the inch thick piece of metal to Eranor’s neck. Eranor, being held down by Aldyn, and with her arms bound behind her, could do nothing as the collar was locked shut onto her neck with a complicated screw like lock. Eranor glared daggers at her father who refused to look at her. Aldyn quickly attached a chain leash to a d-ring on the front of Eranor’s new collar. He started to move out of the room but Eranor was fighting back against the tug of her leash.

“No!” she shouted as she tried to resist the tugging. “No! Go back! Father! Mother! Look at me before you ship me off dammit! Look at what you’re doing!”

“Princess!” Rosewood cut over Eranor’s shouting with her own stoic and serious voice. “We are leaving.” Eranor glared at Rosewood and was about to say something but Rosewood spoke first. “There is nothing for you to gain here,” Rosewood said looking Eranor in the eye and sending a subtle message through her gaze. Eranor’s anger was quickly turning into sadness and she started sobbing. “Aldyn,” Rosewood said urgently.

“Right,” Aldyn confirmed. “Come princess,” Aldyn commanded in a neutral tone. This time as he tugged on Eranor’s leash Eranor didn’t fight back and let herself be led out of the town hall.

Prisoner of Progress Chapter 2

 Eranor was dangling from a wooden frame in a small tent. The group had only just arrived at a small makeshift camp on the outside of town, and immediately upon arrival Eranor was stripped from her dress and hung up from this a-frame in the tent. Her wrists and ankles were bound to the frame leaving her body sprawled out in an x shape, a makeshift cloth gag was in her mouth, not that she really felt like screaming. Who would come to help her if she did? Her parents just sold her out, she was legally property of this far off princess. Even if she got out she would be shipped right back to them or worse.

Eranor glanced up from her downward glare to watch Rosewood work with some kind of metal device. She would be modest about showing her whole body to this Miqo, but she couldn’t mover her arms to cover up, though she tried her best to twist her body.

“Hold still sweetie,” Rosewood said twisting Eranor’s body back in position as she slid most of the metal contraption around her crotch. She blushed and gave a muffled expression of shock as a metal cage like contraption was stuck to her privates. “I know, but believe me it’s for your protection,” Rosewood said. “We’re going to be hoofing it back, and the roads can be dangerous, especially in times like these.” Rosewood inspected the device and appeared confident with its position. She adjusted one of her gloves that had a magical focus in it that started glowing. With a bit of metal magic the thing closed tightly around Eranor, sealing shut seamlessly. Only when it was finally on did Eranor recognize the device. A chastity belt. The fact that Rosewood said it was for her protection had some grim implications, but Eranor didn’t doubt it.

“Matching top too,” Rosewood said as an attempt at a joke. Eranor gave an unamused look. The description wasn’t inaccurate. It was basically a chastity belt for her breasts. A bit excessive, but at least she was wearing clothes now. If this counted as clothes. “And last but not least,” Rosewood held open a heavy cloth jacket, with long sleeves. Eranor looked back at the ground in hopelessness. Rosewood took the chance to get to work while Eranor wasn’t putting up a fight. She quickly wrapped the girl up in the straitjacket, and with her fully secure she released the girl’s ankles from the a frame in the tent, replacing the rope bonds with leather cuffs, connected by a thing medium length chain that would keep her from walking to fast. With a leash attached to the metal collar on her neck Rosewood deemed the package secure, and removed the cloth gag from her mouth.

“Well let’s get you loaded up then,” Rosewood said cheerily using Eranor’s leash to drag her out of the tent.

“How am I supposed to keep up,” Eranor whined as she struggled to move with all of her restraints.

“Oh you won’t be walking,” Rosewood said knowingly. “We’d never make it in time.”

“We would if we just took the trains,” Eranor huffed in annoyance. “All of the Miqo countries have a connected railway, we can take them to the Vas Naga border.” Eranor knew this well, she was present for a lot of those meetings, not that it did her much good now.

“You had a connected railway,” Rosewood corrected. “Na Miqo has already destroyed the rails leading in and closed its borders.” Eranor wanted to pause for a moment to process this, but the lead kept her walking on. “Even if they weren’t,” Rosewood continued. “We couldn’t risk it. Not with you. A princess as a salve is an unbelievably valuable prize. You would surely be captured by bandits, or agents from Na Miqo if we were to take public transportation.” Eranor knew better than to pause this time, but still the weight of what was being said was getting to her.

She was brought to the common area of the camp. Two scale beasts were being loaded with supplies for the journey, and being saddled with a covered cart. Eranor was studying the cart wondering what might be in it when she was casually picked up.

“Aieee,” Eranor gasped in shock and looked back at General Aldyn, who put her back down.

“She needs her diaper on Rose,” Aldyn said casually.

“Diaper?!” Eranor shouted in protest. Aldyn shot her a look. Eranor sighed in defeat her bound arms reminding her of her new position.

“Diaper yes,” Aldyn said quickly. “We can’t be stopping for you.” Eranor pouted in defeat, but she didn’t see Rosewood give Aldyn a stern look, to which he returned his own confused look.

“Come Eranor,” Rosewood said with a sigh leading her to one of the nearby tents. They made it inside where two female Naga were waiting around.

“Can we have the room please,” Rosewood asked in a way that made it clear it was a command. The two soldiers responded in kind. Eranor looked on with disdain. “Lie down,” Rosewood commanded, gesturing to a blanket on the floor of the tent. Eranor paused for a moment. “Down.” Rosewood commanded more sternly. Eranor sighed and struggled to lie down on the blanket with some help from Rosewood.

“I don’t see understand why only one of us has to wear diapers, and be left in a straitjacket,” Eranor spat out. Rosewood sighed as she folded out a diaper.

“I’m going to let that go because I know you’re going through a lot right now,” Rosewood said folding the diaper to get it ready.

Beastkin diapers had actually come a long way. Mostly due to their extended time as children. It was uncommon for Miqo to be kept in diaper until they were eight or nine, it was shorter for Naga but still they were in diapers for much longer than humans or elves were, though their bodies still grew. So the advanced plastic diaper made with the help of magic that Rosewood slid under Eranor resting just under her chastity belt, was actually fairly common. Eranor couldn’t help the embarrassed blush as the thing was slid under her and Rosewood got to work applying powder. As a princess she didn’t have the same pressure to potty train, so she was actually a late bloomer with potty training. She still had not too old memories of similar scenarios to the one she was in now. Only then it was a maid at the palace changing her diaper, and this time she was the one closer to maid status here.

Rosewood taped the diaper snugly up, fanning out the leg gatherers, and then helped Eranor back up, a fresh blush on her cheeks. She was a sight. A girl bound tight in a strait jacket was bad enough, but now add in the diaper. This would have been incredibly embarrassing, and it was, but it was also expected. Slaves like Eranor often wore ridiculous things like this, well except for salves like Rosewood it seems.

“It’s all yours ladies,” she said as she exited.

“Ma’am,” one soldier responded as the two made their way back into their tent. Rosewood dragged Eranor back over to Aldyn. “Ok general,” Rosewood said pointedly. “She has her diaper on now.” Aldyn gave Rosewood a look.

“Can you maybe not ... eeep,” Eranor squealed again as Aldyn once more grabbed her off of the ground by a handle on the back of her straight jacket. She was the strapped snuggly into a seat like harness on the side of one of two scale bests. Right on its front leg, where Eranor’s head would be resting on the riders knee. With a few straps tightened Eranor found herself secured tightly to the beast, her legs dangling helplessly. She felt like baggage, and that wasn’t entirely inaccurate.

Eranor felt the scale beast shuffle lightly as Rosewood climbed onto the saddle. Eranor looked up at her from her side saddle seat.

“Yeah you’re stuck with me kiddo,” Rosewood said with a smile ruffling Eranor’s head. “Unless you’d rather ride with general dense.”

“What was that ma’am?” Aldyn said mounting the other scale beast that had the covered cart attached to it.

“Nothing general,” Rosewood snickered back.

“Wait it’s just us going back?” Eranor said concerned.

“Correct,” Aldyn answered. “Everyone else is needed for the defense. And since it is just us, we need to move quickly and quietly. Rose you have a gag don’t you.”

“I’m sure Eranor can keep quiet on the road,” Rosewood said sternly. Aldyn didn’t answer.

“Carynth, you have the lead!”

“Sir!” a female soldier shouted nearby. With that Aldyn hit his reins and his scale beast go moving. Rosewood did the same, and Earnor found herself moving listlessly with the mount.

She felt a unique sadness as they started riding briskly toward the border between Pal and Na Miqo. She knew that one day she would probably leave her country forever. Married off to some prince as a political deal. When she thought about that was almost as objectifying as her current position was. She wiggled in her side seat, feeling the cushy diaper against the chastity cage around her and struggling to move her arms in the strait jacket. This was actually more objectifying she decided.

“You seem lost in thought,” Rosewood said. Eranor was a little shocked that she was even addressed. “It’s going to be a long ride,” Rosewood said with a grin. “As your master regent you do have to do what I say, and I say entertain me with some conversation." Rosewood chuckled at the comment to herself, but Eranor didn’t find it as amusing. “It will help you to get it off of your mind,” she added more genuinely. Eranor looked up as much as she could.

“It just feels weird. Leaving it all. Especially like this. It’ll be the last time I ever see this place,” Eranor said thoughtfully.

“You don’t know that for sure,” Rosewood offered.

“Don’t patronize me,” Eranor shot back.

“And you watch your tone,” Rosewood said seriously. Eranor gave a deep sigh.

“I’m sorry,” she said throwing her head back.

“I’m sorry, m-m-m-ma,” Rosewood prompted.

“I’m sorry master,” Eranor said through gritted teeth.

“We’ll get there,” Rosewood said happily. “Good girl for trying,” she said scratching Eranor behind the ears. Eranor would move out of the way but she was pretty well stuck in place. It didn’t feel terrible anyway.

“This whole thing is stupid!” Eranor shouted out. “I don’t deserve this!”

“No you don’t,” Rosewood agreed flatly. “You don’t deserve this, and it’s not fair. I know just as well as you.” Eranor thought about apologizing but didn’t seeing as only one of them was riding and the other was baggage.

“I don’t know what makes you so special,” Eranor said gruffly.

“Well it’s actually more like I’m not special,” Rosewood corrected with a small laugh. “I’m not a princess, I’m just a slave girl. Which means I’m not worth worrying over loosing.” Eranor rolled her eyes. “I also know my manners.” Rosewood said more pointedly. “When you learn some, you’ll get the same leniency.”

“I doubt it,” Eranor retorted.

“Well only one way for you to find out.” Eranor scoffed. “I think maybe I got distracted somewhere along the way there,” Rosewood course corrected from her scolding. “I’m sorry. I know things are hard for you and I want you to know I genuinely empathize.” There was a silence as Eranor absorbed what Rosewood said. “If you want to keep complaining I won’t interrupt you this time. Might want to get it out while you can. Once we got across the border we need to be quiet.” Eranor sighed then took a breathe.

“Well first of all,” she started. Rosewood giggled and scratched the back of Eranor’s head. Eranor stopped her ranting at the touch.

“Good girl, keep going,” Rosewood encouraged, and Eranor did.

Prisoner of Progress Chapter 3

The group arrived in a clearing. At the end of this clearing was a small ravine, inside it a small river was running, and a simple metal bridge was going across it. Or rather, there was once a metal bridge. Now there was nothing but an exploded heap of metal. Eranor wiggled in her harnessed seat on the scale beast. She noticed the rail tracks they were following continued on toward the once bridge, now pile of scrap metal. Rosewood was right earlier it seemed. Their neighbor Na Mqio had destroyed the rails leading into the country. Likely in an attempt to slow the advancing elves should they overtake the country.

“Yep just like we thought,” Aldyn said lowering his binoculars.

“What’s it matter?” Rosewood chimed in. “We knew we weren’t going to be able to follow the rails.”

“Yeah, but it would have been easier to use the bridge to cross at least,” Aldyn sighed. “Now we’ll have to skirt the forest to get around it.” Eranor could only faintly hear the two as they had wondered a bit away to observe the bridge. She was concerned about what they were saying, but she had a more pressing concern on her mind. They had been riding for several hours now, and Eranor’s need to use the bathroom had arisen not too long into the journey. Only, she couldn’t work up the nerve to actually use her diaper, with the scale beast’s constant movements and also the eyes of Rosewood on her. Now that the two were away and the scale beast’s movements were now just little nudges as it ate some grass, she thought now would be the best time to relieve herself. With same strain Eranor was finally able to open the floodgates into her diaper. With a blush she started to fill it, though the relief was overwhelming the shame. It helped that Eranor was a late bloomer and still had some memories of wearing and wetting diapers. Though the decidedly different circumstances brought out decidedly different emotions. The harness like seat pressed the sodden warm diaper against her, and caused a blush and another wiggle.

Aldyn and Rosewood were still talking logistics, but Eranor got the general idea. Her country, Pal Miqo, was bordered by the elf empire to the east and Na Miqo to the west. The forbidden forest was to the North. When the forces from Vas Naga arrived they cut through the forest, which is difficult to do, and probably why they were able to surprise the elves so easily. There was no way they could cut through the forbidden forest with Eranor being dragged along, much less the covered cart from the other scale beast. The forest, or more accurately the large tree in the middle of it, was the source of magic for the realm. As such, the area around the tree was charged with magic. The trees in the forest are known to move on their own, covering any path cut through in mere moments, and preventing anyone inside from using them as landmarks. The beasts in the forest were charged with magic as well, and capable of casting strong magic. It had been told in old tales that the first Beastkin, who still walked on all fours, made their home in the forbidden forest, protecting the world tree at its center. Now, however, the forest was just as hostile to the Beastkin as it was to the elves.

Without going through the forest they would have to go through Na Miqo to get to Vas Naga. Vas Naga bordered it to the north, being itself bordered by the forest to the east, the Border Mountains to the north, and Tel Naga to the west.

“I’m taking a leak,” Aldyn said with a groan, walking a fair distance away. “Then we can get going.”

“Righto,” Rosewood said cheerily. “And maybe by now our passenger has finally stopped holding it and used her diaper.”

“Wha I …” Eranor wriggled and blushed, but she couldn’t stop Rosewood from sticking her hand against her diaper.

“I thought as much,” Rosewood smiled. “Good girl,” Rosewood smiled and patted Eranor on the head.

“Don’t – don’t,” Eranor was flustered speechless.

“Shush dear,” Rosewood tapped Eranor on the nose playfully. “You’ll have to wait until we stop before we can get your diaper changed.” Eranor huffed and turned away causing Rosewood to giggle. “Gosh you are cute. Tialla’s going to love you. Well as much as she can.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Eranor looked to Rosewood, who was scratching her scale beast behind the ear.

“Well it’s not really my story to tell,” Rosewood said in thought. “But the short version is that my master is not actually very keen to have another slave.”

“She kept you,” Eranor said pointedly.

“That she did,” Rosewood conceded. “Though I think it’s more accurate to say I wouldn’t let her let me go,” Rosewood giggled. “I helped raise her you know. I’m sure you too had a slave for a nanny growing up, being a princess and all.”

“Yeah,” Eranor’s thoughts drifted do the Naga slave that she spent most of her childhood with. “Maria,” Eranor said thoughtfully. “I freed her as soon as I could. I think she fled back home.”

“If I had a home to go back to, maybe I would have too,” Rosewood pondered. “But my master is all I know. She’s never getting rid of me, whether she wants me or not.”

“That’s probably why you have so much freedom you know,” Eranor said pointedly. “She probably finds it hard to order her former nanny around.”

“Quick to jump to conclusions about someone you haven’t met.” Rosewood countered.

“I don’t need to meet her,” Eranor countered just as quickly. “She forced my parents to sell me into slavery to her.”

“It’s not that simple,” Aldyn said, surprising both Rosewood and Eranor by emerging from the woods behind them, evidently having finished. “We need this alliance just as much as Pal Miqo does. If the elves take Pal Miqo, they’ll use it as a staging ground to enslave all Beastkin. We have to stop them, or at least hold them as much as we can.”

“Then why even take me at all?” Rosewood said angrily. “It sounds like Tialla is just taking advantage of the situation.”

“That’s enough!” Rosewood said sternly. “I’ve given you your time to vent, and that’s over. Remember our place Eranor. We belong to our master, and we will respect and obey her. You will stop disrespecting her or I’ll get a gag out for you.” Eranor turned away in defeat. “Yes master!” Rosewood said in a way the indicated it was a prompt.

“Yes master,” Eranor said through gritted teeth. Rosewood sighed, releasing some of her pent up tension and her cheery attitude returned. Aldyn gave a respectful nod to Rosewood.

“Let’s get moving girls,” Aldyn said confidently.

“Lead the way general,” Rosewood said, fully back in her chipper attitude.

The group go back on the road. Eranor now notably more uncomfortable riding in her seat now that her dry diaper, wasn’t dry any more. It was a bit of a frustrating walk as they followed the river looking for a spot to cross over and not finding a whole lot of luck. All the while the forest around them grew denser as they continued on. Eventually though they came to a spot where the ground dipped down into the river bed and there was a spot flat enough for them to cross.

“All right we can fjord the river here,” Aldyn said indicating a shallow, but still fast moving part of the river.

“We can what?” Eranor asked.

“Fjord is a fancy way of saying cross,” Rosewood explained hopping off of her scale beast. “Just hang tight for a bit.” Eranor watched from her seat as Rosewood approached the covered cart and start casting some magic on it. Going over any holes in the wood, and using magic to reform the wood and seal it shut.

“What do they have in there that’s so important?” Eranor asked to no one in particular, though the scale beast did respond with a long grunt. “Well your opinion is noted.” Eranor said rolling her eyes.

“All right you’re up here with me,” Rosewood returned from her task of sealing the cart up. “Wouldn’t do to have you washing away now would it.” Rosewood released Eranor from her seat on the side of the scale best and helped her up onto the saddle proper with a push against her diaper.

“Hey!” Eranor complained as she finally made it on the top of the saddle, a real feat considering she was still in the strait jacket.

“Wow you do need a change,” Rosewood said as she climbed up behind Eranor, basically keeping the girl situated in her lap. Eranor huffed in a blush as the group started to cross the river.

Eranor noticed almost immediately that she may have underestimated how harrowing crossing the river would be. It wasn’t that deep, but the water was moving fast, and it was deep enough to carry any one of them away if they fell off. And they were forced to move slowly, as the scale beast struggled with groans against the rushing current. Especially Aldyn’s scale beast struggling with the covered cart that creaked against the strain.

“I got you sweetie,” Rosewood said tightening her grip on both Eranor and her reins. Eranor was very aware of her strait jacket, and that if she fell in she was basically doomed. Under these circumstances, Eranor found comfort in Rosewood holding onto her.

After what felt like an agonizingly long time Aldyn’s scale beast crossed the river with what seemed like a triumphant roar, quickly getting the cart out to. In a few more minutes Rosewood’s scale beast did the same. Everyone, even Aldyn breathed a sigh of relief once they were across.

“General,” Rosewood said bringing her scale beast up to Aldyn’s. “Perhaps now is a good time to make camp?”

“Agreed,” Aldyn said releasing some tension. “I’ll find us a safe place over in those woods, keep close.”

Eranor was glad that they seemed to be too eager to find camp to put her back in her harnessed seat, even more glad that she didn’t have to ride in that thing while they crossed the river.

“What’s in there?” Eranor though to ask.

“That’s classified,” Rosewood said quickly.

“I hope it was worth it,” Eranor said with a sigh.

“I hope it is too,” Rosewood commented.

“Now what the heck is that supposed to mean!” Eranor was even more confused.

“Quiet back there!” Aldyn shouted back. “Unless you want to attract some forest beast.” That comment got Eranor to shut her mouth. “I think I see a good spot up ahead,” Aldyn added.

“Good,” Rosewood said in exhaustion. “I’m beat, and Eranor really needs a diaper change.” Eranor grumbled quietly. She didn’t audibly protest, because Rosewood was right, she just wished she didn’t have to announce it like that.

Prisoner of Progress Chapter 4

 There was a clearing close to the more magical parts of the forbidden forest. A part where the trees might not move around as soon as everyone went to sleep. It was a small clear area surrounded by semi dense forest. Aldyn had led everyone to this clearing and began unpacking the scale beasts. Eranor and Rosewood were off on the other side of the clearing. Eranor was sighing as Rosewood hammered a stake into the ground. Attached to that stake was a metal chain, attached to that metal chain was Eranor’s collar, attached to Eranor’s collar was a very disgruntled Eranor, and she was disgruntled because attached to this disgruntled Eranor was the still soggy diaper.

“Just be patient,” Rosewood said finishing her hammering. Eranor didn’t even respond. Rosewood left to help Aldyn set up a meager camp with some supplies from the scale beasts. Eranor pouted, as much as she could pout in a strait jacket, left in boredom while the two worked. Once the gear was out Eranor was further insulted as the two scale beasts were tied down onto the same stake in the ground she was. She shifted from anger to a sad acceptance. She was angry at her situation. Angry that this could happen to her. Yesterday she was a princess, today she was tied up with the animals. A scale beast groaned as if reading Eranor’s thoughts.

“Who the hell asked you anyway?” The chain on Eranor’s collar rattled as she hopped up and struck as much of an angry pose as she could against the animal. Of course she was in a strait jacket and an incredibly soggy diaper, so the display was more comical than anything. Even the scale beast seemed to find the display funny as it snorted.

“Eranor dear,” Rosewood said gingerly. “I’ve got my tent set up, why don’t we get your diaper changed?” Eranor looked away embarrassed, but moved eagerly as Rosewood grabbed Eranor’s leash from the stake in the ground, releasing it with metal magic. She led Rosewood over to her small tent, just big enough for her bed roll and not much else. “Lay down dear,” Rosewood said gingerly. Eranor eagerly obeyed, laying down on the simple bed roll. “Geez we really should have taken care of this earlier,” Rosewood said apologetically as she removed the incredibly sodden diaper. Eranor was too embarrassed to acknowledge the statement, though it was obviously true. “I’m curious dear,” Rosewood said wiping Eranor down with a wet cloth. “When did you age out of diapers?” Eranor gave Rosewood a look. “I ask because you were a princess you know,” Rosewood said fluffing up the new diaper. “I know royalty tends to potty train a little late. I know Tialla did. I was just curious if you were the same.” Eranor blushed again, turning away.

“Twenty-one,” Eranor said shyly.

“Huh that is interesting,” Rosewood pondered, applying some powder over Eranor and the new diaper. “Very late. Even for the Biscotti.”

“Yeah well,” Eranor said with a sigh.

“I know,” Rosewood cut in. “Don’t forget I was Tialla’s nanny,” Rosewood taped up the new diaper snugly. “I know how it can be for kids like you. Parents want to put off aging up out of diapers. Guess they see it like a status symbol or something. I always thought that was messed up, but what could I do about it?”

“Yeah,” Eranor said hopefully. “Yeah it kinda is.”

“Come here dear,” Rosewood asked, though it was a formality. She scooted Eranor closer herself and got to work loosening her strait jacket. “We’re not going anywhere. I don’t see any reason to keep you all locked up like that.” Rosewood grabbed hold of the chain leash still on Eranor’s collar and walked out of her tent, Eranor forced to follow behind her.

Eranor wasn’t quite sure what to do with the new freedom, for as much freedom as it was. She had her arms free again, but she was still on a leash. Small victories she assured herself. Aldyn was already piling up some small logs in the space between his tent and Rosewood’s. He looked up briefly at the two. Namely at Eranor out of her strait jacket, in nothing but her diaper and the chastity top she was still wearing.

“If we’re not going anywhere, why do I still need to wear diapers?” Eranor asked having gained some confidence.

“You really shouldn’t be out of your strait jacket, much less be out of your diapers.” Aldyn warned. Eranors face sank with her confidence at that statement.

“Remember what I told you Aldyn,” Rosewood said pointedly. “You should be more nice, but you,” Rosewood emphasized who she was talking to by yanking Eranor’s leash gently. “Need to learn your place.” Both Aldyn and Eranor pouted, having not gotten what they wanted. A successful compromise. “Here let me get the fire going,” Rosewood stepped up to the pile of logs, and stuck her glove with the magical focus into the fire. After a few seconds and a bit of a surprised yelp, a fire soon erupted engulfing the logs. “Don’t know my own strength,” Rosewood giggled. “Come Eranor, keep me company while I get our dinner out.”

Eranor didn’t really have a choice in the matter, the chain leash jingled gently as the two made their way over to one of the scale beasts. Eranor could briefly make out that Aldyn was setting up some chairs by the fire.

“I’ve got to hold your leash so you get to hold the food,” Rosewood sang, abruptly putting a sack into Eranor’s hands. Eranor studied that sack as Rosewood sealed up the compartment on the scale beast that held the sack.

“What is it?” Eranor said concerned.

“Nothing by your standards I’m sure,” Rosewood closed up the compartment on the scale beast. “But for roughing it, it’s a veritable feast.” Rosewood made her way back to the fire and thus so did Eranor. “Some jerky, some bread, and some beans.” Eranor grimaced. It really was nothing compared to the royal meals she was used to, but the gentle tugging against her collar reminded her she didn’t really get to complain.

Rosewood and Eranor returned to the fire where Aldyn was sitting on one of two chairs set up by the fire. Eranor huffed quietly as the implication sat in. Two chairs for the two people who were in charge. She would be sitting on the ground.

“Problem?” Aldyn asked accusingly.

“No problem,” Rosewood cut in quickly. “Eranor was just taking her place next to me. Right dear?” Rosewood prompted.

“Yes,” Eranor said picking up on the hint. Though not enough as she got an elbow from Rosewood. “Yes master,” Eranor corrected with barely contained spite.

“Good girl,” Rosewood ignored the anger and gave Eranor a quick pet between her ears. She took the sack from Eranor and knelt down by the fire, using the heat to make the cold food a little warmer. After a few moments, Rosewood handed a cheap plate with food on it to Eranor. “Go give Aldyn his food,” she commanded in a cheery tone. Eranor’s leash was long enough, and the area around the fire short enough, that she could deliver the food to general Aldyn, while Rosewood still held her leash. She did just that, though she couldn’t look the general in his face as she handed him the plate.

“Thank you,” Aldyn took the plate tensely. He glanced over to see a look from Rosewood. “Good girl Eranor,” he corrected his statement. This time it was Eranor’s turn to get the look from Rosewood as she looked at her.

“Yes master,” she said quickly. She looked back to get the approving look from Rosewood in response.

“So tense between you two,” Rosewood said putting together a plate for herself and for Eranor. She took her seat and Eranor sat on the ground next to her chair. “We’ve got a long trip ahead, it won’t do to have this awkwardness between you two.”

“I don’t think the awkwardness is avoidable,” Eranor said chewing her piece of jerky. She noted the expectant pause. “Masters,” she added.

“You’re giving her too much freedom,” Aldyn chastised. “We need to have her properly trained before we give her to the queen. We don’t have time to be nice to her.”

“She’s not some hopeless idiot Aldyn,” Rosewood countered. “She knows what slaves are supposed to do, she’s been around them her whole life, had one change her diapers.” Rosewood stopped to giggle. “I guess that’s still happening.” Eranor groaned. “Regardless, she knows what’s expected of her. It’s just a matter of giving her the proper encouragement.”

“I don’t think this is the proper encouragement.”

“And I suppose you would have her strung up and beaten at every offense? I can tell you from experience that such a method is not effective.” Rosewood let that implication sit heavy in the air. “I know you’re nervous Aldyn, I am too. Just be careful it doesn’t get to you. We need you to keep your head on straight. I know you’re not that person, don’t let this make you that person.” Aldyn looked away in shame.

“You’re right,” he admitted playing with his beans. “It is getting to me.” There was another silence. Eranor looked back and forth between the two, a new perspective on her situation. She let the comment she had die in her throat and went back to eating her food.

“Come Eranor,” Rosewood gestured to a spot closer to her. “Sit,” she commanded. Eranor shifted her positon quickly. “Good girl,” Rosewood said reaching down to the now closer Eranor to gently pet her head. “I wanted to pet you while I eat,” Rosewood said non-chilantly. “And you do have soft hair.” Eranor blushed and tried to keep eating, though she was secretly thankful for the command. The petting felt good, and she would have loved to sit there and relish in it, but her pride wouldn’t let her. Since it was a command though, she didn’t really have a choice but to enjoy. Rosewood scratched just the right spot behind Eranor’s ear, and her head involuntarily twitched in appreciation. “This is what I mean general. See what you can get if you treat your slaves with kindness.”

“What?” Eranor said surprised.

“Shush. Finish your food. Quietly.” Rosewood switched to a short but not angry tone. Eranor did just that and after a moment the petting resumed. “It’s ok to like it dear,” Rosewood whispered. “It is supposed to be a reward.” Eranor blushed, and tried her best to eat without commenting. Even in her position she had to appreciate what Rosewood was doing here. Forcing her to enjoy the petting and associate it with a positive reward to reinforce her submissive behavior.

After the dinner the group quickly moved to get some rest. Dark had already begun to sink across their clearing, the trees blocking what was left of the setting sun didn’t help this. Eranor sat silently as Rosewood put out the fire. Instead of using water she used a kind of fire magic to dissipate the fire into the air. As she was doing this Eranor had another, but familiar thought. There were two small tents, and three of them. Just like with the chairs, it seems she would be left out in the cold.

“I’m going to turn in,” Aldyn said getting up with a stretch. “Night you two,” he yawned as he sank into his small tent. Now that the two were alone Eranor looked expectantly at Rosewood, who was finishing up her task of dissipating the fire.

“Something on your mind?” Rosewood asked in a way that let Eranor know she knew exactly what was on her mind.

“I just don’t wanna sleep outside,” Eranor admitted meekly.

“Well that is something reserved for good girls. I don’t know if you have been today,” Rosewood gave a mildly accusatory smirk. Eranor looked away defeated.

“I’m trying,” she said quietly curling up.

“I know dear,” Rosewood sighed. “And I’m not that cruel. You can sleep in my tent, but in exchange I expect your best behavior, and if I don’t get that …” Rosewood let the question answer itself.

“I’ll do my best,” Eranor said hopefully.

“I know you will. You’re a good girl,” Rosewood stood up with Eranor’s leash still in her hands. “Come on we’re turning in too.”

“Yes master,” Eranor said eager to be on her best behavior.

The two crawled into the small tent. Eranor taking her expected place on the part of the tent that Rosewood’s bed roll wasn’t covering. It wasn’t quite the ground, there was a small tarp like floor of the tent, but it was notably less comfortable. Rosewood tied Eranor’s leash tightly to the pole in the center of the tent that held it up.

Eranor sat curled in a ball quietly while Rosewood got comfortable in her bed roll. It seemed that Rosewood got comfortable quickly, and soon Eranor was left alone, well alone with another sleeping Miqo. Once she thought Rosewood was asleep Eranor struggled to get comfortable on the floor of the tent. Even her best efforts didn’t really bear fruit, every pose she tried was just uncomfortable. She settled into one of the more comfortable stances and sighed. It was the first time she had a moment to herself really. Even now she wasn’t really alone. Rosewood was just right there, only asleep. Still alone was alone, and she finally had a moment to process everything, and have it really hit her.

She halfheartedly tugged against her chain leash as tears welled up in her eyes. It held firm, just like she expected it to. It was unyielding just like the reality she found herself in. She was a slave, nothing but an object now. A sacrifice to a world that was rapidly evolving, a casualty of circumstances beyond her control. It wasn’t fair, she didn’t do anything to deserve this, but the universe didn’t care. It didn’t care who was or wasn’t a good person, who did or didn’t deserve the punishment it dealt out.

Eranor started to cry at the weight of it all. Struggling to cry quietly so as not to wake Rosewood.

“Eranor,” Rosewood said sympathetically.

“Ah,” Eranor gasped is surprise. “I’m sorry I didn’t mean to wake you I …” Eranor didn’t get to finish as Rosewood dragged her over to her bed roll in a gentle embrace. Eranor was in silent shock for a moment.

“It’s ok,” Rosewood said genuinely. "It’s ok.” Rosewood cradled Eranor into her chest and gently started rubbing her back. Eranor couldn’t contain it anymore and started sobbing into Rosewood’s chest. Rosewood remained stoic and calm, continuing to gently rub Eranor's back and shush her quietly. “I know sweetie. I know. It’s not fair none of it.” The continuing encouragement garnered more tears from Eranor. Eventually though the energy of all the crying caught up to Eranor and she fell asleep still cuddled into Rosewood. Rosewood smiled gently, and went back to sleep gently pressing Eranor into herself.

Prisoner of Progress Chapter 5

Aldyn was off on his own, referencing a map in his hand and trying to determine where exactly the group was. They had stopped for a brief moment. Rosewood was insistent that they stop every now and then to change Eranor’s diaper. Aldyn was a little frustrated at this. Part of the point of keeping Eranor in diapers was to cut down on stops and get them to Vas Naga faster. Though that wasn’t the only reason. They still were making good progress, at least if Aldyn’s map reading was correct, so he didn’t say anything. They had been following the river they crossed yesterday, and Aldyn was pretty sure he identified that river on his map and it would take them pretty close to the border if they followed it.

Rosewood and Eranor were closer to the river, as Eranor would need the water for the diaper change she was about to do. Eranor grimaced uncomfortably while she waited for Rosewood to lay down a large towel to change Eranor on. While traveling, the inevitable finally happened. Eranor had gotten pretty ok with wetting her diapers fairly quickly, it wasn’t that long ago that she did that regularly, but messing them was something different. Rosewood and Aldyn, however, would not budge. Despite Eranor’s complaints she was told, rather forcefully, that she would be messing her diaper, and she did. She grimaced again as she remembered the moment. Struggling to push the mess out into her diaper while she was in her seat was not pleasant. It left her in a very strange mental state. Having to put that much effort into doing something so humiliating and uncomfortable. It left her feeling accepting in a way. This is what she was now, somehow being made to mess herself like that had solidified her position in a unique way.

Eranor was still in this messy, and wet diaper while Rosewood got ready. Rosewood had requested a stop pretty quickly after she had noticed Eranor had did the deed, and was sure to shower her with praise for debasing herself. In Eranor’s state it was pretty effective to. Eranor thought as she was waiting in her strait jacket and mess filled diaper, that if she were commanded to stay in such a state she probably would without complaining, but she was also happy that relief had come so quickly.

“All right lay down here sweetie,” Rosewood said gingerly. She wasn’t looking forward to this, but was still putting on a good face. Eranor silently complied and waited as still as she could while Rosewood released the straps at the bottom of Eranor’s strait jacket and removed the diaper. Eranor chose not to look at the outcome of messing her diaper, and thankfully she didn’t have to as it was quickly set aside.

“Now to get you cleaned up,” Rosewood said confidently. She started channeling magic through the focus in her hand and suddenly a stream of water from the nearby river floated out of it and toward Rosewood, moving like a serpent. Once the water serpent was in Rosewood’s hand she pressed it against Eranor’s dirty bottom. Eranor gasped a little at the strange sensation of the glob of water getting her bottom clean. “Pretty neat huh,” Rosewood said appreciating her own abilities. “Amazing how handy knowing just a little bit of magic can be.” With a satisfied smirk Rosewood commanded the now dirtier serpent to rejoin the river. Eranor was a little amazed at the result. She was totally clean, and dry too. Rosewood was very obviously relishing in the appreciation as she slid the new diaper under Eranor and went about powdering and taping her back up. “There all done.”

“Thank you master,” Eranor said a little robotically.

“Oh wow someone is being an extra good girl today,” Rosewood helped Eranor to her feet. “Who knew all it took to get a little rebel to behave was have her in a stinky diaper for a little bit,” Rosewood happily petted Eranor between the ears on her head. Eranor had gotten so used to petting from Rosewood that she actually leaned into the pets a little. “Now I’m gonna go bury this somewhere where little critters won’t get it. Go back to Aldyn and have him get you in your seat again.”

“Yes master,” Eranor couldn’t help the tired sigh as she walked back to where Aldyn was staring at his map pondering something. “General,” Eranor interrupted his thinking.

“Oh hey,” Aldyn shook his head shaking off whatever thoughts he was having. “Let’s get you back in your seat then.” The general picked Eranor up with a small grunt, Eranor had long since gotten over being shocked by the treatment. She was a little annoyed at being back in her seat on the leg of the scale beast, but she did have a new appreciation for it now. The past few minutes she had been stuck in this seat in a messy diaper, which was so incredibly uncomfortable that being back in the seat in a clean diaper mad it feel like one of the most comfortable seats she had ever been in.

“How we lookin?” Rosewood said returning to Aldyn and Eranor.

“We should be there sometime tomorrow,” Aldyn explained. “I’m pretty sure this river will get us close to the border. It bends back into the forest before going into Vas Naga, but as long as we just keep north at the bend we’ll make it.”

“We don’t have to cross the river again do we?” Eranor asked concerned.

“Thankfully no,” Aldyn said rolling his map back up. We’re on the right side of the river so we won’t have to cross it again.”

“Well that’s a relief,” Rosewood sighed.

“If both of you are good we should get going,” Aldyn said in a more gentle commanding tone.

“Yes sir!” Rosewood giggled making a mock salute. Aldyn rolled his eyes stifling a smile while the two mounted their scale beasts.

“We’ll make camp once we get past the river,” Aldyn said before driving his cart laden scale beast on, with Rosewood and Eranor taking their usual position behind him.

“Well dear if you’re going to have any more stinky diapers, you should do it before we get past the river,” Rosewood teased. Eranor still wasn’t quite in the headspace to fire a comeback at that, but her mood did noticeably shift. “Too soon?”

“Yes,” Eranor said flatly.

“Sorry dear, just trying to lighten you up a little,” Rosewood scratched behind Eranor’s ear. Eranor gave a satisfied sigh at the petting. “You should probably get used to that though.”

“Used to what?” Eranor was confused.

“Using your diaper dear.”

“Isn’t it just for the trip? And it’s only a few more days. I can probably go that long without having to …. You know.”

“Well,” Rosewood’s mood shifted to a slight uneasiness. “I mean we still have a ways to go, and we may take more trips with you, you know.” Eranor was pretty sure Rosewood wasn’t being totally truthful but it didn’t really matter.

“I guess you’re right,” Eranor spoke in a surrendered tone. “If Tialla wants me in diapers, that’s what I’m gonna be in, and that means using them too,” she ended the statement with a defeated sigh. Rosewood was a bit conflicted here. This attitude was definitely one that warranted a “good girl” praise, but not with the attitude Eranor had.

“It’s not all doom and gloom kid,” Rosewood tried to be comforting. “Look I belong to Tialla and I’m doing fine. You’ll be fine too.” Eranor gave Rosewood a look. Rosewood had a special position, that much was obvious. So comparing her experience to Eranor’s seemed disingenuous. Such a discussion though wasn’t something Eranor felt equipped to have in her current state of mind, so she dropped it.

After a few more hours the group came to the fabled bend in the river. The valley the river had cut in the land seemed to have hit an impossible to cut rock face and went off to the west instead of continuing forward. Thankfully they were able to get to the top of this cliff face fairly easily, the land around it sloped up to it gently and the group was soon looking down on the river they had been following after only a minor detour.

“We should try to make camp,” Aldyn said looking at the sun. It was starting to set on the horizon, and the group was tired from the day of travel. Aldyn couldn’t find a secure clearing in the more dense forest like her did the night before so the group made camp at the edge of a more dense forest, looking out into a emptier plain area with some scattered trees the more dense forest was to their backs.

“Need a change Eranor?” Rosewood directed her question to the Miqo riding by her leg. Eranor grunted in the affirmative and Rosewood looked at Aldyn.

“I got it,” Aldyn said hopping off of his scale beast and moving to remove Eranor from her seat. “You get her changed I’ll start setting camp,” He lifted Eranor out and set her on the ground, handing Eranor’s leash to Rosewood. Rosewood hopped down from her own scale best, grabbing the cloth she had changed Eranor on earlier, and moving a little ways away from Aldyn to give him so space to set up. Rosewood hummed as she rolled out the cloth matt on the ground while Eranor stood close by, idly making her leash make jingling sounds to entertain herself.

“Lay down,” Rosewood commanded and Eranor obeyed. “Well this will be easier than the last one at least.” Eranor talked more to herself as she got to work, humming as she did. As she had rolled up the used diaper to be disposed of and got the new one ready Eranor’s ear twitched a little. Her head shot over to the scattered trees in the plain. She thought she may have heard the telltale crack of a foot pressing against a stray branch, but after looking over the plain that she could see, she couldn’t see anything obvious. The setting sun made seeing things in detail a little difficult, however, so the fact that Eranor couldn’t see anything didn’t calm her nerves. She thought back to when they had left Pal Miqo, when Rosewood informed her that she was a valuable asset. She remembered why exactly she was still locked in her chastity gear for this trip. She groaned uneasily as she stared out in the direction of the sound.

“Ease up there Eranor,” Rosewood said taping Eranor’s new diaper up. “Probably just some critter running around. More scared of us than we are of it I imagine.”

“Yeah,” Eranor said unconvinced. She continued an uneasy watch as Rosewood released her from the strait jacket, once again leaving her in her chastity gear and diaper while they were at the camp.

“Let’s head back,” Rosewood softly yanked Eranor’s leash. “Aldyn might burn himself getting the fire started, and I’m hungry.” Rosewood moved back to where Aldyn had already set up the tents and the chairs. Eranor continued to stare out at the rapidly darkening plains until her leash grew taught forcing her to follow Rosewood.

Eranor obediently took her spot on the ground by Rosewood’s chair on the ground, and she’s given her plate of the same food they had the night before.

“Eager to get back home Alydn?” Rosewood asked with a knowing look.

“Eager to get back to an actual room,” Aldyn groaned tiredly. “Have you ever been to Vas Naga Eranor?” Aldyn asked. Eranor looked up from her food in a bit of a shock. She didn’t expect to be talked to directly by Aldyn.

“No,” Eranor admitted anxiously. “I never have. I’ve been to all of the Miqo countries, but that’s it.”

“Probably just as much our fault,” Aldyn admitted chewing on jerky. “We should have been more open with other Beastkin, but you know how it is.”

“Yeah,” Eranor admitted with a hint of sadness.

“Don’t you get all introspective,” Aldyn laughed. “It’s us old guys that are the problem. You young people. You guys care more about each other than we did.”

“Not that it really matters in my case,” Eranor said sadly. “Not much I can do to make things better anymore.” Aldyn grimaced a bit at the situation he had gotten himself in.

“Eranor,” Rosewood chastised. “Aldyn was just trying to be friendly. Don’t do him like that.” Eranor blushed a little.

“Sorry,” Eranor apologized.

“No no it’s my fault,” Aldyn said taking the blame for the awkward conversation. “Anyway, I hope you’ll like it there,” Aldyn said changing the subject. “I think it’s a beautiful place, but I’m biased.”

“It is pretty Aldyn,” Rosewood agreed. “You are a little biased though,” she added with a smirk.

“Oh come off it,” He laughed waving his arm dismissively. Rosewood and Aldyn both giggled. Eranor smiled as she kept eating her food. “All right I’m turning in,” Aldyn got up with a groan and made his way over to his tent. “Night you two.” Rosewood got to work dissipating the fire away while Rosewood watched.

“So have I been a good girl today?” Eranor hazarded a small joke.

“Yes I’d say so,” Rosewood giggled. “We’ll go to bed in a little bit, I’ve still got to take care of the fire.” As Rosewood continued to busy herself with this task Eranor’s ear twitched again and her head jolted out toward the plain. She heard something again. It wasn’t a twig snapping, it was more like a rustling of leaves, like some creature darting through the dark woods. While Eranor was still looking the light of the fire suddenly went out. “Come on I’m sleepy.”

“Yes master,” Eranor said quickly following Rosewood into her tent.

Prisoner of Progress Chapter 6

 Eranor was woken from her fitful slumber by a shake from Rosewood. The frightened look on her face was enough to rouse her fully.

“You need to get out of here,” she whispered using her magic to manipulate the chain and free Eranor from her leash attached to the tent pole. Eranor could hear some scuffling outside and looked back at Rosewood in a panic. “I said get out of here! Run to the forest, keep heading north, or circle back to the river and go back home. Whatever, but get out of here.” Rosewood lifted the back flap of the tent and Eranor didn’t stick around for more explanation. She crawled out of the back of the tent and quickly made her way into the outskirts of the forbidden forest taking small glances behind her of Aldyn fighting off a group of Miqo.

 It was only a few moments of fighting before Aldyn surrendered, much to his shame. Even if there was nothing to be ashamed of. They were ambushed by five rather burly looking Miqo dressed in matching blue light chain armor. Aldyn looked at the ground and grunted angrily. He was sitting on his knees with his wrists tied with a short chain to his ankles, keeping him in place. As three of the Miqo searched his tent, two returned from Rosewood’s tent, with Rosewood similarly bound and set next to Aldyn. Aldyn looked up briefly and met Rosewood’s gaze, which told the story for him. Eranor had run off, that much was clear by her not being with the two of them. Aldyn hoped she would make it to safety somehow.

“All right,” One of the Miqo spoke up, taking a haughty position in front of the two captives. “Spill it where is the slave?”

“What do you mean?” Rosewood feigned ignorance. “I’m the slave right here. Didn’t you notice the collar?” The comment was met with a rather violent smack across the face.

“Don’t you dare!” Aldyn shouted, but his shout was cut short by a bolt of lightning. The Miqo talking to them had quickly drawn a small wand from his belt and shot a lightning spell at Aldyn. The pain was intense, far more than the hit Rosewood had received. Aldyn breathed heavily as the shock worked its way through his body.

“Aldyn please,” Rosewood cautioned.

“Listen to your bitch Naga,” the Miqo added. “We won’t hesitate to fry you. We came for the slave girl.”

“She’s not my …” Alsyn started with a blush.

“Aldyn,” Rosewood silenced the large Naga.

“Where is she!” the Miqo shouted, grabbing Rosewood by the collar but directing his question to Aldyn.

“We don’t know who you’re talking about,” Rosewood was convincing even though she was being roughly held by her collar. Though the Miqo wasn’t looking at her, he was using her to get to Aldyn, and he could tell it was working. For now, though Aldyn held out.

“You heard her,” he said through gritted teeth. “We don’t know who you’re talking about.” The Miqo roughly threw Rosewood to the ground, leaving her face in the dirt. “Come on boys, let’s check that cart out.” The group of five went over to the covered cart and Aldyn did his best to lean over to Rosewood. “Are you ok?”

“I’ll live,” Rosewood said coughing up dirt. “I’ve been through worse,” she rolled over onto her side, unable to get back onto her knees.

“That doesn’t make me feel better.”

“Pfft, you softie,” Rosewood smirked despite the situation. Aldyn sighed in disbelief. In the distance he could hear that the Miqo had finally broken into the covered cart. “Where is she?”

“I let her go,” Rosewood admitted. “Told her to keep going north, or to follow the river back home.”

“She doesn’t stand much of a chance out there.”

“Better out there than here,” Rosewood countered.

 Eranor watched from behind a tree as the group of Miqo men broke into the covered cart. She really wasn’t dressed for this kind of thing, if you could call what she was in dressed. Nothing but the chastity gear and the night diaper she was wearing over it. Thankfully the loud chain wasn’t on her collar. That would have given her away. She held her breathe. Even though she was a good distance away from their camp, she could still see the Miqo attackers, which meant they could potentially see her as well if they just looked in the right direction. She had overheard the leader earlier mention her. They were looking for her specifically, which she found odd. Especially since Rosewood was just as much of a slave as she was. They didn’t want Rosewood though, they wanted her specifically. That didn’t sit right.

“Nothing but some busted magic armor,” one of the Miqo said emerging from the covered cart. Eranor recognized the term. Magic armor referred to the walking mechanical war machines the elves used to supplement their troops as they invaded Pal Miqo. She remembered hearing them marching around outside as she hid in the royal bunker, and saw the destruction they had caused when she finally emerged from that bunker. The Naga must have found a relatively intact one to take back and study. Elvish technology was still a huge unknown, and she could understand how valuable an intact magical armor could be for research.

 With the cart sufficiently searched the group of Miqo all made their way back to Aldyn and Rosewood. Leaving the cart unoccupied. Eranor didn’t exactly know what her plan was but she found herself moving toward the now open cart.

“Now, I’m going to ask again,” The leading Miqo said, while the other 4 gathered around Aldyn and Rosewood. “Where is the other slave at?” The Miqo emphasized other predicting a snarky response from Rosewood. “We know you have one.” Eranor could hear the group clearly as she snuck into the cart and quietly shut the door. On the inside was several pieces of magic armor, lightly disassembled for travel. How it was now, the thing looked like a pile of trash, but she knew the damage this thing could do when it was fully operational.

“Why do you want some other slave?” Rosewood said still on the ground. “I’m not good enough for you.”

“Oh that’s just it dear,” the lead Miqo picked Rosewood up by her collar again. “I think you might be enough for me, but I don’t know about everyone here,” the Miqo shot a devilish grin at Aldyn who was grinding his teeth in anger.

“Oh please kitten,” Rosewood spat. “I promise you, I’m more than all of you can handle.”

“Oh we’ll see about that,” the Miqo started dragging Rosewood by her collar to her tent, with her gagging all the way.

 Eranor could hear everything from inside the cart, and knew she didn’t have a lot of time to do whatever she was going to do. She was studying over a piece of the armor. A rounded cylinder arm some with some sort of firearm barrel at the end of it. More like several stuck together. Miqo technology hadn’t caught up to elven technology, but they had guns, and Eranor got the basic idea that she was looking at a big gun. She also knew generally how these things operated. Inside this mechanism was an incredibly complex magical rune that operated the device. Despite how complicated the rune was the activation spell was exceedingly simple. It was basically just a focus of magical energy.

 Eranor didn’t know where exactly the activation crystal in this thing was, and she didn’t have time to find out. She could hear Rosewood choking and gagging. She just channeled her magical energy as best she could over the whole device before, finally, it started to whir to life. The barrel started to spin rapidly and suddenly it fired rapidly, bullets shooting through the wooden side of the cart leaving a series of holes, and two screaming Miqo on the other side. Apparently Eranor managed to hit two of them with the burst.

 As soon as she did though the other three sprang into action. Rosewood was dropped to the ground as the leader got his wand ready, and she was coughing catching her breath. Then suddenly it was eerily quiet, though Eranor could sense that the three remaining Miqo were surrounding the cart she was in. It was tense as the grouop surrounded the cart.

“Princess Eranor!” The lead Miqo shouted. “Is that you in there?” How did he know who she was? Eranor though to herself, though her mind was racing too much to really process that revaltion fully. She could hear leaves rustling as one of the Miqo moved to the door cautiously, any moment now they would be opening it. “There’s no reason for this princess, just come on out.” As the door was opening Eranor heard another scuffle outside. Grunts, the sound of punches landing, the sound of blades entering bodies, and finally a distinct bang from a gun. Then it was quiet again. Once again the door jostled and it opened.

“Eranor,” Aldyn said out of breathe. “You ok?” he reached his hand inside to help her out. Eranor took the hand and left the cart.

“Yeah I’m fine are you? Oh my God! Aldyn there’s a sword in your arm!” True enough a dagger was sticking out of Aldyn’s shoulder.

“Ah it’s ok, it hit me in the plate,” Aldyn brushed the concern off though clearly he was hurt. It was true that the dagger was sticking out of his Naga scales. Eranor moved to walk past the cart but Aldyn stopped her. “Maybe you should wait here until we move them,” Eranor looked at him confused. “Don’t want you to see this,” Aldyn smiled. Eranor nodded and sat down on the cart while Aldyn moved away presumably to hide the carnage he no doubt just caused. Aldyn must have forgotten that Eranor was in the middle of a battle not too long ago and seen her own share of carnage, or maybe he just wanted to prevent her seeing more. Either way Eranor appreciated the thought and didn’t protest as she sat.

“Mind if I join you,” Rosewood approached, toying with a fairly gnarly looking black knife. Eranor silently scooted over. “Dumbasses didn’t even take off my glove,” Rosewood held up the glove in her left hand, which had a magical focus imbedded in it and smirked. “Just needed a few moments alone to do my metal magic. Shame about my collar though.” She looked at the gnarly looking knife in dismay.

“That’s your collar?” Eranor said astonished.

“Mmmhmm,” Rosewood explained. “I had to give Aldyn something to work with. My collar is made out of especially conductive metal you know. Too bad there’s no way I can get its shape back the way it was with magic alone.” It was just now that Eranor noticed the bruising on Rosewood’s neck.

“Rose you neck!” Eranor said suddenly.

“Oh it’s fine I’ve seen worse.”

“You and Aldyn both unbelievable,” Eranor breathed in frustration. “You know he’s got a sword in his arm?”

“What!” Rosewood said shocked. “Aldyn!” she shouted past the cart. “Your arm!”

“You neck!” he shouted back.

“You two are ridiculous,” Eranor sighed. “Can I see your glove?” Eranor looked at Rosewood and the two shared a silent message. They both knew that Rosewood really shouldn’t be giving the now captive slave Eranor a magical focus, but she also knew Eranor just saved them. So she handed the glove over with a knowing look. Eranor slipped the glove on and brought it to Rosewood’s neck. The glove didn’t quite fit, and Eranor wasn’t used to doing magic this way, but she still managed her healing spell. She didn’t know a lot of magic, but she knew a bit of healing. Something she picked up in her spare time. It was a very appropriate kind of magic for the diplomatic princess. A glow emanated from the glove as Eranor ran it over Rosewood’s bruised neck and the bruise started to fade.

“There better,” Eranor said, only now noticing how close she had gotten to Rosewood in doing her healing. She backed away a little embarrassed.

“Very impressive princess,” Rosewood said brushing the embarrassment off. “Now if we can convince Aldyn to stay still for you.”

“I would still recommend you rest a day,” Eranor put her hands on her hip. “Not that either of you will listen.”

“Absolutely not,” Rosewood smiled. “Now we’ve got a stubborn lizard to heal. Aldyn! Come here!” Rosewood grabbed Eranor’s hand gingerly and the two made their way over to Aldyn who had just finished his grim task.

 It was some effort getting Aldyn to lay down for Eranor, and Eranor and Rosewood had to work together to remove the dagger from the Naga’s shoulder. With that down Eranor got to work with her healing magic, using some plant magic and leaves from the forest nearby to make a makeshift bandage.

“I really didn’t need all of this,” Aldyn said annoyed as Eranor was busily focusing her healing over the large leaf that covered Aldyn’s wound.

“You are ridiculous sometimes,” Rosewood shook her head in disappointment, overlooking Aldyn and Eranor while Eranor worked.

“There,” Eranor said sighing in tiredness. “That closed it up, but I would be careful with that shoulder for a few days.”

“Thank you Eranor,” Aldyn said getting up. “Good girl,” that comment caused Eranor to blush and turn away. She pretended to ignore it and removed the glove from her hand, giving it back to Rosewood.

“Now that we’re all safe,” Rsoewood said putting the glove back on. “What the heck was that about.”

“They were more than just bandits that’s for sure,” Aldyn commented. “Matching uniforms aren’t typical for bandits.”

“And if they were just bandits they would have been happy with me,” that comment from Rosewood made Aldyn noticeably uncomfortable.

“My father sent them,” Eranor said flatly. Rosewood and Aldyn looked at her looking for an explanation. “They knew who I was and knew I was with you. There’s only one way that could be possible. If my father told them. He must have sent them out after me.”

“That certainly complicates things,” Aldyn said thoughtfully. “There’s no way we can accept an alliance after this, and we really need that alliance. We can’t let the Elves get their foothold.”

“Well then just pretend it didn’t happen,” Eranor brought up. “My father was foolish, he shouldn’t have done that. We need this alliance to work. You still have me as your slave, as long as no one finds out about this attack, then there’s nothing to break the alliance.”

“What about Trynamore?” Rosewood asked officially. “If he finds out we offed his rescue squad …”

“There’s nothing to prove we did,” Eranor shook her head. “We were next to the forbidden forest. All maner of creature lives in there. No doubt one big enough to take out 5 soldiers. Without proof that we killed them, then he has nothing.” Rosewood looked at Aldyn who shrugged in agreement.

“Well that just leaves you then,” Rosewood looked at Eranor. “If this is going to work, you’ll need to come back with us as a slave. Without you, the alliance will fall apart.” Eranor looked at the ground in embarrassment.

“I don’t have a choice anyway,” Eranor sighed. “I already came back, and I can’t make it very far on my own.”

“You’re a very smart, very brave girl Eranor,” Rosewood commented, scratching the girl on the head.

“Doesn’t feel that way,” Eranor sighed in defeat.

“It’s true,” Aldyn said simply. A pause made it obvious that he did not plan to add anything else.

“Well said,” Rosewood smiled.

Prisoner of Progress Chapter 7

 It was not a long sleep before the group was awakened by the morning light, and despite Eranor’s protestations to the contrary Aldyn and Rosewood had quickly packed up the camp and were ready to move on.

Eranor was patiently waiting by one of the scale beasts for Rosewood to put her into the strait jacket she always wore while they traveled. As it was now Rosewood only held Eranor’s leash and it dangled loosely.

“Ok let’s change your diaper before we go,” Rosewood sang happily, giving Eranor’s diaper a squish. “Oh you really need one too,” Rosewood continued as she led Eranor over to the last bit of camp remaining, Eranor’s diaper changing mat complete with a new diaper waiting. Eranor laid down confused. Usually she was put into the strait jacket as soon as possible, but they seemed to be delaying today. She didn’t know why. Surely a strait jacket would keep her from moving during a diaper change not that she would anyway.

“You’re not going to put me into the jacket?” Eranor cautiously spoke up, hoping they hadn’t just forgotten to and she didn’t just ruin her new freedom.

“Not unless you want me to,” Rosewood shrugged as she removed the wet diaper Eranor was in and started wiping her down. “No judgement from me if you do. Some find that sort of thing comfy.”

“No no I’m fine. I just,” Eranor shook her head quickly causing Rosewood to giggle.

“Well you had your chance to run away, but you came back and saved us.” Rosewood said sliding the new diaper under Eranor. “So we don’t think you really need that jacket any more. Your leash is enough to keep you in check.” Eranor taped the new diaper up with a smile. “And you get to ride up with me instead of in that little seat.” Rosewood held out her hand to help Eranor up. Eranor blushed at the sign of respect, or as close to respect as a she could get in her new position.

“Wait though,” Eranor spoke up as a though crept into her head. “If I don’t have to wear the jacket then why do I need to stay in diapers?”

“Don’t press your luck,” Rosewood smiled booping Eranor’s nose. “Come come,” Rosewood gently tugged on Eranor's leash and led her over to the ready scale beasts. Aldyn was busy checking the hasty repairs he had made to the cart containing the magic armor. “Is it ready general?”

“As it’ll ever be,” Aldyn sighed stopping his toiling. “I’m just glad we’re close to the border, or at least we should be.”

“And I doubt anyone else is following us anyway,” Eranor added in.

“Quite,” Aldyn nodded.

“Verbose as ever,” Rosewood sighed. “Come Eranor let’s get saddled up.”

With some difficulty Eranor managed to clamber up onto the back of the scale beast, with Rosewood quickly joining her, sitting in front and grabbing onto Eranor’s leash loosely. Eranor blushed, at how close she suddenly was to Rosewood.

“Better get over that,” Rosewood said acknowledging the embarrassment. “We may be close, but we still got a bit of a ride before we’re into Vas Naga.” Eranor grumbled but settled more comfortably into Rosewood. “Now while we’re traveling I want to go over some things with you, since you seem to be in an agreeable mood.” Aldyn started moving his scale beast and Rosewood followed.

“What things?” Eranor asked suspicious.

“Some simple commands you need to memorize,” Rosewood said sternly, not looking back at Eranor as she was steering her scale beat.

“Oh good,” Eranor sighed annoyed.

“Loose that attitude, this stuff is important.”

“I fail to see how demeaning tricks are important.”

“Eranor!” Rosewood scolded.

“Sorry master,” Eranor apologized looking at the ground.

“Good. Now we obviously don’t have the room to perform these, but it’s worth it to go over them first and then we can work on performing them.”

The next several hours of the ride were Rosewood explaining various poses Eranor would be expected to perform on command. All of them fairly demeaning. Begging, sitting pretty, prostrating, and presenting her leash were just some of the poses. Rosewood was quizzing Eranor about describing them for a while as they went. It was only a few hours before Eranor got well and truly sick of the quizzes, but the constant repetition had actually cemented what all of the commands were in her head pretty well. She wasn’t looking forward to later that day, when apparently she would be expected to actually perform them.

“What is prostrating,” Rosewood quizzed.

“Face down ass up,” Eranor answered tiredly.

“You are expected to have some decorum too,” Rosewood said warningly.

“Decorum? While I’m offering my ass up to the master in the room?”

“Just because you’re not in your strait jacket any more doesn’t mean you’re immune to punishment Eranor. Perhaps a quick beating on that ass you’re offering up will remind you of how you should speak. Yes Master,” Rosewood demanded.

“Yes Master,” Eranor sighed not unlike a teenager.

“Without the attitude. Positive inflection and a smile. It’s your duty and your pleasure to serve.”

“It’s not really.”

“Well then you’ll do it or get hit,” Rosewood snapped back. “I was trying to give you the positive spin, but you insist on being negative. Regardless, try again and do it right.”

“Yes Master,” Eranor forced a happy inflection.

“Close enough,” Rosewood sighed. “Perhaps I have been drilling you a little too hard today.”

“Yes Master,” this time the happiness from Eranor was genuine. Rosewood couldn’t help a sly smile.

“We can take a break for now, but do try to remember them for later.”

“Ugh I don’t really have to do this do I?”

“You do,” Rosewood was unapologetic.

“It’s just so humiliating,” Eranor complained. “I mean doing that in front of Aldyn, and in front of you.”

“You need to realign you’re thinking,” Rosewood said with a breathe. “You’re someone’s treasure. When they are asking you to do these things they are showing you off. Showing off how beautiful you are, and how you would only do these things for your master. You should be happy that someone treasures you like that, and proud of your own beauty. At least that’s how I think of it.” There was a quick silence.

“I don’t know if that’s always true,” Eranor struggled to find a way to speak her mind.

“It’s not always true,” Rosewood answered honestly. “Believe me I know. There are some masters who do only do this to humiliate you. They gain happiness from your suffering and will seek to use you to that end at every opportunity, but Tialla is not one of those masters.”

“So she thinks I’m a treasure?” Eranor questioned. “We’ve never even met. How can I be a treasure to her?”

“In your own way you are, and that will become clear soon enough. Though that’s beside the point. She’s going to be that way because she’s a decent person. I raised her to be that way.” Eranor was quiet for a moment. “She’ll like you,” Rosewood interrupted the silence.

“I hope so,” Eranor sighed with worry.

“Rose!” Aldyn called out from his scale beast ahead of them. “I think we’re across the border now.”

“Right!” Rosewood called back, before quickly conjuring a spell in her clothed hand. After a moment she threw a glowing ball of fire into the air, and it circled around the group cycling between different colors in a very obvious fashion. A signal for someone to pick up on.

“Let’s wait up for em then,” Aldyn said circling his scale beast back around.

It was only a few moments before some soldiers emerged, following the signal Rosewood was emitting no doubt.

“General Aldyn!” One of the soldiers spoke quickly and saluted with his arm across his chest.

“We have a convoy waiting for you nearby to escort you to the train,” another soldier shouted.

“Be sure this gets to our research team,” Aldyn said hitting the side of the covered cart. “You don’t wanna know what we did to get it.”

“Yes sir!” the soldiers shouted in unison. Aldyn hopped off of his own scale beast and walked next to Rosewood’s, which was now being led by one of the soldiers.

True enough it was a quick jaunt over to a waiting group of mounted scale beasts, and the group started moving together with military precision. Eranor found herself scooting closer to Rosewood nervously. Moving with the group offered less conversation, but the distance was also fortunately far less than they had been moving.

The convoy arrived in a non-descript clearing, but what was waiting for them was a two car train resting on some tracks that seemed to go nowhere. The train itself was two cars long, one for the engineer and one for passengers: Eranor, Rosewood, and Aldyn in this case. Trains moved along their rails with the aid of metal magic, this one was, no doubt, no exception. The bottom of the train was littered with connected magical crystals, meaning the driver in his cabin could easily channel magic throughout the length of the train easily and adjust the trains speed and direction across the metal rails.

This seemingly random set of rails that the train was currently rested on was probably part of an attempt to connect the Naga rail system with the Miqo’s, which was already connected between the various Miqo countries, but this project was stopped with looming tensions. Now those looming tensions had come to fruition, which is why Eranor even found herself here to begin with. Despite the circumstances that led to its existence, this rail close to the border they had crossed was certainly convenient for them.

Rosewood confidently hopped off of her scale best and walked toward the train, Eranor being forced to follow behind.

“We have some restraints in the car,” a soldier following next to Rosewood began but he was quickly cut off.

“I don’t need those,” Rosewood cut the soldier off, still walking to the car. “I’ve got our new slave completely under control, isn’t that right dear?” Rosewood tugged on Eranor’s leash.

“Yes master,” Eranor answered with a blush. She didn’t really like the idea of being tied up for the whole train ride anyway. The soldier bowed and stepped away.

“Besides we need to practice your commands on the ride over, now that we have the room,” Rosewood added to Eranor. The two stepped aside allowing Aldyn to board the train car and then followed after them.

The train car itself was a fairly spacious car. About the size of a small parlor with cushioned seats along the two walls. Eranor noted that one of the seats had several hard points on it. Likely where she would be sitting restrained if Rosewood had not spoken up for her. The whole thing had a very regal decor to it as well. It was clear this was a car meant for one person, or a select few people. It was probably Tialla’s royal train car.

Eranor didn’t have a lot of time to process all of this as she felt a light sting on the back of her leg.

“Ow! What? Ow!” her question was hit with another sting. Rosewood was standing behind her gently swatting her with a cane. It wasn’t particularly painful, but it was annoying enough to be motivating.

“Come on Eranor,” Rosewood rested the thin cane in her hand. “Show me sit pretty.”

Prisoner of Progress Chapter 8

 The train had been going for a few hours, though Eranor could only pay a small amount of attention to the countryside they found themselves rapidly traveling through. Right now she was sitting on her knees in the middle of the train car, with her hands curled up into balls by her head. She was staring at Rosewood nervously.

“Close,” she said plainly. Then came the attack. “Knees further apart,” Rosewood hit Eranor’s knee with a cane, “Arms too far apart,” again she hit Eranor’s arms. “You need to squeeze your chest,” she hit across Eranor’s breasts. “The point of sit pretty is to show off the goods. Really push them up.” After the explanation Rosewood grabbed Eranor and adjusted her position to the correct one.

This was how the training had been going for the past few hours or so. It’s what Rosewood called reinforcement training, and what Eranor called extremely annoying. Though she wouldn’t say as much out loud, not while Rosewood had that cane in her hand. It didn’t really hurt all that much, but it was annoying and was an effective form of negative encouragement.

“Now back to neutral position,” Rosewood commanded Eranor quickly stood straight up. “Now sit pretty.” Eranor quickly assumed the position again, keeping Rosewood’s notes in mind. Her knees were further apart and she was really pushing her smaller sized breasts up as much as she could. There was another tense pause while Rosewood examined the pose. “Good girl,” Rosewood praised and Eranor’s tensions were momentarily loosened at the praise. It meant she did it right and wouldn’t get hit, and also get something else. The better part of reinforcement training. Rosewood smiled and set a small piece of candy on the floor in front of Eranor. The reward for successfully performing a command. They weren’t a super delicious treat or anything, but the whole situation seemed to magically made the sweet taste better somehow.

Of course Eranor didn’t take it, even with it right in front of her. This was something she learned very early in this training session, she wasn’t to take the treat unless she was told to. So she swapped her gaze between the treat on the ground in front of her and to Rosewood expectantly, still holding her good sit pretty pose.

“You may want to wrap it up Rose,” Aldyn spoke up from his seat. He had been there the whole time and seen every demeaning trick Eranor was forced to learn, much to Eranor’s dismay. She’d rather he not be there, but it was true that slaves didn’t care who was in the room they listened to their masters. More relevant to Eranor, however was that Rosewood would smack her with the cane if she complained about Aldyn being there. "Not too much longer til we're at the palace," Aldyn continued. Rosewood glanced back at Aldyn at the news, with a somewhat perplexed look on her face.

“Really?” she asked in disbelief. “I didn’t seem like it’s been that long.”

“You’ve been at it for a few hours,” Aldyn reminded. “Time flies when you’re having fun it seems,” He giggled slightly. Eranor did her best to keep the comeback to that statement in her throat. It hadn’t been fun for her, and she felt every grueling moment of the past few hours. She didn’t say that though, Rosewood was still holding her cane. She just held her sit pretty pose and gave a small whimper gesturing toward the treat on the floor. Rosewood turned back around quickly when she heard the whimper.

“Ok go ahead take the treat,” Eranor eagerly gobbled the thing down, entering a more relaxed sitting pose as she ate the treat. “Ok then one final lightning round before we get you ready for departure. Three treats on the line if you get em all right. Ready?” Eranor nodded excitedly. “Sit. Lay Down. Roll over. Beg. Sit pretty. Prostrate. Walkies. Ready.” Eranor hit each pose as best and as quickly as she could as Rosewood fired them off. With her staying on the last pose Ready, which had her sitting with legs spread far apart and palms up on both knees. Rosewood lightly tapped on the outside of Eranor’s knee with the cane and Eranor quickly adjusted so the knees weren’t as far apart. “What do you think?” Rosewood asked Aldyn with a hint of anxiousness.

“She seemed fine to me,” Aldyn answered.

“I just hope fine is good enough,” Rosewood sighed dropping the three treats on the ground in front of Eranor. “Good girl. Go ahead and eat your treats.” Eranor gobbled the treats up as Rosewood and Aldyn kept talking.

“It’ll have to be,” Aldyn said with a sigh. “We don’t have a whole lotta time.”

“Yeah,” Rosewood replied. “And she’s not the only one that needs training either.”

“What? I thought you were up to date on all of your training.”

“Please Aldyn. I have always been a model slave. No it’s not me that needs more training. It’s Tialla.”

“Oh,” Aldyn said knowingly.

“She doesn’t really know how to handle slaves, deliberately never wanted to, but she’s going to have to now.”

“Well that part should be easy right?”

“Not as easy as you would think. Come here Eranor let me check you diaper.” Eranor stood up with a blush. What better way to end the humiliating training with a humiliating diaper check. Extra humiliating because Eranor knew it wasn’t dry. It’s not like she was going to ask Rosewood for a potty break during that training, and the poses did not lend themselves to holding one’s bladder. “That’s what I thought.” Rosewood smiled and stepped away.

“You’re not going to change her before we arrive?” Aldyn asked.

“Nope.” Rosewood said smiling. “Her diaper is perfect as it is. Would be better if it was messy too but extra soggy is a great way to show her off when we get there.”

“What!?” Eranor couldn’t help the protest.

“Calm down sweetie we’ll get you changed soon, but first impressions are important. Speaking of we need to get you ready, and you’re not gonna like this.” Rosewood approached with some kind of heavy restraint in her hand and Eranor gave a defeated sigh.

As she was being locked into the thing she finally got a chance to look outside and see what must be the Vas Naga capital city. While Miqo cities were organized into their cantons Naga cities centered around large Pyramids. There were fewer buildings in total but the buildings themselves were much bigger. In most cases, a whole Naga town could live inside one of their pyramids, usually all on the first floor of the pyramid itself. The second floor was typically reserved for public services and businesses, and the floors above that were for government or other management purposes. In the case of the capital one of these pyramids, the smallest actually, served as the royal palace. Eranor could see that the rail they were on split into three tracks that went into the second floor of the three pyramids that made up the capitol. It was interesting for her to see a new culture, but the musings were short lived as Rosewood approached with a ring gag that would keep Eranor’s mouth open uncomfortably.

“Is all this not enough,” Eranor gestured to the contraption she had been locked in while she was looking at the city. She had been locked into a metal pillory. A long metal rod with three holes that went around her neck, and her two wrists, keeping her wrists held up by her head and off to her side. Additionally her ankles were now attached by a short chain.

“Relax it’s only for a bit.”

“If it’s only for a bit then why do it at all?”

“We have our reasons,” Rosewood said sternly. “Now be a good girl and open up. I’ll give you a treat at the end of all of this.” Eranor sighed annoyed.

“This sucks,” she complained quietly but opened her mouth for Rosewood to put the ring gag in. The gag kept Eranor’s mouth uncomfortably wide open, and already she was starting to drool.

“I know dear, hang in there. Oh and if you do need to make messies that would complete the picture perfectly.” Eranor mouthed off an angry comment through her gag though no one could tell what it was.

The train whirred to a stop inside the second floor of the pyramid and suddenly Eranor found herself nervous, even though it would be impossible to tell in all of her bonds. It only occurred to her now that she was about to meet her master, queen Tialla, the person who was to be the center of her universe for the rest of her life. With how she was now, she would certainly make an interesting first impression.

The train door opened unceremoniously. And Rosewood grabbed Eranors leash, Eranor groaned in protest as she was yanked out of the train, struggling to keep up in her bonds. As quickly as she was ushered off of the train, she was just as quickly met with an entourage of four royal guards, at the center of the was a small Naga, even smaller than Eranor.

Queen Tialla, who looked barely out of her childhood herself. She was small and had a shocking lack of the Naga’s natural plates, though she carried herself confidently. Her stark white hair matched her similarly white scales, a rare trait among Naga, as normally the scales were a dark black. This all went with her outfit, which was a regal but practical outfit. A blue dress whit white fringes, whose skirt fell to just above Tialla’s knees, though her legs were covered with white tights.

“Rosewood,” Tialla said plainly, though there was a hint of longing in her greeting.

“My master,” Rosewood said slowly giving a deep curtsey. “I’ve brought your newest slave. Princess Eranor of Pal Miqo.”

“So I see,” Tialla said quickly. “You’ve been a good girl Rosewood.”

“Thank you master,” Rosewood said in a breathy voice Eranor had not heard before. She gave Rosewood a curious look. She could tell something was up, but she couldn’t tell what it was, and she doubted it really mattered one way or the other.

“You may inspect the slave,” Tialla spoke to one of her guards.

“Yes my queen,” The guard answered militarily and approached Eranor, to being inspecting every inch of her body that wasn’t covered by her chastity gear.

“I can tell from here that her diaper is wet,” Tialla commented. “Just like I instructed. You’ve made me proud Rosewood, now release her from her chastity so I can inspect all of her.”

“Yes master,” Rosewood obeyed, and quickly descended upon Eranor. Eranor found a strange sensation coming over her as the chastity gear she had been wearing for the past few days fell off with the diaper that she had been wearing for just as long. She struggled to not scream out as the royal guard groped and inspected all of her most private parts.

“How does she look?” Tialla asked the guard.

“Everything is top notch ma’am,” the guard said finally stopping his inspection.

“Good,” Tialla said flatly. “I would like to inspect her more personally in my quarters. Rosewood you will accompany me.” There was a pause. “Where is your collar?” Tialla asked in an accusatory tone, but anyone could see that the expression on her face was more of a hurt emotion.

“I’m sorry master,” Rosewood explained. “We needed an especially strong knife to cut through some brush, and my collar was the only metal that would suffice.”

“We shall have to get you another one. It won’t do to have a slave wander around without her collar.”

“Yes Master. Sorry master,” Rosewood got on the ground in an almost perfect prostrating pose.

“You are forgiven,” Tialla said, unable to hide the uncertainty in her voice this time, but she quickly recovered and kept speaking in her royal tone. “You will come with me to my quarters and help me inspect the new slave.”

“Of course master,”

“And Aldyn,” Tialla addressed the general at last. “You are needed in the war room immediately.”

“Yes my queen,” Aldyn said with a salute and quickly began walking away. Tialla to, started to move away, and Rosewood followed practically dragging Eranor with her leash. It was a quick walk past the train station to a small elevator. The royal guard left the two princesses and two slaves with a salute as the doors closed. Tialla began casting a spell onto a rune on the wall, no doubt a very specific spell that only a certain few people knew that would give access to the queen’s personal chambers. The ride up wasn’t long but it was awkward. Eranor was groaning in complaint against her bondage, but otherwise that was the only sound until the elevator arrived at it’s destination. As soon as the doors opened and Tialla stepped out into the parlor like room her demeanor changed.

“Can we get her out of this ridiculous get up,” Tialla said in a distinctly different tone that had sent Eranor into a whiplash. The care in her face heavily contrasted with the cold royal tone she had earlier and better fit her demure frame. Rosewood and Tialla quickly got to work against the restraints, and soon Eranor was left now completely naked except for her collar.

“I do apologize for the treatment Eranor,” Rosewood said apologetically.

“The elves have spies even in our palace,” Tialla explained. “I cannot afford to appear weak, even in my own home.” Tialla made no apologetic gesture other than her words, but Eranor expected as much. Despite her more friendly attitude now, Tialla was still her master, though her reaction to her other slave was much different. Tialla had embraced Rosewood in a deep long lasting hug.

“I know sweetie,” Rosewood said gently stroking the back of Tialla’s head.

“I’ve missed you,” Tialla said softly.

“I know, but you’ve been so brave,” Rosewood said proudly.

“There’s still so much more to do,” Tialla sighed as she rested her head in Rosewood’s bosom.

“And you’ll get through it all,” Rosewood smiled.

“At least one of us is confident,” Tialla very suddenly glanced up at Rosewood. “And where did you collar really go.”

“I told you we needed a knife,” Rosewood said nervously. “Right Eranor?”

“Uh yeah I guess,” Eranor said feeling like a stranger in the room.

“Suspicious,” Tialla said playfully. “But I’m glad that metal turned out to be as useful as I thought it would. I’ll have to make you another one.”

“Yes you will dear. Now,” Rosewood clapped her hands together. “Let’s get your new slave dressed yeah? You two do need to get acquainted.” Tialla and Eranor both looked at each other nervously, and then back to Rosewood. “Come on time is wasting you know.”

Prisoner of Progress Chapter 9

 Eranor was pouting a bit as Tialla led her by her leash through the halls of the spacious personal quarters of the palace. Eranor wasn’t expecting to be on the same level as her new master, but to already be being lead around on a leash by Tialla, while she was naked no less. It wasn’t how she wanted to start the relationship off. She was at a loss for words about the whole situation honestly. Tialla was smaller, and it seemed just as old, if not younger than her. Yet here she was being bossed around by her. She wasn’t even being paid attention to, Tialla was more interested in catching up with Rosewood. Eranor had to contain herself a little. It was probably better if she was ignored, considering what personal slaves often had to do for their masters.

“Oh and this will be your room um …” Tialla spoke unconfidently and looked at Rosewood for an answer.

“I’m sure calling her Eranor is fine,” Rosewood filled in.

“Well, I didn’t know if I should, like, call her slave or not.”

“I don’t think that’s necessary, and I’m sure Eranor appreciates it if you use her name.” Eranor straightened up at finally being addressed, but wasn’t sure what an appropriate response would be. “Geez you two really need to lighten up,” Rosewood complained.

“I’m sure you can appreciate that this situation is …” Tialla stared at the Miqo on the end of the leash she was holding, Eranor blushed covering her bare chest with crossed arms. “Awkward for both of us. Maybe we should talk after Eranor has clothes on.” Tialla blushed with Eranor as she looked at the naked Miqo.

“Oh yes well I’m sure this will spark some conversation,” Rosewood smirked knowingly. “Please by all means show Eranor to her new room and get her dressed in a new outfit.” Tialla looked confused for a moment and then furrowed her brow at realization. Eranor shuffled nervously.

“Yes well,” Tialla did her best confident domineering stance, but it was farily obvious she was nervous. “Let’s show uhh little Eranor her new room.” Tialla opened the room in question and led Eranor inside.

Room might have been a bit generous in describing it. Nursery was more accurate. There was no bed, but there was a crib, No wardrobe, but there was a changing table, and no bookshelf with books to read, but there was a rather large playpen with childish toys to play with. Considering that Beastkin were considered babies for much longer than the elvish races, the furniture wasn’t even that much larger than what one might find in a typical Beastkin nursery.

Eranor was genuinely confused at this turn of events. She couldn’t say she was disappointed exactly. As a personal slave, she expected her “room” to be a small cage under her master’s bed. While this crib wasn’t much better than a cage, she at least had a room.

“I had my old room refurbished,” Tialla explained. “And my old nursery furniture moved in and sized up a little.”

“It’s bigger than my room,” Rosewood rolled her eyes in an obviously overdramatic fashion.

“I’m,” Eranor paused after finally speaking up. “Confused.” She finished after finding the right word.

“I don’t think there’s really much to be confused about,” Rosewood commented.

“Maybe I can explain while we’re getting you dressed yeah?” Tialla said anxiously, leading Eranor by her leash over to the changing table. Eranor laid down still processing what all of this meant, while Tialla and Rosewood got to work securing her wrists and ankles to cuffs attached to the changing table, keeping her unable to move off the changing table itself. With a final chest strap across her chest, she couldn’t do much more than wiggle. About the time Tialla was fluffing up yet another adult diaper is when things started to click for Eranor.

“Wait no?! Diapers? Again?” Eranor complained but as she was now, she could only protest and wiggle on the changing table. Tialla finished fluffing up the diaper and slid it under Eranor’s waiting bottom.

“Yes well,” Tialla explained with a blush. “It was my idea really. It’s symbolic you know. It shows how your country is now protected by mine, like a mother might care for a child if you will.”

“So you’re gonna keep me in diapers for the rest of my life then? For your stupid metaphor?” Eranor said angrily. Tialla blushed as she started wiping Eranor clean with a baby wipe.

“If you prefer you can be the traditional pet,” Rosewood cut in sternly. “I’m sure I can kind a kennel for you to spend the rest of your days in.” Eranor was silent at this remark, but kept a grumpy expression.

“Now Rosewood, I think it’s fair that she may be a little upset,” Tialla cut in thoughtfully.

“It doesn’t matter if she’s upset. She’s your slave,” Rosewood was just as stern with Tialla. “You decide how she gets to live, and she’s supposed to accept it.” Eranor grumbled at this comment and Tialla sighed while applying some baby powder.

“Rose,” Tialla said quietly as she started to tape Eranor’s diaper up. Unlike the ones she had been wearing on the way over here this one seemed designed to be juvenile. While the others were plain with only a simple color this one was a soft lavender and decorated with some light blue stars. Made to be babyish, something Eranor was going to be getting used to.

“Or maybe that whole metaphor thing is bull shit and you’re just doing this so you don’t have to be mean to her,” Tialla stopped what she was doing briefly at the comment by Rosewood. That pause was enough for Eranor to realize that what Rosewood said was true. “We have two days before the general Castor is here, and he won’t be impressed with this.”

“General Castor,” Eranor spoke up recognizing the name. “That’s the general of the elf army. That’s the monster who invaded my home.” Eranor started to struggle against her restraints. “If I find out you’re in league with that monster.” Eranor was cut off by a sharp painful smack to her thigh. She winced in pain and sucked in through her teeth, as Rosewood matched the slap on her other thigh.

“You will NOT think ill of your master Eranor!” Rosewood chastised.

“I am not in league with Castor Eranor,” Tialla said more gently. “My goal is, and has always been, to keep the elves out of beastkin lands, which is why I am negotiating with him to being with.” Eranor was silent as Tialla explained, she pulled against her restraints once more but they held firm and so did the expressions of Rosewood and Tialla. “I need you to understand that Eranor. Understand that I only have your best interest at heart.”

“And my best interest is served by parading me around as a child, humiliating myself and my country to the Elf that just invaded us.”

“That is not something for children to concern themselves with,” Tialla replied quickly.

“It’s not your place to question your master’s methods,” Rosewood translated into a more commanding tone.

“If it’s not my place to question, and if I don’t have a choice, then why do you care at all?” Eranor stated petulantly.

“Because I don’t want to beat you into submission Eranor,” Tialla answered honestly. “I’m not that person. I can’t do that. That’s why I need you to understand.” Eranor sighed and released the tension she had been holding against her restraints.

“Are you going to be a good girl?” Rosewood asked. “Or do we need to leave you tied up on your changing table to think about it?”

“Fine fine. I’m fine masters,” Eranor said calmly.

“No, say it back,” Tialla commanded flatly.

“I’ll be a good girl,” Eranor said with a blush.

“Good,” Tialla said releasing a breath she was holding. “Now let’s get you up. I have some lovely dresses for you to wear, and I’m sure you’re hungry from your journey. We can get you fed and then bathed as well,” Tialla said happily. She released Eranor’s restrains and Eranor sat up. She took Tialla’s hand and let her new Master, or caretaker maybe, help her off the changing table. She immediately realized that these diapers were even thicker, and louder than the ones she had grown used to wearing on the trip here.

Eranor waited patiently while Tialla perused the stocked closet in the nursery, settling on a simple dress.

“Nothing too fancy for now,” Tialla mused happily. “You’ll have your bath soon,” she retrieved the dress, a short white one with some floral print across the bodice. “Arms up,” Eranor couldn’t help rolling her eyes as she obeyed and found the dress slid over her. Despite Eranor’s attitude, Tialla seemed to be having fun anyway. With the dress on Eranor, Tialla finished the look by clipping a large pacifier onto the dresses collar.

“You do look exceptionally cute Eranor,” Rosewood cut in with a smile. Eranor was not as amused, pouting as she noted the short dress only covered the very top of her diaper. She looked ridiculous, no doubt that was partly the point. It really didn’t matter though; she didn’t have much of a choice.

“She is remarkably adorable,” Tialla smiled as she put Eranor’s pacifier into her mouth. Eranor let the thing fall out of her mouth and get caught by the clip. “Aww don’t be such a poor sport. Rose, do you think you could whip us up something for dinner?”

“Oh, I certainly can my queen,” Rosewood said excitedly. “Ah I missed my kitchen out on the road,” Rosewood excitedly ran down the hall presumably toward the kitchen. With the two alone Tialla approached Eranor and calmly removed the leash from her collar.

“Doesn’t really suit a little one I think,” she whispered. “But do come along let’s get you fed.” Tialla looked back at Eranor expectedly, and Eranor blushed a little.

“Th-thanks master,” Eranor said unsure.

“I don’t think master really suits me either,” Tialla said thinking. “We can think of something later. Maybe nana? That sounds pretty good.” She looked at Eranor as the two walked down the hall toward the kitchen.

“They’re both a little embarrassing for me, if I’m being honest,” Eranor replied unsure.

“Yes, well some of that is expected I think,” Tialla said sympathetically. “I thought mommy would be the most appropriate, but it doesn’t seem right to me. You’re older than me I’m pretty sure.”

“I do believe so,” Eranor answered.

“I’ll keep thinking on it, but do let me know if you have a preference.” The two had finally made it to the small living area, that had a similarly modest kitchen attached to it, where Rosewood was busy away at a stove, grilling some kind of meat over the fire rune powered oven.

“What’s she doing off her leash?” Rosewood accused.

“I didn’t think it quite looked right,” Tialla shot back.

“I leave for just a few moments,” Rosewood sighed flipping the patties of meat over in her pan. “She should at least eat in her high chair,” Rosewood said sprinkling some spices over the meat. “Don’t think you really have any extra room at our small table. Unless you want me to start eating from the floor already.”

“Not funny Rose,” Tialla silently fumed as she scooted the high chair from a spot in the kitchen and into the living area.

“Wasn’t trying to be,” Rosewood said simply.

“Well hop up dear,” Tialla said once the high chair was brough next to a small table in the living area. Eranor looked at Tialla unsure and pleading. “Rose isn’t all that wrong there’s not a whole lotta room at the table up here, besides it looks cozy to me.” Eranor sighed and scrambled up into the high chair. She didn’t really have that far to climb, but still she was off the ground. She then found herself strapped into the chair with a little strap across her waist and her diaper, pressing it against her. Shortly afterward a small wooden tray was laid across the arms of the chair and secured with some traps. Eranor was stuck, if rather loosely, into her high chair. “Wonder how much longer Rose is going to be?” Tialla wondered once Eranor was secure in her high chair.

“Not much longer,” Rosewood spoke up, entering the room with three burgers on a large plate.

“Ah good timing,” Tialla said happily. “I’ve missed your cooking.”

“Not much of a chef are you my queen,” Rosewood smirked placing a burger onto Eranor’s tray.

“Not quite,” Tialla admitted. Eranor was already digging into the burger when Rosewood set an oversized baby bottle of juice onto the tray as well. Eranor was too busy enjoying the well-cooked burger to complain about the childish drink container.

“Ah gods,” Rosewood exclaimed as she took a bit of her own burger. “Beats trail food that’s for sure.” Tialla giggled as she sat down with rosewood at the small table. “You know we’ll need to practice commands tomorrow.”

“Bah! Why do you insist on ruining a good dinner?” Tialla complained.

“Because it’s important,” Rosewood said seriously.

“I’m sure you’ve given Eranor the run through.”

“It’s not Eranor I’m worried about,” Rosewood said knowingly. Tialla blushed and focused on eating her burger for a while. “Tialla,” Rosewood demanded attention.

“Ugh Rose!” Tialla spoke in frustration. “I know we’ve got to work tomorrow, and I know I have to be more … assertive.”

“Dominant,” Rosewood corrected, but Tialla winced at the word.

“Dominant,” Tialla corrected herself. “Can we just worry about that tomorrow?”

“Castor will be here in two days.”

“I’m aware.”

“And you are not the intimidating queen you need to be.”

“I’m aware.”

“And there’s no point in playing this whole charade unless you…”

“Rose!” Tialla spoke loudly. “I. Am. Aware. Can you please drop it so I can enjoy my dinner.”

“There, that’s what we need,” Rosewood said pointing her finger.

“You are so frustrating sometimes,” Tialla sighed and went back to her burger. She stole a look to Eranor who gave a worried look back, though she remained respectfully silent. Tialla groaned at being silently judged. “Eat your food Eranor,” Tialla said seriously. “You too Rose.”

“Yes master,” Rosewood respectfully gave a small bow causing Tialla to scoff.

Prisoner of Progress Chapter 10

 Eranor was delighted at the opportunity to have a bath. She had been on the road for the better part of a week, not to mention the stress of becoming someone’s slave added on top of that. Also, she was almost kidnapped. She almost forgot that. Yes, time to soak in some hot water and wash the previous day’s events off her sounded heavenly. As she sat down in Tialla’s bathroom it almost was.

It really was a bathroom in the literal sense. The whole room was dedicated to the bath, though admittedly it wasn’t very big. It was a smooth room, with faucets and benches along the wall and a single drain in the middle. The faucets were connected to apparatuses in the ceiling where water supplied from water runes were fed through pipes heated by fire runes to deliver hot water out of small hand faucets when a button was pressed. Already Eranor had taken a faucet and was starting to rinse herself in the steaming water. It was incredibly relaxing after the past few days, only there was one glaring issue.

“Feels great to get all clean after such a long trip, doesn’t it Eranor?” Rosewood asked smiling, naked as the day she was born, as was Eranor. Though Rosewood remained seemingly oblivious or uncaring about the awkward situation. Tialla was behind her similarly naked, but at least more aware of the strange situation, even if she played it off rather well.

“I’m sure she agrees Rose,” Tialla said with a smirk. “Now Eranor come sit over here by me,” Tialla had sat down on one of the benches along the wall and gestured to the floor in front of her. Eranor sighed getting up from her position and sitting in front of Tialla in the spot instructed, just in front of her feet. Tialla was already testing the water coming out of one of the faucets. “Your hair is very pretty Eranor, I don’t know if I’ve mentioned it,” Tialla said as Eranor suddenly found said hair starting to be sprayed with delightfully warm water.

“I thought yours looked better actually,” Eranor said starting to relax at the soothing feeling of having her hair cleaned, despite the awkward scenario.

“Really, but it’s all white. I always thought it made me look like a granny.”

“What?” Eranor said shocked turning around.

“Keep looking forward,” Tialla gently corrected. “Unless you want shampoo in your eyes.” Tialla started lathering up some shampoo in her hands.

“Well, I think it’s very unique,” Eranor said, stopping as Tialla started to rub the lathered shampoo into her hair. Eranor stopped talking and melted into Tialla at the soothing sensation of having her scalp massaged.

“I suppose it is that,” Tialla said dismissing the comment.

“You should learn how to take a compliment dear,” Rosewood scolded from her spot in the room as she was washing herself.

“I thought you were playing the salve tonight, Rose,” Tialla shot back with a scornful look “Shouldn’t really be talking back to your master like that. If that’s what you are.”

“Hmmm quite right,” Rosewood took the comment in stride showing no real effect from it. Tialla scoffed angrily, Eranor tilted her head back toward the girl.

“She’s just so dense sometimes,” Tialla said quietly as she started rinsing the shampoo out of Eranor’s hair.

“I do get that impression,” Eranor agreed.

“All right stand up let’s get the rest of you clean,” Tialla commanded gently, Eranor obeyed rising up to her feet as Tialla started lathering up some kind of liquid body wash into a brush. Though the body washing was a little rougher than the hair, Eranor still found it relaxing. “Wow you were dirty,” Tialla said looking at the clouded water washing off Eranor.

“It was a long trip,” Eranor said vaguely after a look of warning from Rosewood.

“So I’ve heard,” Tialla said obviously suspicious. “It seems even you are keeping secrets from me.”

“For your own good,” Rosewood said seriously. Tialla scoffed.

“She’s actually right about that one,” Eranor chimed in. Tialla gave Eranor a look but released a breath in acknowledgment.

“So it seems, but I will find out eventually.” Tialla said calmly spraying Eranor clean with one of the faucets. Rosewood seemed to be done as well and was casually exiting the bathroom, though the fact she said nothing to Tialla as she left didn’t go unnoticed. Tialla grumbled as she left.

“Seems pretty bad,” Eranor said cautiously.

“She’s just so …” Tialla held her arms up in a vague shape struggling to find the right words.

“I know what you mean,” Eranor said genuinely. “My nurse maid was the same way. Though I guess I see now she only wanted me to be my best. I kinda miss her,” Eranor said losing herself in thought a bit. Tialla took the comment to heart and seemed to calm down some.

“Yeah, I guess you may be right.”

“All right,” Eranor said suddenly. “Your turn.”

“My turn what?!” Tialla demanded.

“Your turn to get clean,” Eranor said plainly. “Come on you did me the least I can do is return the favor.”

“Eranor that’s not how this works. You’re the slave here.”

“Sounds exactly like something a slave would do.”

“Not that kind of slave though,” Tialla defended horribly. “It’s not like that. Rose would kill me if …”

“Rose left,” Eranor reminded. “And I’m sure she would kill you if you took me off my leash. You did, and here you stand still breathing.” Tialla gave Eranor a look. Not having any rebuttal to what she was saying but still seeming to adamantly deny her. “Can I just do this for you? You seem like you need it.” Tialla closed her eyes.

“Just be sure you use that green bottle on my scales,” she explained. “They’re a little sensitive. I don’t have a lot of them so I like to keep the ones I have.”

“Yes master,” Eranor spoke the very proper name in a way that wasn’t at all salve like. “Ok sit down right here in front of me.” Tialla obeyed but kept a feigned regal air about her as Eranor got to work lathering the same shampoo in her hands.

“I said you should come up with something else,” Tialla said back, she was quieted as Eranor started rubbing the shampoo in.

“I’m still working on it,” Eranor paused for a moment. “Nana.” Tialla smiled in satisfaction. “If you don’t mind me asking, how long ago was it? You know, when your parents.” Eranor didn’t finish the thought but Tialla knew what she meant.

“About a year ago,” Tialla said thoughtfully. “Died in a hunting trip. And of course, I’m their only child so.”

“I can’t imagine the stress,” Eranor was still rubbing shampoo into Tialla’s hair. “Being fast tracked to leadership like, not to mention dealing with your parents’ death.”

“Well, though it may be off putting to say, their death did not hit me especially hard.”

“I know what you mean,” Eranor was sympathetic and she started rinsing the shampoo out of Tialla’s hair. “I don’t really have any love lost for my parents.”

“That may be partially my fault.”

“Please, they were treating me like property long before they sold me off as a slave. If it wasn’t to you, I’d probably be doing this to some minor lord's son or something,” Eranor had finished rinsing and was ringing some of the water out of Tialla’s hair. “When I say that I guess being here isn’t the worst. Though there are some things I’d opt to change of course … Nana” Tialla couldn’t help a giggle at the comment.

“I did not know my baby would be so witty,” she smirked as Eranor motioned for her to stand up. “It’s exactly as you say though,” she continued talking while Eranor lathered up the body wash onto a brush. “Just like you I was destined to be married off to some lord as well. Until my parents died, and I had to take the throne. Funny how all of the royal kids are the ones getting married off instead of doing the marrying.”

“You get more bargaining power when your offering up a chance at the throne,” Eranor said cynically. “Lucky for you that your parents died before they could ship you off,” Eranor started gently scrubbing Tialla.

“That is quite the horrible thing to say,” Tialla replied neutrally.

“It’s not wrong though.”

“No …. No it is not.” There was a silence for a moment, the comments made between the two girls weight the atmosphere of the room heavily. “It seems very disingenuous of me to be complaining about my circumstances. Some people would kill to be queen. Or even princess.”

“I’m more than happy to do all of your complaining for you,” Eranor smiled as she started to rinse Tialla’s body off. “Consider it one of the many services of you new baby slave Nana.”

“What would I do without my royal complainer?” Tialla giggled some. “I think Nana is growing on me.”

“Yeah? I’ll stick with it then,” Eranor said moving to the green bottle. “All right you’re going to have to explain this one to me.”

“Oh well that one you don’t really lather up you just kinda rub it in the scales against the grain,” Tialla started to explain. “Maybe I should just do it.”

“No!” Eranor scolded pressing against Tialla’s chest. “I came this far, you’re gonna let me finish the job.” Tialla blushed silently and let Eranor continue. The sensation of rubbing against the grain of Tialla’s scales was very strange, something Eranor didn’t quite expect from the otherwise soft Tialla.

“I know, it does feel a little weird,” Tialla apologized. “Imagine how it feels for me. Surely you Miqo also have some strange hygiene routines.” Eranor blushed and look at Tialla in the eyes before quickly averting her gaze.

“Tail wax,” Eranor said quickly. “We have to apply tail wax, about once a month, or it gets all frizzy.”

“Really?” Eranor said laughing.

“Hey I didn’t laugh at yours!” Eranor protested.

“Fair enough. I think perhaps I will get you some then. Can’t have my little kitten with a frizzy tail.”

“Kitten?”

“Works well with nana I think.” Eranor sighed in acceptance. “If you’re done kitten. I do believe it is time for bed.”

“I could sleep for a thousand years I think,” Eranor said as the two exited the bathroom.

“I’ll bet you can, but you’ll have to settle for a night for now,” Tialla donned a bathrobe that was waiting in the bathroom and after she was clothed, she led Eranor back to the nursery. “Ok hop up on the changing table.” Eranor rolled her eyes but laid down on the thing. “Oh, it’s not that bad. I should know I’m not that far out of diapers myself.” Tialla spoke calmly as she prepared a diaper under Eranor.

“Same here,” Eranor admitted. “Though that doesn’t make me eager to go back into them.”

“Oh, you’re parents were slow to potty train you too?” Tialla questioned as she applied a cream and powder to Eranor.

“Yeah. Just another way for them to show me off.”

“Well, I hope you don’t mind that I think it’s cute, and definitely will be showing you off.” Tialla smiled taping up the diaper snuggly. Eranor scoffed a bit. “Fair enough. Now give me a color for your onesie.” Eranor couldn’t even be surprised at this twist. Even back home she still had a few onesies that she still fit into from her baby years that she would wear to bed from time to time.

“Pink,” she said plainly.

“Pink it is,” Tialla said rummaging through the closet until she proudly revealed a soft pink onesie decorated with yellow flowers. Eranor raised her arms up and found the thing slid over her head and Tialla snapping the crotch shut. “Now up in the crib.” Tialla pointed, but Eranor was already shambling her way to the crib. “You do look cozy in there,” Tialla commented as she slid the side of the crib up and then shut closed the top locking the whole thing shut.

“Beats sleeping on the ground.”

“High praise,” Tialla said sarcastically handing Eranor a pacifier attached to a clip through the bars of the crib. Eranor pondered the soother for a moment before attaching it to her onesie. “Do you want me to get you a bottle?”

“I’m already about to pass out. I'll be fine.”

“Ok Eranor,” Tialla moved to leave the room “I’ll see you in the morning I hope you rest well.”

“Same to you,” Eranor called out as Tialla left the nursery. She walked past the door to Rosewood’s room on the way back to her own, not really noticing that the Miqo was watching from her door with a happy smile on her face. With Tialla gone, Rosewood made her way back to her room to go to bed herself.

Prisoner of Progress Chapter 11

 Eranor yawned, stretching as she started to wake up. Her hands hit the bars of her confined crib. Despite her sleeping arrangements, she had slept unbelievably well. Probably because it was the first “bed” she had slept in after several days. She could probably have slept for the rest of the day if not for a certain Naga waking her with a grin.

“I’m glad you slept well,” Tialla said donning a large grin.

“Yuh esh,” Eranor stopped before realizing why her speech sounded so warped. At some point during the night the pacifier clipped to her onesie had made its way into her mouth and obviously she had enjoyed suckling it. She let the pacifier fall from her mouth and get caught by the clip as she blushed.

“Aww I thought it was cute,” Tialla said with a smile. “How’s your diaper doing?”

“It’s fine,” Eranor blushed while Tialla had opened the crib up for Eranor to step out. “It’s not like I actually wet the bed anymore.”

“Well, I’m sure you’ll be ready for a change when we get back,” Tialla said opening Eranor’s closet looking for a suitable outfit.

“When we get back?” Eranor questioned concerned.

“Yes. I do have a small errand to run. Replacing rosewood’s collar. Won’t do to have her in some cheap replacement when general Castor gets here.” Eranor involuntarily stuck out her tongue at mention of his name though Tialla didn’t notice.

“And I suppose it’s a chance to show off your new slave too,” Eranor guessed with a sour tone. Tialla sighed as she had found an appropriate outfit. It was a purple dress with white accent frills and a distinct heart shaped keyhole around the chest with an enticing white frill.

“Yes,” Tialla said matching Eranor’s sour note. “Rose thought it would be a good time for me to go,” Tialla paused with discomfort, “walkies with my slaves.” Eranor sighed in frustration. “I’m just as annoyed by this as you are.”

“Are you really?” Eranor questioned raising an eyebrow.

“Ok fair enough, you are probably more annoyed,” Tialla admitted defeat. “Look, just bear with me for this ok. If you’re a good girl we can have ice cream when we get back.” Eranor rolled her eyes at being called good girl, but it was clear Tialla was waiting for an appropriate response.

“Yes Nana,” Eranor sighed petulantly. With a smile Tialla finally unlocked the crib Eranor was in, and Eranor crawled out.

“Do you like the dress I picked out?” Tialla asked hopefully.

“It is,” Eranor stopped searching for the right word. Really, she didn’t want to caught dead in the thing. It was overly childish, would be not nearly long enough to cover her diaper, and showed entirely too much cleavage. This was all likely the point though. “It’s cute.” Eranor settled on a harmless compliment.

“I know,” Tialla said sympathetically. “You should see what Rose is wearing though,” Tialla continued unsnapping Eranor’s onesie.

“Yeah, but she isn’t going to care,” Eranor countered. “It’s all her idea.” The onesie was brought over Eranor’s head and put away.

“True enough,” Tialla sighed replacing the onesie with the dress. Eranor was right, the thing did nothing to hide the childish print diaper she still had on from the night before. “She is being just as frustrating about this,” Tialla sighed zipping up Eranor’s dress. “She even went back to pick out an even skimpier outfit then what I had picked out.”

“She was probably going to do that no matter what you had picked.”

“I know that now,” Tialla huffed. She was looking into Eranor’s changing table until she retrieved a pink leather chest harness. Eranor looked at the thing and grimaced.

“It’s better than dragging you around by your collar. Be a good girl and quit pouting,” Tialla huffed, in a bad mood from the conversation, and started fastening the harness onto Eranor.

“Did you get the baby ready to go?” Rosewood said entering the nursery.

What Rosewood was wearing could barely be describe as clothes. The top she was wearing was just a small piece of cloth leaving half of her breasts exposed and threatening to reveal the part that would be kept covered. Similarly, her skirt wasn’t even that. It was a half foot long skirt, that was open in the front giving an unblocked look at the tight panties underneath it.

“Good god,” Eranor said under her breath.

“Tell me about it,” Tialla sighed finally getting Eranor’s harness on snuggly.

“You look cute Eranor,” Rosewood commented happily.

“You look revealing,” Eranor chastised.

“Listen,” Rosewood was about to go off into a rant but she was cut off.

“I don’t wanna hear this again, Rose.” Tialla stopped her. She had clipped a pink lead onto the back of Eranor’s harness and moved quickly to Rosewood attaching a black lead to the temporary black leather collar around her neck.

“Right sorry master,” Rosewood said giving a respectful bow. Eranor shot Rosewood a look that could kill.

“Let’s go you two, out in front.” Tialla was donning a faux domly persona. Eranor and Rosewood both obeyed. Eranor hoped that the ruse would last for their trip out to wherever market they were going.

It was an embarrassing trip for Eranor. The three had ridden a train from the royal pyramid to one of the two more public ones and were currently on the second market floor walking around. Of course, all eyes were on the three of them, and Eranor could feel it. She knew that everyone could see and was likely looking at her diaper, and the childish chest harness and paci clipped to her dress only cemented her position. They were just as much so taking in all of Rosewood that was on display. Even Tialla, who was the most modestly dressed with a blouse and some cloth trousers, did not escape stares. Anyone would notice the owner of two loudly dressed slaves even if they weren’t a new queen. Tialla happened to be both.

The only thing that kept Eranor going was, somewhat ironically, her sympathy for what Tialla was going through. She wasn’t the one degrading herself, but it was clear she didn’t agree with, and wasn’t a fan of, this practice. What’s more, the second-hand embarrassment she was feeling from Eranor, and especially from Rosewood, was obvious. To make things worse Rosewood seemed to be completely unaffected by it. Eranor might have thought that the whole thing would be a little better for both her and Tialla if Rosewood were a little more affected by her situation, but she, by all appearances, wasn’t. This was just a normal day to her.

“We’re here,” Tialla said with a sigh as the group approached a medium sized shop. “Thank god,” Tialla said under her breath. “Well go on in girls, no time to waste.” Eranor moved in out of embarrassment and Rosewood out of obedience.

The shop was a cluttered blacksmiths shop. The only part of the shop that wasn’t covered with swords, or axes, or shields was the counter, behind it was a forge giving off the only light in the room, but it was bright enough to have to room well lit.

“Well princess Eranor,” a smooth voice greeted the three. A tall Naga lady made her way from behind the forge to the counter. She was tall and slender, wearing a simple shirt and pants with a blacksmith’s apron. Her exposed arms were completely covered in the Naga scales, a rather unique trait, and one the served her well smithing. “What interesting toys you’ve brought with you.” She said particularly looking at Rosewood.

“Don’t remind me,” Tialla said quietly, but followed it up more confidently. “And it seems one of my toys has lost the nice collar that I’ve made for her. I was hoping to get a replacement. Today if possible.”

“Of course, my queen,” the Naga gave a small bow. “I do wonder what adventure caused our scantily clad Rosewood to lose something so valuable.”

“I do as well, but she isn’t telling.”

“She seems to be keeping no other secrets,” Rosewood silently pouted as the Naga was clearly talking at her disapprovingly. “Of course, my forge is yours my queen. I do have a small sample of the metal remaining. I assume you will want to meld it yourself like you did last time.” Tialla glanced at Rosewood.

“I suppose I will. It is important to her after all.” Tialla answered with a small huff. With a gesture, the Naga blacksmith led the group toward the forge, and placed a small ingot of a black iridescent metal into the hot forge.

“You still know the proper magics? You will have to make it with magic if you still want it to be properly reactive.”

“I am a bit out of practice,” Tialla said, but she confidently removed a slender wand from a pouch at her side. The shaft of her wand, like most wands, was made from magic focusing crystal, much like a crystal one might find at the top of a staff or in a magical glove like Rosewood used. “I think I can manage.” With a nod the blacksmith removed a large bowl from the forge that had the liquified metal inside of it.

“Be quick before it cools. If you need me to do it for you, I am nearby.”

“I won’t.”

“I’m merely offering my queen,” the blacksmith bowed and calmly returned to the counter.

Eranor and Rosewood watched, both standing a distance away that was about as long as their leads, as Tialla readied her wand and focused it on the bowl of molten metal. As the wand glowed the metal rose out of the bowl and started swirling around until it formed itself into a molten metal ring. Tialla squinted as she started to grab some water from a nearby bucket with magic while still holding the metal in a ring shape. As she started to form the water with magic into a similar ring shape as the metal she gave a grunt and the water lost its shape splashing onto the table. The same almost happened to the metal but Tialla managed to magically funnel it back into the bowl it came from.

Eranor and Rosewood looked on in concern.

“Do you need help dear?” Rosewood asked.

“No no I got it. Just gotta go again.”

“Tialla you’re going to have less mana than when you started," Eranor pointed out. "It’s only going to be harder.”

“I just need to focus more,” Tialla said trying to brush off Eranor.

“You need to stop being stubborn,” Eranor huffed and approached Tialla, holding onto the wand with her own hand resting above Tialla’s.

“Eranor!” Tialla barked angrily.

“Be mad at me later,” Eranor fired back. “But for now, just let me help you. The metal is cooling.” Tialla sighed in frustration. “I’ll do the water ok.” Tialla nodded and repeated her trick before, magically grabbing the hot metal and spinning it into a circle. At the same time Eranor, using the same wand, focused on grabbing more water and forming it into a ring, spinning in the opposite direction from the metal.

“Ok,” Tialla spoke through gritted teeth. “Now pull em together.” Eranor nodded and the two moved their spinning rings until they met in a cloud of steam until the water was mostly evaporated. Mostly. A few droplets of water remined, and had arranged themselves into a complex pattern inside the solid ring, the thin droplets looking like a spider’s web on the inside and making an alien yet familiar pattern. It existed for only a moment before the water evaporated and the now completed collar fell to the table. Sticking on its side for just long enough to be unnatural before falling over.

“Did you do that?” Tialla asked shocked. “That thing with the water?”

“That wasn’t me,” Eranor said just as shocked. Rosewood had approached the collar while the two were talking and picked it up. She was amazed as with only a little bit of magical energy; she was able to make the collar levitate a few inches off her hand. Without even needing a proper magical focus.

“Tialla this is incredible,” Rosewood said in shocked happiness. “I dunno what you two did but this thing is amazing.” She held up the floating collar to the other two girls. “This is way more reactive than my last collar.” Tialla took it from Rosewood and was also amazed at how easily she could get it to float. With a tap of her wand the single solid piece of metal flew apart into several puzzle-like pieces that still floated in the loose shape of the original, only expanded.

“That is impressive,” the blacksmith said entering the room. The sudden entrance shocked Tialla, and the pieces of the collar all flew back into their original shape and the collar landed gently in Tialla’s hands. “Even for me. My queen, I do believe you’ve made something special there.” Tialla looked at Eranor who blushed and looked away.

“Well,” Tialla said shaken a bit. “I take it you’ll be more careful with this one Rose?”

“I ...” Rosewood paused for a second, looking at Tialla and then to Eranor. “I think maybe you should give that one to Eranor,” Rosewood said with a smile. “She did help you make it after all.” Eranor and Tialla both blushed.

“I mean if you’re sure,” Eranor said quietly.

“But what are we going to do for yours?” Tialla protested.

“I’m more than happy to make her one,” the blacksmith offered.

“Yeah, you’re too beat to try again dear,” Rosewood said shrugging. "You should let her do it."

“But I did this for you,” Tialla said quietly. “I …” she trailed off.

“It’s ok dear,” Rosewood said with a genuine smile. “You’ve done enough for me. This one was meant for Eranor.” Tialla turned to look at Eranor, as she did the collar started floating listlessly in her hands. Eranor and Tialla slowly approached each other.

“Well,” Tialla gulped nervously. She didn’t know why but the moment seemed to be heavy for her, and she could tell Eranor felt the same. “Sit!” Tialla commanded shakily, though Eranor obeyed all the same, getting on her knees in front of Tialla. Tialla tapped the collar with her wand and it flew off into its expanded puzzle piece shape. She knelt with Eranor and guided the expanded loop over her head until it was roughly around her neck. Then the collar shut itself hanging only a little loosely around Eranor’s neck.

Eranor held the collar with her hands. It was unbelievably light, yet she could feel it’s weight around her neck. She had the distinct feeling that this moment was an important one, but at the same time, that wasn’t a bad thing.

“I think it looks beautiful on you,” Tialla said quickly.

“Yeah,” Eranor agreed. “It does.” Tialla and Eranor locked eyes again. The two both blushed but they didn’t break eye contact. Rosewood and the blacksmith shared a brief look of acknowledgement.

“My queen,” the blacksmith interrupted the moment and Eranor and Tialla shook their heads as they came back down to Earth. “Would you like to come with me and pick out Rose’s collar?”

“Y-yes,” Tialla cleared her throat and she and Eranor quickly stood back up. “Let’s go over that.”

Prisoner of Progress Chapter 12

 Tialla, Eranor, and Rosewood had all left the blacksmith’s shop. Eranor and Rosewood both looking at their new collars. Eranor’s was no doubt the more impressive, but the one Rosewood had on was nothing to slouch at. It wasn’t the reactive metal of Eranor’s but it was very nice looking, a shinier silver color than Eranor’s black iridescent. Overall, the trip had made everyone in a better mood, even though they were still aware of the eyes of the average person on them.

Tialla was quick to escort the group back onto the train that made it’s way back to the royal pyramid, and she just as quickly made her way through the corridors to the elevator to her quarters.

“Ah queen,” a familiar voice cut through the hallway.

“Oh Aldyn!” Rosewood said happily. Though when she said that the two looked at each other, and suddenly for the first time that day Rosewood grew embarrassed about her outfit, and Aldyn was similarly flushed.

“Rose,” he stammered looking away. “You’re looking very uh …”

“Let’s just uh …” Rosewood stalled for a moment. “Let’s just not talk about it.”

“Agreed.”

“Was there something you needed Aldyn?” Tialla said hoping to move past the awkward moment.

“Oh, right I just wanted to let you know,” Aldyn said deliberately avoiding looking at Rosewood. “The boys are already examining the package we brought back. They are confident they can replicate most of it.”

“Oh, that’s wonderful news,” Tialla said happily.

“I shall keep you abreast,” Aldyn shot a quick look at Rosewood. “I mean I’ll keep you updated.”

“Thank you, Aldyn,” Tialla nodded. “I’ll see you later we still have prep to do before tomorrow.”

“Lots of prep,” Rosewood added.

“I’ll leave you to it,” Aldyn said giving a small salute before leaving the girls to call their elevator. The group was only inside for a moment before Eranor and Tialla both shot a smirking look at Rosewood.

“Whaaat?” Rosewood complained with a blush.

The elevator soon opened and Rosewood was quick to walk out and take charge, yanking Tialla’s arm around as the leash Tialla was holding was torn from her hand as Rosewood stepped off.

“Ok girls we got a lot of practice to do and not a lot of time to do it,” Rosewood said with a drill sergeant-esque tone.

“I thought you were supposed to be the one listening to me,” Tialla grumbled.

“I will be,” Rosewood put her hands on her hips. “After we get done here, you’ll be the picture prefect master.” Tialla rolled her eyes. “I’ve got some commands for you to go through written down in my room, we’ll practice in the den.” Rosewood quickly walked off, the lead Tialla was holding dragging along the ground as she briskly walked off.

“I guess we should go wait for her to get back,” Eranor said begrudgingly.

“I guess so,” Tialla sighed.

The two girls did just that, lounging around in the den until Rosewood returned, a small list in her hand.

“All right I’ve got some simple commands here,” Rosewood hit the ground running, handing the list and her leash over to Tialla who took it with a grimace. “Now remember. Calm but firm commands, correct the stance accordingly, don’t be mean, but don’t be forgiving.”

“I got it Rose,” Tialla said in frustration.

Despite what Tialla had said she definitely didn’t have it. There was some obvious difficulty from Tialla at commanding her two charges around. She found the whole thing uncomfortable and awkward not unlike the trip they had taken outside earlier. While Eranor was doing her best to hit the positions, Rosewood was constantly making deliberate mistakes to try and get Tialla to be more assertive, much to the frustration of Tialla. The only positive thing to come from this brief training session was that Eranor felt confident that she could hit the positions first try. Though Tialla was no more confident in her commanding, and was only increasingly frustrated along with Rosewood.

“Maybe we should take a break,” Tialla said after Rosewood once again deliberately messed up her sit command.

“We don’t really have time for a break Tialla. You need to get this down.”

“Well, I’m pretty sure Eranor needs a diaper change,” Tialla looked at Eranor hopefully. “Right Eranor?”

“Uhhhhh,” Eranor paused for a moment. Struggling to fill her diaper like Tialla was asking her. Though she did find it easy to do so.

“She’s not supposed to tell you when she needs a change,” Rosewood reminded. Tialla stopped to glare at her, which gave Eranor enough time to finish wetting her diaper.

“Eranor,” Tialla said closing her eyes. “Come here and let me check your diaper.” Eranor meekly came over and just silently let Tialla squish the front of her diaper. “Look at that soaked, looks like we do need a change. Come on Eranor.”

“Oh, I can come ….” Rosewood started.

“Just Eranor please,” Tialla left quickly holding Eranor’s hand. Eranor was half dragged back into her room by Tialla, fast enough so Rosewood couldn’t follow. Eranor had never experienced an angry diaper change before, so this experience was a first, but it was clear Tialla didn’t really want to talk about things, so Eranor just kept her pacifier in while the new diaper was somewhat forcibly taped on her, and she found herself now more casually walking back to the den.

“All clean?” Rosewood asked with a smile. “Then we can get back to it.”

“Rose,” Tialla grumbled under her breath. Rose smiled in ignorance. Eranor was becoming just as frustrated as Tialla at the prospect of continuing this training. “I wanted to take a break.”

“And I told you we don’t have time.”

“I thought I was the one in charge!”

“Not nearly enough yet,” Rosewood said in frustrating calmness.

“Rose I’m gonna strangle you I swear!” Tialla yelled out in anger.

“I told you before, don’t be angry. It’s calm dominance.”

“I’ll calmly dominate your tail off of your ass!”

“That’s not at all what I said. Were you even …”

“Rose!” Eranor broke up the argument by speaking up. “Can you stop for two seconds and look at what you’re doing?” Her breathing was heavy as the frustration of the past few minutes had been building up in her.

“I know what I’m doing,” Rosewood said knowingly. “I’m teaching Tialla how to handle her slaves.”

“You’re not just her slave Rosewood.”

“I mean I know I’m her nurse maid too but I …”

“You’re her mother Rosewood,” There was a silence in the room after Eranor had shouted the statement. Tialla was hanging her head low, hinting at the truth of the statement.

“Eranor I don’t know if you’ve noticed but …”

“You’re not her real mother yes,” Eranor stuck a finger in Rosewood’s chest. “But you may as well have been. Her mom stuck her with you to take care of. You raised her. You taught her everything she knows. So can you please take a moment and think about how that is making her feel.”

“I …” Rosewood started to speak back, but then stopped to look at Tialla, her face still hanging low with exhaustion, and to Eranor’s who’s eyes were firey with anger. She suddenly lost her voice and went over to Tialla, grabbing her hands gently in her own. “I’m sorry Tia,” Rosewood said gently. Tialla fell into Rosewood burying her head in Rosewood’s chest. Rosewood gently rubbed the back of Tialla’s head. “Tia I’m proud of you.” Rosewood said softly. “I know this is hard for you. I know you don’t want to do it, but I know that you can. You’re strong. You’re so strong, and I am so happy that I helped make you that way.” Tialla took in a deep breath with her head still buried. There was a hint of drying up of some tears as she withdrew her head from Rosewood’s chest. “I’m sorry I’ve been hard on you.”

“It’s ok,” Tialla said softly.

“We can take a break now sweetie,” Rosewood said with a nod of her head. “If you need it.”

“No. No I …” Tialla rubbed her eyes for a moment. “I’m good. I’m good. You’re right, I can do this.”

“Yes, you can,” Rosewood smiled and patted Tialla on the shoulder. “You can do this.” After the motivation Rosewood took her place next to Eranor again. “Do your best sweetie.” Eranor gave a confident smile to Rosewood and Tialla resumed her domly attitude with new found vigor and determination.

“Ok,” Tialla took a deep breathe. “Sit!” she spoke with an almost perfect tone, and both girls quickly obeyed.

With her new found determination the next session went surprisingly well, and Tialla was in brighter spirits about her new role for once. It was after another few hours of this session that Tialla confidently called it.

“I think we’re done. Good girl Eranor.” Eranor took the opportunity to take a seat on the ground, noting her diaper squish as she did, they had been at it a while after all. “And Rosewood …” Tialla couldn’t finish whatever she was going to say as rosewood embraced her in a hug.

“You did such a good job sweetie,” Rosewood said encouraging. “You’re so good you may even have Castor following your commands.”

“Well, I doubt that,” Tialla blushed. “But I’m glad you think so.”

“I would say I would make us all a victory dinner,” Rosewood started happily before faltering. “But I am beat. Tialla is a real slave driver right Eranor?”

“I’m not gonna dignify that with an answer,” Eranor giggled.

“I’ll go get one of the servants to bring us something up in just a moment,” Rosewood giggled leaving the room.

“Hey,” Tialla said going to where Eranor was sitting. “I really appreciate that.” Eranor blushed. "For standing up for me."

“Anything for my Nana.”

“Don’t’ brush this off,” Tialla said donning her new found domly voice. “Take the compliment and say ‘thank you Nana’”

“Thank you, Nana,” Eranor couldn’t hide the blush as she said that.

“Good girl,” Tialla said with her usual voice patting Eranor’s head. “Come on let’s get you in your high chair.”

Prisoner of Progress Chapter 13

“Are you sure you don’t need help putting the baby to bed?” Rosewood offered as Tialla and Eranor were making their way to Eranor’s nursery.

“I’ve got it Rose,” Tialla sighed.

“I’m not an actually a baby you know,” Eranor reminded with a pout though the other two seemed to ignore her.

“She’s not that hard to manage Rose. I got it. You get some sleep.”

“Well,” Rosewood paused unsure. “If, you’re sure.”

“I’m sure,” Tialla said with annoyance. “Go. To. Bed.” she finished by placing a hand on her hip.

“Yes ma’am,” Rosewood said noting Tialla’s new found dominant voice. Tialla watched and made sure Rosewood went into her room before finally addressing Eranor silently fuming at being ignored thus far. “Oh, someone’s a little fussy. You probably need a change.”

“You know that’s not what it is,” Eranor huffed before remembering her diaper was actually wet. “Well, it’s not the only thing,” she added with a blush.

“So cute,” Tialla smiled. “Hop up on you changing table,” Tialla motioned in that direction and Eranor obeyed, climbing up on the changing table where Tialla quickly secured her to the table. “Wow you did need a change. How did you wet this much since dinner?” Tialla teased.

“Nana,” Eranor huffed while the used diaper was removed.

“Keep it down sweetie,” Tialla cautioned. “I don’t wanna wake Rose.”

“Why?” Eranor questioned. “I thought we were going to bed.”

“That’s what Rose thinks, but I’m too antsy to sleep,” Tialla slid a new diaper under Eranor and started powdering her. “I need a book to calm down, and as a personal slave one of your responsibilities is keeping me company while I read.” Eranor shot Tialla a look. “Plus, I’ll give you that ice cream I promised?” Eranor couldn’t help her eyes lighting up. “Thought that might do it.” Tialla grinned. “We can at least get you in a onesie so you can be comfy.” Eranor shot her arms up and Tialla quickly threw the cute dress she was in off her setting it aside to be cleaned later.

“Can I pick?” Eranor said covering her chest.

“You picked the last one and it was plain,” Tialla reminded. “I’m gonna pick this one and I want it to be cute.” She found a cute onesie in question, a light blue one with little bunnies on it. “Arms back up,” Eranor rolled her eyes but did as she was told, quickly being dressed in the cute onesie, the final touch coming from a light blue pacifier being clipped on. “Go in the study and pick out a book for us to read, I’ll be right there.” Tialla said with a smile.

“If you’re sure,” Eranor said following Tialla out of the room.

“Mmmhmm,” Tialla nodded. “If you misbehave, I’ll just spank you later.”

“What?” Eranor said shocked.

“It’s down the hall to the left,” Tialla said ignoring Eranor’s shock, and quickly scurrying off to her own room. Eranor stood flabbergasted for a moment, before finding herself moving toward the study. It was safe to say Tialla’s dom training today had caught on quickly. Eranor was much the same as she had pretty quickly fallen into place as well, obeying Tialla and finding her way to the study.

The study was pretty large, though Eranor was used to rooms this size having grown up in a similar environment. In fact, this one was remarkably like the study in her own palace. It made her think of home, and her parents, which soured Eranor’s mood a little. She decided to focus this energy into finding a suitable book. She was feeling like a fantasy adventure book. She quickly found the appropriate section and noted a series that she had always wanted to read, grabbing the first in that series.

Tialla still hadn’t arrived, and Eranor wasn’t quite sure what she should be doing until then. She noted a chair over by an unlit fireplace, it would be cozy if the fire was lit. That was something she could do. After some rummaging, she found a book of matches, and tried to light the few logs that were already in the fire.

“I don’t think you’re old enough to be playing with fire,” Tialla said making Eranor jump.

“Don't scare me,” Eranor complained holding the slowly fading match.

“And you don't play with fire,” Tialla countered. “I thought I told you to behave.”

“I did. I just wanted to help,” Eranor whined.

“Well, that’s ok sweetie, just don’t do it next time.” Tialla entered the room fully as she said that revealing a large object that explained the long time it took for her to get here. “Apparently this was Rose’s,” Tialla said throwing a large pet bed next to the chair. “She would keep dad company like you're doing. I don’t really like thinking about that, but it should be comfy enough for you.” Eranor hesitantly crawled into the large circular bed. It was pretty comfortable. “I got you a bottle too,” Tialla said handing a full bottle to Eranor who took it and set it down in her bed. “Did you pick something out?” Tialla had moved to the fire place.

“Yeah, I set it on that desk while I was trying to light the fire,” Eranor pointed at the desk. Tialla gave a grunt of acknowledgment and bent down into the fire with a fire crystal in hand. It made much easier work starting the fire than the matches did. While she was bent over Eranor couldn’t help but notice something. Tialla had changed into a comfier silk night gown, one that was pretty short. As she bent over Eranor noted something that wasn’t quite panties, though she didn’t say anything right now.

“Oh, I’ve actually already read these,” Tialla said. “But I wouldn’t mind reading them again with you.”

“Great!” Eranor smiled and perked up. “I’ve always wanted to read them, but I never had the time.”

“Well go ahead and get started,” Tialla bent down to lightly pet Eranor. “I’ll probably read it faster than you since I’ve read it once before. So I’ll go get our ice cream while you start.” As Tialla left, Eranor listened for a certain rustle and definitely heard it. No denying it now, Tialla was wearing a diaper under there or at least a pull-up. It was quite the ironic twist. Eranor debated what to do with this information as she put her pacifier in her mouth and started reading.

“I got the ice cream,” Tialla said happily. “Try not to actually scream, we still don’t wanna wake Rose,” she smiled setting one bowl of ice cream into Eranor’s bed and putting her own in her lap as she sat down in her chair and started reading the book.

“Thanks Nana,” Eranor said taking a bit of the vanilla treat. Despite them both being royal and having ready access to ice cream growing up, Eranor knew that it was a rare, hard to come by treat. Something anyone, even a princess, should thank anyone else for should they be given it.

“You’re welcome sweetie,” Tialla paused to take her own bite. “So how far did you get?” Eranor answered by holding up her book, her finger marking her spot, approximately 10% through the book. “Wow you are a fast reader for such a little girl.” Eranor rolled her eyes and went back to reading.

As she kept reading though she couldn’t help but become more and more aware of her Tialla’s underwear. Now that she knew it was there it felt like Tialla’s night gown was a crop top, and every light crinkle was as loud as a horn to her. It would be a nagging thought throughout the reading it seemed. Unless she just bit the bullet now. After all, Tialla just finished changing Eranor’s diaper. Eranor had no room to make fun given how soaked her diaper was.

“So, I can’t help but notice you’re wearing a diaper too,” Eranor tried to say casually. Though she obviously failed as Tialla noticeably jumped. “I’m sorry,” Eranor said upon seeing Tialla’s reaction. “I saw it when you bent over to start the fire. I didn’t mean to.” Tialla sighed and blushed again.

“I guess there’s no point denying it,” Tialla grimaced. She smiled and lifted up her nightgown showing the pull-up underneath. “I’ve been having some night troubles,” she let the nightgown fall back down. “After all I only just got out of diapers when my parents passed.”

“That’s still a little strange,” Eranor commented. “I mean I didn’t have any problem potty training, once I was finally given the chance.” Tialla gave a look.

“Yeah, well I’ve always been a little … stunted,” Tialla said subconsciously putting a hand over her white scales. “Pale scale children are so rare because they have so much medical difficulty growing up. The pale color is a result of lack of nutrients.”

“Oh I didn’t know,” Eranor blushed. “I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have said anything.”

“No it’s fine,” Tialla sighed. “You would have found out eventually, and I shouldn’t have hidden it from you anyway. I mean I keep you around in diapers just for fun.”

“So, you do have fun with it,” Eranor commented snidely.

“Hush,” Tialla chided. “It seems I may be wearing protection at night for a while. We’ve got that in common.”

“There's a long list of things we have in common,” Eranor added.

“It does seem that way,” Tialla agreed giving a longing look to Eranor. “It is admittedly nice to have someone to confide in. Someone who has my shared experience. It’s so hard to complain about these things to others. They just don’t understand the difficulty of being a princess.”

“You’re basically just an object for political gain,” Eranor agreed. “Nobody sympathizes though. They just see all the lavish luxuries we have. They don’t know that you’re never really free never really your own person.”

“And I still have those scars,” Tialla gestured to the pull-up she had on. “Maybe if I had started potty training at the appropriate time, I might have gotten over this night wetting thing.”

“Your parents were probably happy to have an excuse to keep you in diapers. Anything to keep you infantilized for whatever suitor you get shipped off to.” Tialla listened to Eranor and looked down at her, at the Miqo dressed like a child complaining about being infantilized.

“Well, what am I doing then?” Tialla said thoughtfully. “Just repeating the cycle I guess.” Eranor was quiet for a moment.

“I mean it’s not the worst,” Eranor said quietly. “If I have to be infantilized by someone, I’m glad it’s you.” Tialla grunted an acknowledgement.

"I’m glad you don’t seem to hate me at least,” Tialla said eating another bit of ice cream. Eranor found herself scooting closer to Tialla’s chair, her head resting listlessly on her shin.

“It's like you said, we have a lot in common,” Eranor said vaguely responding to Tialla’s statement. Tialla quietly rested her hand on Eranor’s head and lightly started petting her between her ears. Neither one of them said anything, but just let the interaction happen. When Tialla removed her hand Eranor looked up at her, and she looked back at Eranor. Again, they didn’t say anything and just went back to reading their books with a blush.

They kept a mostly quiet, anxious reading until the fire started to die down and the last of the ice cream was gone.

“Perhaps we should call it a night,” Tialla said noting the room grow dim from the fading fire.

“I can read more if you want,” Eranor said with a yawn.

“You cannot even hide how tired you are,” Tialla giggled. “It’s cute,” Tialla said while moving her hand to the bottom of Eranor’s onesie. “Good thing you’re dry, I don’t think you can stay awake through a diaper change.”

“I totally could,” Eranor grumbled.

“Crib now little lady,” Tialla said sternly. Eranor obeyed and made her way over to her nursery with Tialla following. “What did you think of the book?” Tialla asked as she helped usher Eranor into her crib.

“It was ok,” Eranor rubbed her eyes. “It seems like a lot of set up.”

“Yeah the first book is pretty exposition heavy,” Tialla admitted locking the crib shut. “It picks up though, and I think you’ll like it.”

“Well if you like it I probably will,” Eranor said snuggling into her covers. “We’re basically twins.”

“One twin is definitely cuter than the other,” Tialla remarked.

“Nana’s jelly,” Eranor said sleepily. Tialla lingered in thought for a moment, “Night, see you tomorrow.”

“Yeah, see ya tomorrow,” Tialla snapped out of her thoughts. She turned to leave the room.

“Hey!” Eranor shouted as Tialla almost left the room. “You’re gonna kill it tomorrow, and I’ll be right there for you ok.” Tialla took a moment and nodded.

“Thank you dear.”

Prisoner of Progress Chapter 14

The day was here, and the tension in Tialla had mounted. General Castor was due to arrive today. He was arriving by airship, flying over the magical forest surrounding the world tree. Which was just as much a show of force and elven technology as it was a convenience thing.

Tialla and her two personal slaves had moved from their seclusion of the royal pyramid into one of the larger more populous ones. At this moment in a war room just below the top part of the pyramid. Tialla was in a fierce and commanding outfit. An ornate and regal set of shimmering silver light armor, with accents of purple. The armor was hiding the inner turmoil she was felling, but it was doing that effectively. The two Miqo following her were also dressed to the nines of their respective roles. Rosewood was in an enchanting but revealing outfit. What was basically a slightly more ornate bikini with sheer see through fabric “covering” the rest of her body. In a way the light clothing accentuated how little she was wearing. Eranor was contrastingly mostly clothed, in a short, fluffy, and pink and white dress. Short enough that her matching pink diaper was easily seen. It even had a matching pacifier clip.

No one in the room was phased by the strangely dressed Miqo though. Today was just as much a show of force for the Naga as it was the Elves, and everyone was focused on making the right impression. Currently Tialla, Eranor, and Rosewood were all staring at a holographic display. Projected from a very complicated looking light rune embedded in the table.

“Is the cannon ready?” Tialla asked Aldyn who was on the other side of the table of light.

“We have coverage over all three pyramids,” Aldyn answered. “But it is only the one cannon, and it is still untested.”

“This is all still very impressive Aldyn,” Rosewood marveled at the technological display.

“We’re in a race against time,” Aldyn said seriously. “And the elves are winning.”

“Which is why I was so adamant that we capture some of their magic armor.” Tialla said in thought. “How is the progress on that?”

“Progressing,” Aldyn answered. “Though our prototype will not be ready in time for Castor.”

“That’s fine Aldyn,” Tialla said calmly. “I wasn’t expecting you to reverse engineer magic armor in two days. The progress you’ve made so far is astounding.”

“It really is,” Eranor said passing her hand through the holographic display.

“It’s the future for sure,” Tialla agreed. “One we’re being forced to get to remarkably quick.”

“And you seem to be getting there!” Eranor said excitedly.

“As fast as we can,” Aldyn agreed.

“I want the cannon to stay locked on to Castor’s air ship when he arrives. I’m still not convinced this isn’t just an excuse for an invasion. If it is, we can at least make sure the general doesn’t see land fall.”

“That’s an appealing thought,” Eranor pouted.

“Aldyn, you will meet the envoy with me?” Tialla asked.

“Of course, my queen,” Aldyn spoke while giving a small salute.

“We should be getting ready they’re due to arrive any moment,” Tialla said seriously. “You two ready?” She gestured to the two Miqo behind her.

“Ready,” Eranor said determined.

“Same here,” Rosewood echoed the determination. Tialla nodded clipping a lead to Rosewood collar and one to Eranor’s chest harness.

“We should head to the dock,” Tialla said walking that way with her entourage. The dock she was talking about was a recently constructed addition to the middle tier of the pyramid. A platform extending out of the pyramid with enough room for two airships and some support to allow them to dock without need fuel.

The group waited on the dock for a good while, scanning the direction of the forest for the approaching envoy. Finally, three airships emerged over the horizon. Eranor recognized the sleek shape of the military grade airships. Their balloon and cabin were wrapped inside one lightly armored shell.

As the group of three ships approached, the top of the pyramid they were on opened and inside a large cannon emerged, being lifted on a circular platform, and immediately turning and following the group of three airships as they approached. Not to be outdone the elves seemed to answer this innovation with one of their own. As they three larger airships approached sever small single person airships emerged from the inside of the larger airships. They group of five or six person airships made a brief flyby of the pyramid before circling back over to their larger carriers while they settled into position on the dock.

Several Naga workers, now finally over the awestruck feeling of single the single person airships, got to work securing the larger airships to the dock. Tialla did her best to contain her amazement and keep a straight posture. Taking in a deep breath Tialla prepared herself for meeting with the elf general.

Out of the three large airships several groups of human guards with their elven commanders. Humans were a genetic offshoot of elves, or perhaps it was more accurate to say the opposite. The Elves and humans both hailed from the land of Hyur. Off the coast of Hyur was an island, that was actually one of the four great crystals, the air aligned one specifically. These were great sources of magical energy essentially a very large version of the magical crystals used in rune making. The effect of living so close to one of the crystals for an extending time had turned normal humans, into the taller, pointy eared, and longer-lived elves. Being so close to a large exposed crystal was also how the elves were able to quickly study and master rune making, the secret to their advanced technologies like the single person airships they had just wowed the Naga with.

The effect of the change on their society was obvious here. Legions of normal human soldiers commanded by their elven captains. In their society, the elves were seen as the more evolved species compared to the humans, and the humans were treated as second class citizens, mostly used in the elves’ armies as their foot soldiers or as basic laborers. They were typically physically stronger and more resilient that their elven masters, though they couldn’t match the elves’ affinity for magic, no other race could.

As the majority of the entourage emerged and stood ready and intimidating, Castor finally emerged. Castor himself was wearing light armor similar to Tialla’s, though his was black and decorated with magical runes that seemed to make the armor shimmer. In his hand he was holding the leads to his own two personal salves who both obediently followed him out of his airship.

The two Miqo that followed him looked more like animals than the two behind Tialla. They were both “dressed” identically. The most striking thing about their outfit was that both their arms and legs were tightly bound up folded closed, in such a way that they “walked” on their elbows and knees. Thankfully the wrapping keeping their arms and legs bound like this also gave their joints significant padding, but this was the only kindness they were given and it was likely for practicality’s sake. Their clothes were a series of tight thin metal wires. They went around their boobs, lightly squeezing them with sharp claws, and similarly around their privates. The metal was visibly, and uncomfortably holding all their holes open. A similar looking ring gag was tightly wrapped around their head, keeping their mouths forced open like the rest of them. The two were heavily drooling from the gags already.

Eranor and Rosewood both noted the two Miqo slaves, Tialla kept her eyes steady onto Castor, so she didn’t pick up on the subtleties the two Miqo did. Mainly that one of the two Miqo slaves following the general was very obviously beaten into submission. She had a look of fear in her eyes and was constantly alert for commands. The other however, had eyes full of fury. She was still outwardly obeying all her rules and directions, but it was evident from her expression that she was looking for any opportunity to strike. Eranor recognized the two slaves. The firey one was the former general of the Miqo army, general Corinthus, who was presumed dead in battle. The other Mayro Dalia, the mayor of the capitol city, who had similarly been presumed dead.

“Ah you must be the princess Tialla,” Castor said with a smirk.

“Queen Tialla,” Tialla said sternly. “I suggest you remember that.”

“Oh my. I may have touched a nerve,” Castor was still smiling.

“General Castor,” Tialla spoke loudly. “Let me go ahead and dissuade you from what I know you are thinking. I may be a young ruler, but I will not be pushed around. If you will not show me the proper respect I am due in my own country, then these talks are over and we can start this war with me destroying these three airships and your guard!” At the threat both the elven entourage and the many Naga guards all drew their weapons and were ready to strike.

Rose and Eranor were struggling to maintain composure. One of the two Miqo slaves by Castor was panicking, and the other was subtly tugging at her leash eager for the conflict. Tialla didn’t move and locked eyes with Castor for a few tense moments. Finally, the tension was cleared by a hearty laugh from Castor.

“I have mistaken you my queen,” Castor said stopping his laugh. “You have the right of it. I had thought I might be able to push one as young as yourself around, but you have proven me wrong. Spoken with the conviction of leaders many years your senior. I admit I am impressed.”

“You should be,” Tialla said quickly.

“Well, I still would like to negotiate if you’ll have me,” Castor respectfully bowed.

“We may negotiate,” Tialla nodded, and the soldiers in the room put their weapons away. “We have a room on this level of the pyramid. I hope you’ll understand that I cannot allow you or your soldiers on any other levels or any other pyramids.”

“It is your country my queen,” Castor answered.

“Follow me,” Aldyn said quickly. He left the room, with Tialla following behind, and her two slaves following her with practiced elegance. Castor followed them, his own slaves struggling to keep up.

It was a short walk to the meeting room Tialla had arranged. Not very far from the airship dock to keep the elves from exploring as little of the pyramids as possible. The room was spacious, and exceedingly well decorated. Tialla left the design of the room up to a trusted interior designer, to make the room as impressive a room as possible, and it was. It wouldn’t make a large advantage in the coming verbal battle, but every advantage would help. Despite how well decorated the room was the table in the middle was small. A circular table with ornate legs and two ornate chairs. Notably the chairs each had two hard points on either arm.

“Ah even attachments for my new pets,” Castor said happily, attaching the leads of his two Miqo slaves to the hard points.

“I was informed you would have two of your own,” Tialla said attaching the leads of Rosewood and Eranor to her own hard points. “I wanted to be hospitable. I must say I wasn’t quite prepared for the dress you have chosen for your slaves.”

“I could say the same,” Castor sat down and took a leisurely stance in his chair. Leaning onto one arm of the chair and resting his head on his hand.

“I see you’ve noticed Eranor there,” Tialla said donning a more dignified sitting stance.

“Eranor?” Castor repeated the name. “You mean the princess of Pal Miqo?” Castor looked at Eranor, who took the moment to give a slow curtsey.

“The very one,” Tialla confirmed. “Introduce yourself Eranor.”

“I am princess Eranor of Pal Miqo,” Eranor said in a cutesy voice. “Personal slave to my Nana queen Tialla of Vas Naga.”

“I thought to dress her in a way that signifies our new relationship with Pal Miqo,” Tialla explained. “They are a protectorate now. They answer to us and our whims, but at the same time we protect them and nurture them. Not unlike a child you see. So, keeping the royal offspring of Pal Miqo as a perpetual child seemed appropriate.”

“A very inspired idea Nana,” Eranor added.

“I’m glad you think so,” Tialla smirked at Castor.

“Well,” Castor said donning a frown for once. “It seems we do have quite a lot to discuss.”

Prisoner of Progress Chapter 15.

 Tialla and Castor sat opposite each other with a small table in the middle of them. Attached to hard points on their chairs each had two slaves with them. Already a contrast was in place in the room as Eranor and Rosewood were able to sit relatively calmly and comfortably, while Castor’s two slaves fidgeted around in their excessive and revealing restraints.

“I presume you know why I’m here Queen Tialla,” Castor said quickly.

“Indeed, I do,” Tialla nodded seriously. “Obviously to discuss your invasion of Pal Miqo.”

“And your army’s counter attack against mine.”

“I would call it an effective defense,” Tialla replied quickly.

“I would as well, if I had known you were entering an alliance with Pal Miqo. It came as quite as a shock to us to see your troops there.”

“I’m sure your unwarranted attack also came as a shock. To the Miqo at least. From our perspective the imminent attack was easy to predict.”

“Feisty,” Castor said with a grin.

“I suggest you keep that expression saved for your slaves,” Tialla dismissed the comment with a serious gaze. Castor gave a small laugh as he brushed the comment off. Tialla kept her stare steady.

“Had I known you were in an alliance, I assure you I would not have launched my attack.”

“I doubt that,” Tialla cut in. “You may not have attacked at that moment, but you would have attacked eventually, when you had gathered more forces. In fact, I’m quite sure you’re doing that at this moment. Though, we both know that, while your technological advantage may have let you easily overcome the might of one nation, even you cannot hope to overpower an alliance. Especially with your technological edge rapidly decreasing.”

“It would be a costly war for both of us,” Castor retorted. “I would not want to cost you and your kingdom.”

“Let’s be frank. You’re trying to convince me to leave so you can conquer Pal Miqo easier. You don’t care about the damage to me or my kingdom. Though you will find me hard to convince. What gives you the right to Pal Miqo’s lands?”

“What gives you the right to stop me?” Castor countered with a smile.

“Because I know why you’re doing it.”

“Our empire is expanding. We require more land and resources.”

“Please!” Tialla spoke loudly. “Don’t insult my intelligence general Castor. The reason for your invasion is attached to your chair. You’re pillaging Pal Miqo for slaves, and I know very well that if you had not been stopped that would only be a staging area for you to launch more raids into Beastkin lands.” General Corinthus rustled in her restraints at the heels of Castor. Her eyes met Eranor’s and Eranor struggled to keep her composure.

“Quite the accusation,” Castor yanked Corinthus’ chain which got her to settle down. “If it was true, and it’s not, why exactly can’t we take slaves? Clearly you also partake in this practice. Seems to be something of a cultural staple for you beastkin.”

“You can’t because you don’t know how. That much is evident.”

“Do go on,” Castor leaned his head into his hand.

“For starters you have no concept of the delicate balance we have to maintain,” Tialla leaned back slightly as she continued explaining. “Your plan was to just simply enslave an entire country, maybe an entire race. That’s not sustainable long term. We only take slaves sparingly, as prisoners of war or of crimes. We understand that trying to do so to an entire country is a horrible and fruitless endeavor doomed to fail.”

“Oh, I disagree,” Castor leaned forward as he explained his argument. “Modern advancement in rune technology would make keeping control of a large population relatively simple,” Castor removed a circular device from one of his pockets and pressed the large button in the middle of it. His two slaves yelped and writhed on the floor in pain until the button was released. Then he pressed another button the two slaves started writhing on the floor in a completely different way. Even through their open mouth gags the moans they were making were very explicit in nature. Eranor and Rosewood looked on with concern, Tialla struggled to hide her own expression. “And this is only a prototype. We can link similar systems up to large populations, and the negative and positive reinforcement has proven to be effective in enforcing proper behavior. Furthermore, our rapid technological advancement requires such large populations to sustain its growth. We have both the means and the need.”

“Do you not have your own population of humans to pull from?” Tialla asked.

“The humans are not suited to that sort of work. They lack a certain affinity for magic. They are brutes so they serve us well as our military force. Even if they did have the affinity you beastkin have, they don’t have the population we require.”

“Your requirements seem rather costly,” Tialla commented angrily. “Perhaps you should work on your efficiency instead.”

“Tialla my dear queen,” Castor shook his head. “I’m sure you will learn this soon, as your own technology progresses. No cost is too great to fuel the progression of progress. Either you give your all to it, or your enemies will and get their first.” There was a silent pause as Tialla glared at Castor. “But you had another reason why we should not be allowed our expansion,” Castor offered Tialla to continue. “Please enlighten me.”

“The other reason,” Tialla said composing herself. “Is that you clearly don’t know how to control your slaves.” Castor laughed at this comment.

“I assure you queen we are quite capable of controlling any slaves we capture. You don’t have to worry about that.”

“You should be more worried than me,” Tialla sighed. “Your crucial mistake is that you are leading them through fear instead of respect.”

“Respect?” Castor chuckled. “That’s an interesting concept. I am interested in how you convince your salves to behave with respect.”

“It’s quite simple,” It was Tialla’s turn to smirk. “They chose to.”

“I’m sure they do,” Castor said in disbelief.

“We do in fact,” Rosewood spoke up still in a kneeling position.

“Nana couldn’t keep me this cute otherwise,” Eranor added.

“They clearly lack discipline,” Castor seemed offended to even be talked to by the two.

“They are perfectly disciplined. Eranor Beg!” Eranor struck a begging position. “Rose bark!” Rosewood gave a yelping bark. “Eranor, diaper check.” Eranor lifted her short skirt to show her diaper more than usual.

“I wetted my baby diapers,” Eranor answered proudly in a cutesy voice.

“They are very disciplined, as you can see. Because they respect me, and because I respect them, I let them have their own thoughts and opinions,” Tialla leaned back into her chair. “It’s on you that you offended them by calling them poorly behaved. I would speak up as well were I in their position.”

“It is quite interesting how much you value your slaves,” Castor said trying to regain the momentum.

“Why would I not value them? They are very valuable after all, and the more freedom I give them the more valuable they are. They respect that I value them, and in return they value me. I would take Eranor over a thousand of your version of Corinthus,” Castor huffed under his breathe. “And ultimately it will be your undoing. Fear will lead to resentment, and at the rates you described, the number of slaves will vastly outnumber their masters. Their revolt and your fall will be inevitable, and it will just be more war, more death, more destruction. It is my duty as a leader to prevent that.”

“We have a fundamental difference in philosophy,” Castor gripped the arm rest of his chair. “It’s just one way of thinking.”

“It’s the right way of thinking,” Tialla said quickly.

“I don't believe so.” Tialla stood up from her chair huffing in anger a bit. While keeping eye contact with Castor she removed a small dagger from one of the belts on her armor, a mostly decorative thing, but it would prove the point. She handed the weapon to Rosewood, and then grabbed her hand and positioned Rosewood’s hand and thus the dagger to be incredibly close her throat. “Hold there Rose,” Tialla said in a calm anger. “I can do this Castor, because I trust Rosewood and she trusts me. Even with the dagger at my throat I know she will never harm me.” Rose was tense a little as she was struggling to not accidentally nick Tialla while she was talking. “Thank you Rose,” Tialla spoke more evenly. She held out her hand and rosewood deposited the dagger into it and resumed her sitting position. “Now Castor, would you like to repeat the trick with general Corinthus over there?” Tialla offered her dagger, and the captive Corinthus shuffled in anticipation. Suddenly her eyes were locked onto the dagger. Even with her mouth held open by her gag, she seemed to lick her lips. Castor grimaced, and his silence was the response to Tialla’s request. “I think my point is proven.” She tucked the dagger back into its place and sat back down in her chair. Castor gave an approving huffing noise.

“You are quite the woman queen Tialla.”

“I do my best.”

“I must admit you may have persuaded me to try your methods,” Castor leaned back in thought. “On a small sample size at least. We will have to give it some thought in the future.” Tialla’s expression soured as Castor has so easily brushed past her victory. “We have talked a bit about philosophy here, but I think it is time I moved to practical things. I am prepared to offer you and your people a deal.”

“A deal?” Tialla asked incredulously. “I’m quite curious what you are going to offer me.”

“It’s a simple deal. I’m offering a peace agreement with the elven empire. In exchange for removing your armies from the Miqo countries, and agreeing not to interfere with our conquest of the Miqo, we will in turn not expand our conquests to the Naga lands.”

“Your offer is to not invade my lands?” Tialla gave Castor a look. “I’m curious as to what makes you think you could to begin with.”

“Please queen Tialla, I’ve made no insinuations that we can,” Castor explained calmly. “It’s as you said earlier. War leads to death and destruction. We are confident that we have the resources to expand over the entirety of the Miqo lands and even to Biscotti. I don’t know that we can do this if you join forces with your fellow beastkin, and that doesn’t matter. Regardless of who wins conflict between our two races will cause a lot of destruction. I simply wish to avoid this destruction for both of our peoples.”

“Then maybe you just shouldn’t invade,” Tialla shot back.

“That’s out of my hands,” Castor raised his hands in conjunction with what he was saying. “The leaders of the Elven council all agree that space is running out, and our technological advancements needs cheap labor to facilitate. I’m a soldier following orders, and my orders are to take the Miqo lands as our own, but we don’t need to fight for that to happen.”

“I would say that our conflict is inevitable if you continue on this path. I’ve already made my stance clear.”

“You’ll have some time to think on that,” Castor leaned forward and grinned. “I’m making a trip to your neighbors in Tel Naga, and I plan to offer them the same agreement. Perhaps their answer will persuade your own.” Tialla grimaced at this revelation.

“What makes you think I’ll just give you and your army free reign to travel through our lands, just to further your own goals?” Tialla was aggressive.

“Stopping a diplomatic envoy from crossing borders is an act of war my queen,” Castor reminded smugly. “Perhaps you would like to hasten the downfall of negotiations, but I think you’re smarter than that.” Tialla grimaced as Castor stood up, grabbing the lead of his two slaves. “Since we have reached an impasse for the moment, you’ll forgive me if I wish to continue on my way while you ruminate over my offer.”

“You’re free to leave whenever you wish,” Tialla regained her composure and welcoming demeanor.

“Why thank you,” Castor gave a small bow. “We will be here a few hours more while we prepare our ships for departure.”

“Of course. You may take as long as you wish to prepare,” Tialla stood up as well grabbing the leads of her two slaves. “Please allow me to escort you back to your ship.” Eranor and her two slaves passed by Castor and his to take the lead as the group left the room. As they passed general Corinthus locked eyes with Eranor once again. The look between the two carried a whole conversation, as the two couldn’t converse normally and not just because Corinthus was gagged.

It was a conversation of apology and sympathy between the two of them. Both were in demeaning positions, though clearly Corinthus was worse off. Still Eranor was reminded that she was supposed to be the general’s leader, her inspiration in battle. She was surprised that Corinthus still kept that fire in her eyes even after being humiliated as a slave and seeing her princess paraded around like she was. Eranor was thankful that Castor was behind her. She didn’t want him to see her expression of disappointment in herself. Tialla had worked so hard for this moment, to have this air of confidence while Castor was here, and it would be wasteful to ruin that now at the end.

The group was met by a guard of Naga soldiers. “The general here will be moving on to Tel Naga. He is a diplomatic envoy and as such will enjoy unmolested access to travel through our country.,” Tialla spoke officially.

“We will relay the message to General Aldyn at once my queen,” one of the soldiers said with a salute before running off to do just that.

“Shall we escort you back to the airship landing?” another soldier asked. Tialla nodded and the group once again made a brisk pace to that direction. It was a short walk back, and Castor broke from the group to board his airship. The human soldiers that were with him began busying themselves with preparations.

“I expect you to help our guests with whatever they need,” Tialla commanded a soldier. “To help ensure their prompt departure. We would not want to keep King Trellis waiting.” Tialla’s words were cloaked in disdain. The soldier saluted all the same and would carry out the letter of the order. Tialla silently turned around and left, Eranor and Rosewood following behind at the length of their leads.

Prisoner of Progress Chapter 16

 Tialla was antsy as she watched the airship dock below her from her place in a room hidden above. The tension was passed on to the two Miqo in the room with her. They were silent for a moment as they watched the crew of humans and naga below working together to get the air ship ready to relaunch.

“I think perhaps I’ll get some water,” Rosewood said, eager to have something to do. “Tialla sweetie,” Rosewood got Tialla’s attention, and Tialla noted she was still holding Rosewood on a leash.

“Sorry,” Tialla said with a blush, she reached over and unclipped the lead. Rosewood gave a quick bow before leaving. Eranor took the opportunity to approach closer. Tialla was still holding onto the lead for her own chest harness, but Eranor didn’t mind it very much. She had weirdly grown to appreciate it, it was like Tialla was holding her hand the whole time, and she hoped it was mutual for Tialla, she definitely needed someone to hold her hand during the tense encounter they had just had.

“I think you did very well,” Eranor broke the silence awkwardly. “For what it’s worth.”

“Well I…” Tialla almost started on a rant but stopped and took a breathe. “Thank you, sweetie. I’m sorry I’m still just shaken up you know.”

“I totally understand. That was tense,” Eranor sympathized. The change in character between the tense meeting in the shaky naga now was stark.

“I just feel terrible you know,” Tialla sighed. “Saying all that stuff,” she turned to look at Eranor. “I want you to know I don’t really think that way. It’s just,” she paused to look back out of the window. Below things seemed to be wrapping up. “I can’t say what I really think. Because Castor was right. We’ve been enslaving ourselves for hundreds of years, it’s engrained into our culture. I can’t sit here and say the elves can’t take slaves. If we’ve been doing it for so long, why can’t they do it?” Tialla sighed. “The whole thing is a blight. I hate that I’m a part of it.” Eranor winced a little.

“I hope that doesn’t say anything about me,” Eranor half smiled.

“Oh, Sweetie no I …” Tialla paused in thought. “You’re a bright side to all of this. Despite the circumstances. If I’m being honest, though, I', glad for these circumstances since it brought us together.”

“I was just thinking the same myself,” Eranor admitted with a blush. Tialla blushed back as the two realized what they had just admitted.

“I feel like such a hypocrite,” Tialla turned away.

“I don’t think you are,” Eranor comforted. “It’s like you said. I’m choosing to stay with you. I listen to you because I believe in you, because I respect you.”

“It doesn’t matter though,” Tialla argued. “You wouldn’t be here if I didn’t take you. If I hadn’t taken away your choice, and the worst part is how much I enjoy it. I can’t even deny that I like having you around as my slave. It’s just wrong.”

“Tialla, you know that I don’t hold that against you. I know you were just doing what you had to do to be convincing."

“Eranor come on. This whole baby thing. You have to know that it’s not just for this. That whole stuff about the metaphor of Pal Miqo being a child to Vas Naga.” Tialla sniffled. “It's all just stuff i made up because I wanted you to be that way.” Tialla dropped the lead she was holding and let it fall to the ground.

“I had a few suspicions,” Eranor admitted embarrassed.

“I feel horrible,” Tialla said crying a little. “I say all this stuff, and I want things to change to put this crap behind everyone. It’s tearing everything apart, but I’m just as guilty as everyone else. I’m just as much part of the problem by forcing you to stay here and act out some fantasy I have.” Eranor quietly hugged Tialla, and she collected herself.

“I’m sorry,” Tialla said. “For crying and for taking you. You probably hate me, and I deserve it.”

“I don’t hate you Nana,” Eranor said with a smile.

“You don’t have to call me that,” Tialla blushed

“And yet I am anyway,” Eranor smirked. Tialla giggled.

“I guess you are,” Tialla picked the lead back up. “Which is good. It’d be really embarrassing if Castor came back and you flew the coop.”

“Oh yeah Castor,” Eranor said over dramatically. “That’s who you’re worried about.” Tialla laughed again. Eranor and Tialla shared a look.

"Didn't you need a diaper change?” Tialla asked suddenly.

“Woah. Really?” Eranor laughed at the sudden question. “You want to do that now?”

“I could use the distraction,” Tialla said honestly. “Keep my hands busy you know. Besides, I’m tired of watching this dude take forever to leave.” Eranor giggled and smiled as the two left the room they were in and started walking toward the elevator toward Tialla’s chambers.

“Should we get Rose?” Eranor questioned.

“Sweetie, I don’t think she left to go get water really,” Tialla pointed out. “She was just as tense as we were, she needs a break.” The two reached the elevator and Tialla called it down. “She can meet us up here later. It gives us time to relax together anyway.”

The two made their way up the royal chambers, smiling as they made their way to Eranor’s nursery while Castor’s airship finally took off without either of the two noticing, finally leaving the pyramids air space as Eranor was being laid down on her changing table. Tialla stopped for a moment.

“I suppose I should ask,” Tialla said looking down. “If you really want to keep doing this.”

“What do you mean?” Eranor raised up a moment.

“I mean that, For as vile as he is, Castor got me thinking. About myself, and about you. I don’t want to keep being a part of the problem. So, from now on we do this together,” Tialla nodded confidently. “I won’t make you do this anymore. I’ll only keep being your Nana if you agree to it.” Eranor laid back down and sighed.

“That’s a lot to put on a girl you know,” Eranor said snidely.

“I’m serious Eranor,” Tialla confirmed.

“I know!” Eranor was defensive. She blushed a little as she wiggled on top of the changing table. “To be honest with you, this was easier when I didn’t have a choice.”

“How do you mean?”

“Well, that was my excuse you know,” Eranor explained. “Now that that’s gone the only reason I would keep doing it is,” she blushed and spoke the next part quietly. “Because I’ve grown fond of it.”

“Well,” Tialla was also blushing. “Have you?”

“It’s so hard to say out loud,” Eranor said frustrated.

“I did earlier,” Tialla offered.

“You just alluded to it,” Eranor countered.

“O-ok then,” Tialla gulped. “I’ll say it again.” There was a pause as Tialla blushed.

“See!” Eranor said vindicated.

“You’re right this is hard.” Tialla paused and regained composure. “Eranor,” her voice was shaky. “I want to keep being your Nana. To keep looking after you. I would like it if you wanted to keep being my kitten.”

“Ok,” Eranor said quickly.

“'Ok'?,” Tialla put a hand on her hip and donned her practiced dominating voice. “You are not just getting away with an ‘ok’ after I said all of that.”

“But you know what I mean,” Eranor whined.

“I do but I want to hear you say it,” Eranor and Tialla looked at each other, a grin forming on their faces.

“I want you,” Eranor blushed. Even with the mood being brought down a little it was still embarrassing to admit. “I want you to keep being my Nana, and I want to keep being your kitten.”

“There. Good girl,” Tialla and Eranor both let out a heavy breath and the mood of the room seemed to lighten immensely. Tialla immediately got to work changing Eranor’s diaper, getting into a rhythm.

“It does feel a little different now,” Eranor said as Tialla threw her used diaper away.

“It’s better I think,” she said laying a new diaper underneath her and taping it up. “I feel better after that,” Tialla smiled. "Changing your diaper is really centering."

“That’s a little weird.”

“Says the girl in a diaper.”

“Says the girl who put me in the diaper.”

“Oh, that doesn’t work anymore cutie,” Tialla smirked. “Didn’t you just admit to me that you liked this now.” Eranor gasped and blushed. Tialla giggled. As she was done, she noticed she was still wearing her outfit from the meeting, as was Eranor. “Come on let’s get into something comfier. We can finish reading our book together.”

“I’d like that,” Eranor smiled.

“Right then. Onesie for the baby,” Tialla opened the closet in Eranor’s nursery thumbing through the onesies for her, with Eranor peeking over Tialla’s shoulders as she looked. “I like this one,” Tialla showed Eranor a white onesie with some flowers and bugs on it.

“Yes,” Eranor nodded emphatically in approval. Tialla got to work getting Eranor out of her chest harness and her dress.

“I’m a little jealous if I’m being honest,” Tialla admitted as she slid the onesie over Eranor’s head. “I remember onesies being incredibly comfortable, especially with a diaper.”

“Mmmhmm,” Eranor agreed. For both of them the time where that was their typical pajamas wasn’t all that long ago. “I have already gotten used to the feeling again.”

“Yeah, I just don’t think my pajamas feel the same,” Tialla had kneeled down to do the snaps on Eranor’s onesie.

“Well, we’re the same size, right?” Eranor offered.

“I couldn’t,” Tialla blushed.

“Why not?” Eranor pressed.

“It’s just,” she stammered. “I’m supposed to be the one in charge here I …”

“I thought you were moving past that Nana.” Eranor grabbed Tialla’s hands in hers. “Things are the same but they’re different now. You said you enjoyed this right? That you were keeping me a baby was partly because that’s what you wanted.”

“Yeah,” Tialla turned away. “What are you getting at.”

“I get the feeling that maybe you tried this from the other side at some point, or at least have wanted to.” Tialla was quiet. “If you want to you should.”

“But I’m the Nana here,” Tialla was quiet.

“And you’re still going to be even if you’re wearing a onesie. Promise.”

“All right,” Tialla sighed. “Help me out of this.”

Prisoner of Progress Chapter 17

 Eranor waited giddily on the other side of her nursery door, as on the other side Tialla was dressing herself in a onesie and diaper, on that matched the outfit the Eranor herself had on.

“Are you sure you don’t need me to help change you?” Eranor asked from her side of the door.

“Stop asking!” Tialla groaned back. “You know I don’t need help you just want to do it for fun.” Eranor giggled to herself because Tialla wasn’t wrong. After some more shuffling sounds Tialla finally emerged. She had donned a simple light purple onesie. Eranor’s pink decorated diapers matched pretty well and could be seen peeking out of the onesies leg holes. Tialla even clipped on a dark purple pacifier. Tialla was meek and blushed as she looked at Eranor. “W-well.”

“You look absolutely adorable,” Eranor smiled. Tialla’s blush grew a little deeper. “You even got a paci.”

“It didn’t seem complete without it,” Tialla said defensively.

“Sure,” Eranor giggled in disbelief. “So, is it as comfy as you remember.”

“Yeah, I think so.”

“You should wear one more often then.”

“You just want to ogle me.”

“Look who’s talking,” Tialla grumbled a little at this remark.

“You don’t think I look silly?” Tialla said unsure.

“Do I look silly to you?” Eranor responded. Tialla nodded understanding what Eranor was getting at.

“Well, we have a book to finish don’t we,” Tialla said doing her best to regain her confidence. “I’ll make you a bottle.”

“Make both of us a bottle,” Eranor offered.

“I’ll make both of us a bottle,” Tialla said shakily.

“Yes!” Eranor congratulated herself.

“You better be on your best behavior though.”

“For what? making you comfy?” Eranor shrugged. Tialla raised an eyebrow. “I’ll be good Nana,” Eranor smiled innocently. Tialla sighed as she left for the kitchen and Eranor made her way to the study.

Eranor busied herself with getting the books ready and moving the pet bed she had used last time close to the chair Tialla would use. She took a moment finding the spot they were at in their book, which is when Tialla entered the room, holding two bottles as she said she would.

“I could hear you crinkle,” Eranor giggled.

“Are you sure it wasn’t just yourself?” Tialla said handing Eranor one of the bottles. “Be good and read your book.” Eranor nodded taking a drink from her bottle.

Tialla took a spot curled into the large chair and Eranor subtly scooted her pet bed to the front of the chair. Tialla and Eranor were both quiet as they read from their books and drank from their bottles. Every now and then Tialla would reach down to scratch Eranor on the head, which Eranor could not hide her enjoyment for. It was a quiet moment for them. They enjoyed each other’s company, and would often steal smiling glances at each other as they read their book.

“How far along are you?” Tialla asked shifting her position in her chair to look over at Eranor. Eranor held up her book with her finger on the page, choosing that as her answer since her pacifier was in her mouth. “Quite the speed reader for such a little kitten.” Eranor giggled. “What do you think?”

“It’s picking up a little toward the end,” Eranor let her paci fall from her mouth as she talked.

“Mmmhmm,” Tialla agreed. “And the author really starts hitting their stride in the next book, and we’re almost there.”

“We could finish the first one tonight!” Eranor offered.

“You know we probably could,” Tialla said thoughtfully. “I’ll go refill our bottles and we can power through.”

“Let's do it,” Eranor said excitedly.

“Diaper check first,” Tialla chided. “Come on stand up,” Tialla order getting off her own chair. Eranor obeyed and Tialla patted the front of her diaper.

“Hmm I dunno it’s hard to tell,” Tialla was obviously lying. “Let’s unsnap and see.”

“You just want to rub it in,” Eranor pouted as Tialla snapped open her onesie.

“Wouldn’t want you forgetting who the baby here is,” Tialla admitted. “Oh, wow little baby you are soaked.”

“Soaked?” Eranor said in disbelief.

“So soaked,” Tialla confirmed playfully. “Good thing I put you in extra thick diapers so you can wait until the book’s over to be changed.” Eranor smirked and took an opportunity while Tialla was too proud of her teasing to notice and quickly pressed against Tialla’s diaper. Tialla blushed as her diaper gave a telltale squish.

“I knew it! You were just projecting.” Eranor said triumphantly. Tialla stood sternly.

“Eranor sit!” Tialla commanded. Eranor reflexively obeyed, but once she was in her position, she smirked a little at the new game Tialla was playing. “Now beg!” Eranor took up the embarrassing position with a smile. “Now tell me who’s the baby here.”

“I’m the baby!” Eranor said quickly.

“The soggy baby.”

“I’m the soggy baby!” Eranor adjusted her statement.

“Nana’s good girl?”

“I’m Nana’s good girl!”

“You sure are. Good job sweetie.” Eranor giggled as Tialla petted her head. It dawned on the two of them for a moment the small scene they just had. “Ah sorry,” Tialla blushed. “Maybe I should have,” Tialla began.

“No no,” Eranor said quickly. “That was … fun.”

“Yeah?” Tialla said hopefully.

“Yeah,” Eranor blushed. The two looked at each other for a moment before Tialla broke the silence.

“Bottles,” Tialla said quickly. “We need some more bottles. Wait here sweetie.” Tialla grabbed the two empty bottles and started to make her way out when she stopped suddenly. “Rose!” Tialla jumped as indeed, Rosewood had returned, silently looking into the room, wearing her outfit from earlier but with on oversized coat keeping her mostly covered.

“Sorry for keeping you waiting dear,” Rosewood said choosing to ignore what Tialla was wearing. “I shared a drink or two with Aldyn.” Tialla was still silent, knowing full well there was no way Rosewood hadn’t seen what she was wearing. “But you’ve gotten on fine without me.” She approached Tialla and grabbed the two bottles from her. “I’ll fill these up for you two, and make us some dinner.”

“Th-thanks,” Tialla gulped.

“Should I order up another high chair?”

“I uhhh,” Tialla blushed and looked away. “Just the one. For Eranor. Obviously.” Tialla clarified clumsily.

“Of course, dear. I’ll come get you two when it’s ready,” Rosewood smiled and went off to her task, leaving Tialla standing there for a moment.

“Tialla,” Eranor said from her bed snapping Tialla out of her trance state. “Are we finishing the book?”

“Yeah,” Tialla still stammer. “Yeah, I guess let’s finish our book.”

Eranor was very aware that her nana was distracted in her reading from the encounter. So much so that she quickly finished the rest of her book before Tialla.

“Nana?” Eranor broke the silence. Tialla looked at Eranor and sighed.

“Sorry I’m just shaken up a little. I didn’t think Rose would walk in on us.”

“It’s ok though.”

“She probably thinks I’m stupid.”

“Nana, you know that’s not true,” Eranor took on Tialla’s signature hand on hip dominant pose.

“Yeah, you’re right I just …”

“It’s ok. You saw how she reacted. It’s not a big deal. I told you you’re still my Nana even if you look adorable, and I’m sure Rose feels the same way. Just you know not the Nana part.”

“Thank god for that,” Tialla giggled "I'd rather not see Rose like that ever again. Too weird."

“Scoot over,” Eranor said clambering up onto Tialla’s chair.

“Scoot over?” Tialla asked back appalled. “No! Kittens stay in the pet bed.”

“This kitten wants to cuddle,” Eranor found a semi comfortable position leaning into Tialla. “I can get down if you really want me to,” Eranor smirked. Tialla blushed in response.

“I guess you’re fine up here,” she sighed.

“Finish your book Nana,” Eranor said sweetly. Tialla raised an eyebrow. “I already finished mine, because I wasn’t worrying about what Rosewood thought about my cute onesie.”

“Or maybe I should fill the time giving a brat a spanking,” Tialla threatened.

“No Nana,” Eranor said with a smile.

“You don’t seem very convincing,” Tialla commented. Eranor responded by snuggling into Tialla. Tialla sighed again, patting Eranor on the head and getting back to reading.

“Put your paci in. It helps you read faster.”

“You just want to see me use it,” Tialla said while reading her book.

“Yes,” Eranor said simply. Tialla looked at Eranor’s hopeful face, and begrudgingly slipped the pacifier in her mouth. “So cute.”

“Yo ah getting ah ankin ater,” Tialla sadi over her pacifier.

“Worth it,” Eranor said snuggling into Tialla some more.

Prisoner of Progress Chapter 18

 Tialla had set a bowl of pasta onto the tray of Eranor’s high chair. The sight of her feeding the Miqo was stranger than usual because, on the surface, they both looked like they should be in a high chair. Both were in onesies and both needed a diaper change. Eranor smiled as Tialla brought another spoonful of the pasta to her mouth, and Eranor ate it happily. It was pretty good. A unique flavor of sauce made with ingredients found in Vas Naga.

“You should take some time to eat your own dear,” Rosewood reminded. She had emerged from her own room where she had dressed out of the revealing outfit she had on and into comfortable looking sweats. “Or maybe I do need to bring another high chair up.”

“I’m eating!” Tialla responded quickly. She took a bite from her own bowl that she had also sat down on Eranor’s high chair tray. Though it was obvious that her bowl was significantly fuller than Eranor’s.

“You need a change too,” Rosewood added smiling as she drank some hot chocolate. Tialla blushed.

“I was going to change Eranor after dinner,” Tialla responded. “I can change myself after I finish with her.”

“Or we could get Rose to change us lying next to each other." Eranor offered excitedly. "Wouldn’t that be cute!” Tialla blushed and pushed another bite into Eranor’s mouth getting her to stop talking.

“I can change my own diaper. You're lucky you’ve gotten me to do as much baby stuff as I have tonight.”

“Nah ike you don enjoy it,” Eranor said with her mouth full.

“Don’t eat with your mouth full,” Tialla wiped off a bit of stray sauce from Eranor’s face diligently.

Eranor had begun to pick up more that caring for her was something of a meditation for Tialla. Eranor supposed she could see how it could be calming, but she was happy to be on the receiving end of it. Tialla noticed that she had reached the bottom of Eranor’s bowl and sighed. She sat a bottle down on the high chair tray and grabbed her own bowl to finish.

“I suppose Aldyn wants to talk with me at some point,” Tialla directed toward Rosewood.

“I’m sure he does,” Rosewood answered.

“I’ll get dressed after I eat and then we can …”

“We can wait,” Rosewood said cutting Tialla off. “There will be time tomorrow. You need to relax.”

“I can’t relax. Castor is on his way to Tel Naga.”

“Even with a fancy airship it will take him a few days,” Rosewood reminded. “Both to get there and to start talks. You have time to relax.”

“No, I don’t. I should go.”

“You should stay,” Rosewood countered gently. “Trust me, Aldyn is fine. Go play with Eranor for tonight.”

“I’m not playing,” Tialla grumbled.

“Sure looks like playing you’re playing to me. Which is fine because you need it.” Rosewood petted Tialla on the head. Tialla was quiet for a moment. “Are you sure you don’t want me to change you. I used to do it not too long ago, and I am still your servant.”

“No Rose you’re not,” Tialla said with a sigh. “I don’t want you to be any more. I want you to do whatever you want to do.”

“Oh, are you giving me my freedom?” Rosewood said flatly sipping on her drink. “Wow I wasn’t expecting that tonight. Neat.”

“Neat?” Tialla asked shocked, expecting more of a reaction for something so serious.

“Neat.” Rosewood nodded. “I’m happy to be a free Miqo again. If you were thinking I was going anywhere else, however, then I’m sorry to disappoint you.”

“Rose I just said I didn’t want you to …”

“No. What you just said was that you were freeing me. Which means you can’t tell me what to do any more. Which means that I don’t have to listen to you when you tell me to leave.” Rosewood smirked as Tialla sighed. “Sweetie there’s nowhere else I’d rather be than with you, free or not.” Tialla ran to Rosewood and hugged her. “I’m so proud of you dear. You really are becoming quite the little queen.”

“Thanks Rose,” Tialla mumbled with her head buried into Rosewood.

“You’re welcome, dear,” Rosewood playfully pressed against Tialla’s bottom. “Now go get your diaper changed or I will do it for you. You can’t stop me anymore you know.”

“All right all right,” Tialla giggled. “Eranor time to come down and get your soggy diaper changed.”

“Yes Nana,” Eranor happily replied. Tialla walked over and released Eranor before taking her hand and walking toward the nursery.

“You know it is pretty late,” Tialla mused while they were walking. “And we could both use a nice hot bath after today.”

“Yes, we could,” Eranor agreed. “Come on!” Eranor excitedly started to take the lead.

“Eranor behave!” Tialla ineffectively scolded.

Eranor and Tialla emerged from their bath. This time Eranor was happy to let Tialla do all the doting, acknowledging that caring for Eranor was helping her to stay calm about the relatively serious happenings. They were out now and Tialla was ushering Eranor over to her changing table. She was a little absorbed into her caring and didn’t think about how the two of them were still naked as she slid a new diaper under Eranor.

“You know a different girl might think you’re coming on to me,” Eranor commented. Tialla looked down at her bare chest and blushed.

“I got distracted,” Tialla sighed.

“I know I’m just teasing,” Eranor reminded gently as her bottom was cleaned and powder was applied. “Getting close to bed time isn’t it.”

“Yeah,” Tialla said with a bit of melancholy as she taped Eranor’s new diaper up. “Arms up.” Tialla commanded, and Eranor obeyed.

“Are you sad that our little play time is over?” Eranor asked as a purple onesie decorated with stars was slid over her head.

“Yeah, I am,” Tialla snapped Eranor’s onesie shut. “I really needed this.”

“That was obvious,” Eranor nodded. Tialla rolled her eyes and clipped a pacifier to Eranor’s onesie.

“Ok go wait in your crib it’s Nana’s turn,” Tialla playfully swatted at Eranor’s bottom who skipped off to her crib so Tialla could lay down on the changing table herself. She somewhat awkwardly slid a diaper under her own bottom and started powdering herself. Eranor distracted herself with one of the stuffed animals in her crib while Tialla taped up her new diaper and went over to the closet to pick a new onesie out for herself, settling on a pink one dotted with light blue moragas, a long rod-shaped flying insect known for its light blue bioluminescence.

“You look cute,” Eranor commented as Tialla clipped a light blue pacifier to your onesie.

“You’ve said that a lot tonight.”

“It bears repeating.”

“Well back at you sweetie,” Tialla smiled and made her way over to Eranor’s crib. Eranor backed away expectantly, waiting for the bars of her crib to be shut and locked. There was a pause as Tialla stopped. “Eranor,” she said deliberately leaving the crib open. “Stop me if I’m being too forward but, I would like it if you slept with me tonight.” This time it was Eranor’s turn to grow flushed.

“I mean if you want me to.”

“I do,” Tialla nodded.

“Of course, Nana,” Eranor smiled.

“Thanks sweetie.” Tialla grabbed Eranor’s hand gently. “Let’s go get our bottles filled up and turn in.”

Holding hands, the two went back to the kitchen to fill their bottles. Rosewood gave a silent nod as she saw the two girls in new onesies and diapers make their way to Tialla’s room. Moonlight shone into Tialla’s room from a large window that her bed was resting against. It cast a soft glow into the room. Eranor took a sitting position on the bed while Tialla gently shut the door.

“My turn to say you’re cute,” Tialla giggled. Eranor blushed and hid her face a little. Tialla crawled into the covers and Eranor followed. The two cuddled close to each other, intertwining their legs and resting their heads against each other.

“Everything ok?” Eranor asked seriously.

“I don't know,” Tialla answered closing her eyes. Tialla cuddled into Eranor pressing her whole body into Eranor’s. Eranor grew flush and gulped.

“Nana what …”

“Shhhh,” Tialla pushed Eranor’s pacifier into her mouth. “Eranor, I’m going to say something that I think is horrible.” There was a pause as Tialla looked away. “I think I love you.”

“Why is that something horrible?” Eranor asked, spitting out her pacifier.

“Because,” Tialla paused. “I took you. I forced you to come here. You never had a choice.”

“I have a choice now,” Eranor replied. “And I’m choosing to stay with you.”

“You wouldn’t even be here to make that choice if I hadn’t forced this on you. And I'll never know if you want to stay, or if you've just been conditioned to stay. Worse still I liked that. I don't know if I would feel this way about you if you weren't my slave before. If the idea of keeping you as my pet now wasn't exciting to me.” Eranor was quiet for a moment, she didn’t have an answer for that. It wasn’t wrong, and she could tell that the truth of it was bothering Tialla. The truth of both parts of that statement really. The part where she forced someone across a country to be with her against their will, and the part where she liked that. Eranor hugged Tialla tightly.

“I’m sorry. I don’t have an answer for you,” Eranor admitted. Tialla solemnly put her pacifier into her mouth. “This is nice though. Here together, snuggling, being cute together. Diapers crinkling together,” Ernaor wiggled some to elicit the sound she was talking about and Tialla blushed. “Let’s not worry about how we got here ok. I want to be here, and I want to keep being yours. I love you too Tialla.” Tialla released a breath she had been holding and buried her head in Eranor’s chest for only a moment before taking it out to look Eranor in the eyes.

“Thanks, Eranor.” Tialla planted a gentle kiss on Eranor’s forehead. “We should get some sleep though. The next few days will probably be busy.”

“Aww no more staring at you in cute outfits,” Eranor giggled.

“Sadly no. You’ll have to do all of the cute modeling for both of us. And you’re pretty good at it.”

“You have a forbidden fruit flair to it though,” Eranor whined. “Nana playing baby, the juxtaposition of power plus innocence. It’s such a vibe.” Tialla laughed.

“I’ll dress up again eventually, as a treat. It would lose the specialness if I did it all the time you know.”

“But I can do it all the time?”

“Because you’re the baby.”

“How does that make sense?”

“Doesn’t need to I’m the Nana,” Tialla smiled putting her pacifier back in.

“That you are,” Eranor put her own pacifier in her mouth. “Night Nana.”

Prisoner of Progress Chapter 19

 It was early in the morning in the Vas Naga war room. It was a room that was situated almost at the top of the central, government pyramid. Aldyn was sitting in the center of the room, around a round table. The same one this same group had been around earlier, as it lit up tracking Genarl Castor’s ship’s approach to their pyramid. At the moment the lights in the table were off. The room was busier than it was then too. Several officers were busily operating terminals in the rooms, sending out scrying and other forms of magical messages to numerous contacts. They were rapidly assessing both the situation in Vas Naga, and the situation in the other Beastkin countries as well. Preparing in case the worst should come to pass with General Castor and the elf army.

Tialla stood across the table from Aldyn, less dressed than she was the day before. Just a blouse and a lengthy black skirt. Rosewood and Eranor were behind her, in some ways more dressed than they were yesterday, but at the same time less. Rose had on modest clothing, a shirt and some pants. Eranor was a little more nicely dressed, donning a simply elegant soft pink dress. It threatened showing the colorful diaper underneath, though it didn’t outright announce it like the other outfit. Aldyn himself was wearing the coat Rosewood had on the night before, though he wore it like a cape with no shirt underneath with military fatigue pants. Such a dress was fairly official for Naga military.

“So, what’s our chances?” Tialla asked looking away in thought.

“By ourself?” Aldyn asked. “We don’t stand a chance. Even with the guaranteed aid from Pal Miqo, their diminished forces would not make a significant difference.” Eranor looked away at the comment. “No offense intended,” Aldyn apologized.

“So, if we’re to survive, we need allies.”

“Even then it’s not what I’d call a guarantee,” Aldyn grimaced.

“Then why do this at all?” Tialla asked crossing her arms. “Why would the elves reach out to us with this deal?"

“Our military opinion is that the elves are buying time. Their march across the Miqo countries is guaranteed, especially with Pal Miqo in the state it’s in. It’s an easy victory. But should we intervene at all, that easy victory becomes something they have to fight for. That’s why they’re pushing their deal. Once the Miqo countries are secured, and their forces are replenished, however, we have no doubt they will move on to Naga lands. Maybe we would have more time if they try to cross the sea to Biscotti, but historically no one has ever had a successful occupation of Biscotti. We feel the chances of them trying that next are slim.”

“Unless they just want to show off,” Rosewood added in.

“That possibility has been considered,” Aldyn answered the Miqo’s objection. “It has been deemed a possibility.”

“Either way we’re on borrowed time,” Tialla pondered. “Unless we can band together.”

“With every beastkin nation under one alliance we calculate the odds are slightly in our favor,” Aldyn answered. “It’s a tough ask though.”

“It begins with Tel Naga,” Tialla said.

“It does,” Aldyn agreed. “If we can secure an alliance with Tel Naga in opposition to the elves, we think that securing a united beastkin alliance will be difficult be feasible. At the least it would keep any more from aligning with them. Without Tel Naga's opposition though, the possibility is near impossible.”

“If Castor manages to convince them to his little plan.” Tialla was entertaining the worst outcome. “There’s no doubt the other beastkin nations would shut their borders and close themselves off.”

“Not entirely,” Aldyn answered. “We think that we can still secure an alliance with Tel Naga, even if they agree to Castor’s terms. Of course in that case we would also have to abide by his terms. They are the best singular ally we can have right now either way.”

“How do we think Tel Naga is leaning?”

“It’s split,” Aldyn answered. “King Joshua and his council are both split on whether to take Castor’s deal or not.”

“The future of all of the Miqo countries is left up to whether a slimy elf can convince an old codger Naga to endorse a system that’s killing all of our countries,” Tialla sighed angrily. “And if he agrees then I’m forced to stand with him, or lose our country.” Eranor approached Tialla and gently rubbed her back calming her down a little. “We need to try and get to King Joshua first. Let him know the only way to oppose the elves is with everyone together.”

“His general is likely giving him the same rundown I’m giving you,” Aldyn responded. "It is possible to make on alliance and mount a successful opposition, but it is much more likely and safer to comply. All the other nations are probably aware of this as well.”

“The answer’s right there in front of them all and they won’t take it!” Tailla yelled.

“That’s the way people are when they’re facing the end,” Eranor cut in solemnly. “They panic and close off.” Tialla turned to look at Eranor. It was hard to see her cute kitten as something of a politician, but she had just as much experience, maybe even more, than Tialla did.

“Well, how about that hunk of scrap we hauled over here?” Rosewood tried to steer the conversation in a positive direction. “Any progress there?”

“Advancement is happening fast,” Aldyn smiled for once. “We think we can have a replication withing the month, and production can start shortly thereafter.”

“Our alliance with the dwarves is still good?” Tialla asked hopefully.

“It is,” Aldyn nodded. “Materials are secured. Once we have plans down we can begin production.”

“That’s some good news at least.”

“Maybe more than you think,” Eranor added. “If we can close the technological gap with the elves.”

“It would improve our chances,” Aldyn agreed. “Not enough to win, but enough to be costly.”

“And they don’t seem very eager to take costs,” Eranor added.

“An astute assessment,” Aldyn agreed. Eranor smiled and curtsied.

“At the end of the day we’re waiting on King Joshua,” Tialla assessed the situation. “Though our course is clear either way.”

“It’s all just offerings my queen,” Aldyn bowed slightly.

“I need a break I think,” Tialla said tiredly.

“I do need a diaper change,” Eranor said to give Tialla an out.

“You heard the lady,” Tialla shrugged.

“We can handle things for the moment my queen,” Aldyn said with concern. “Take your time. It is as you said. We are just waiting now.”

“You two go on,” Rosewood smiled. “I’ll stay here with Aldyn.”

Tialla and Eranor quickly left the room into the hallway outside and walked away.

“Do you actually need a change?” Tialla asked.

“Not really,” Eranor admitted. “You seemed like you needed an excuse though.”

“Yeah,” Tialla sighed. “It’s all just really heavy.”

“You’re doing a good job,” Eranor smiled.

“You think so?” Tialla seemed happy. “I’m glad.”

“Seems strange for my Nana to value my opinion so highly,” Eranor pondered.

“Well you know as much about this as I do,” Tialla admitted. “Maybe more since you’re older than me.”

“Yeah, I forget I am sometimes,” Eranor replied.

“It’s easy to,” Tialla giggled. “What with those soggy diapers you’re fond of wearing.”

“Says the Nana who loves changing those soggy diapers.” There was a pause as the two looked at each. “Maybe we should go for a walk. Get some air,” Eranor offered.

“I probably need to get back,” Tialla.

“You’ve got time.” Eranor reminded. “You’re going to have to wait anyway.”

“You’re right of course,” Tialla nodded. “We can head to the middle level, that’s open air.”

“You want me on my leash,” Eranor said with a smirk.

“I couldn’t,” Tialla blushed. “I told you I don’t want to force you.”

“Who says you’re forcing me?” Eranor smiled. “Maybe you haven’t considered that I like it when I get walks.” Despite Eranor’s joking attitude the blush on her face was heavy. “You’ve done it before, with me in a much more revealing outfit.”

“Don’t remind me,” Tialla grimaced. “Do you really want me to do that?”

“I like it, and you like it. Besides I’ve noticed how it calms you down.”

“Well, I think I brought it in my pack,” Tialla agreed.

“I may have one in mine too,” Eranor giggled.

Tialla was right. She did bring a chest harness with her in her shoulder bag that she left in the war room. She only peeked in for a moment to grab it. Aldyn and Rosewood were too busy talking to each other to notice.

This time putting the harness and leash on Eranor and walking her in public had a different vibe to it. The two were anxious but in an excited way. Putting it on didn’t take long at all, and the white harness matched Eranor’s dress very well. Tialla clipped a lead to the harness and held it in her hand. She then held Eranor’s hand. The result was that she was holding Eranor’s hand as well the end of her lead. It was, on the surface, just two people holding hands, but the extra element of the leash was felt physically in their hands as well as on their mind.

“See,” Eranor said hushed. “Aren’t I cute?”

“Adorable,” Tialla agreed in a similarly quiet voice.

“Should we go then?”

“Are you sure?”

“I’m sure. I’ve already done it once right.”

“That’s different,” Tialla said emphatically. “This is now. I’m asking you. I want you to…”

“I want it,” Eranor confirmed. “I promise. Come on let’s go.” Despite being the one holding the lead Tialla felt herself being dragged along by her hand by Eranor toward the stairs that would lead them to the open-air floor of the pyramid. She was right. They had done this before, and by all accounts, the last time should have been by far the more humiliating of the two. They both felt it more this time, however. The feeling was decidedly different and decidedly more intense. It wasn’t done out of obligation. It wasn’t done for a queen to show off her new toy. It was done out of love. For the two of them to be uncompromising and unashamed of the relationship they had.

The reaction of the general population was mostly the same, maybe even more muted as it was far less obvious this time around that one of the girls was on a leash. Yet the two couldn’t stop blushing ang giggling. Having fun, which was the most contrasting part of the two experiences.

“Come on Nana I wanna look over the edge,” Eranor playfully skipped to the end of her lead.

“Slow down Eranor,” Tialla scolded as the two made their way over to the edge.

Prisoner of Progress Chapter 20

 A company of Miqo soldiers walked down the road toward Vas Naga. The roads had been barren lately. Everyone was closing their borders, fearing the imminent attack from the elves. In normal circumstances this group of Pal Miqo soldiers would not have been able to cross into Na Miqo, let alone into Vas Naga. This wasn’t normal circumstances though. In the middle of this small group of soldiers was the queen of what was left of Pal Miqo, queen Tara. Even in worrisome times like these, no one would deny the passage of royalty on a diplomatic envoy. The situation would be the same as the group approached the crossing to Vas Naga.

The entrance on the road was guarded with a force of Naga appropriate to the uncertain times. As the Miqo approached the Naga the Naga raised their weapons until a shout from behind them got them all to lower their weapons, the whole time queen Tara didn’t break stride, neither did the soldiers guarding her.

“Queen Tara?” the leading solider spoke up and fell in line next to her as she and her group kept walking.

“I need to speak with Queen Tialla,” Tara said not breaking stride. “It is of the utmost urgency. It relates to our current conflict with the elves.” The lead Naga stopped for a moment in though, letting the group of Miqo pass him. After a moment’s though he motioned for some Naga soldiers to follow him.

“Queen Tara, we can escort you to a public train,” the solider offered. This finally caused the queen to stop walking, her group taking a second to notice and stop with her. Her nose raised a bit at the concept of public transportation, but she swallowed her pride, the importance of what she was doing warranted the brief lowering of her status. She sighed and nodded and affirmative toward the soldier.

By this time a group of 3 Naga soldiers had caught up, there was a brief pause as the commander talked with one of them, before they both gave a salute.

“Queen Tara, the corporal here will help escort you to the nearest train station,” the commanding officer explained. “We should have you at the royal pyramid by nightfall.”

“And not a moment sooner,” Queen Tara said sternly.

“Yes Ma’am,” the commander bowed.

“Follow us please,” one of the soldier’s spoke officially, and so the now slightly larger group started making their way toward the nearest public transport station.

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Tialla was in her chair in the study, choosing to wear a night shirt and a plain white diaper. Laying across her lap in a light blue onesie was Eranor, suckling away at a pacifier while they both read a book. The second in the series they had started earlier. Tialla had been distracted this time, so her reading was slower.

“Nana?” Eranor questioned through her pacifier. She noticed that Tialla was staring off into space for a moment.

“Sorry dear,” Tialla apologized. “Distracted.”

“It’s ok you got a lot to be distracted about,” Eranor scrambled up. “Let me get you a drink.”

“Oh, sweetie you don’t have to.”

“I don’t, but it would make it more fun if I did have to,” Eranor said teasingly.

“Ok,” Tialla smiled playfully. “Fetch me a drink my cute baby servant,” Tialla said in an overly posh accent.

“Yes Nana,” Eranor said quickly before skipping off. Tialla smiled and got to work catching up to her more immature partner in reading. She was surprised when Eranor had returned rather quickly and with Aldyn behind her.

“General?” Tialla questioned. She quickly realized there wasn’t anything covering her diaper and crossed her legs with a blush.

“Sorry for disturbing you Tialla, but it’s some urgent news,” Aldyn began. “We’ve got word from one of our border guards. Queen Tara is on her way here and wishes to speak with you.

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Tialla had dressed into a semi-professional outfit, a black blouse and a black skirt, a skirt because she changed into another diaper, behind her Eranor was also dressed somewhat professionally, a white one-piece dress with a moderate amount of frills, also wearing a diaper but at this point that had become the norm for her. They were waiting in a small room with a small table for Tara to arrive.

“You don’t have to be here you know,” Tialla told Eranor.

“I know I don’t, but I want to,” Eranor answered. “I want her to see how well I’m doing.”

“I’m not sure she’ll take it that way,”

“It doesn’t matter. You have all the cards, for whatever she’s about to ask you.”

“We’ll have to see what that is,” Tialla leaned back in her chair.

In a few moments, Aldyn reentered the room with queen Tara behind her. Tara wordlessly took a seat across from Tialla. She was acting highly regal despite the rather plain and utilitarian traveling clothes she was wearing.

“That you would insult me by parading my daughter here as your salve,” Tara said under her breathe.

“Nice to see you too mom,” Eranor spat back.

“You might be happy to know that Eranor is no longer technically a salve,” Tialla corrected Tara. “She came because she wanted to, and can leave whenever she wants. Though I would have thought you would have appreciated seeing her.” Tara looked at Eranor and squinted.

“Really? You took my daughter as a slave only to free her?”

“You sold me as a slave!” Eranor corrected. “Tialla has done nothing but show me kindness and support, you and dad are the one that gave me away just to save yourselves.”

“For all the good that’s done us,” Tara said knowingly. Tialla rolled her eyes.

“Look this kind of talk is getting us nowhere,” Tialla said exhaling. “You’ve obviously come here for a reason Tara. Why did you need to see me?” Tara briefly composed herself.

“Quite,” she agreed. “Allow me to be brief, because time is short. I have come here to deliver an artifact, that may be the key to uniting or more reserved allies.”

“Do tell,” Tialla said in a bit of disbelief. Tara gave a small nod before fetching a small box from her pack.

It was a simple box, and inside was a simple looking ring, made from a series of tree branches wrapped in a circle, some leaf sprouts were on some of the branches. It was a simple looking ring, but it had an air of power, because it was powerful, in a sense.

“Is that?” Tiall started the question.

“The twig ring,” Eranor finished looking at the thing in awe.

“The very one,” Tara said with gravitas.

Every beast kin knew what the twig ring was, it was a symbol of their ancient history and it spoke to them on an instinctual lever. It dated back to the first era, when beastkin walked on four legs. During that time, they served as guardians of the world tree. Since then, they broke away from that contract, and each evolved into the three beastkin races of the modern age. It was a relic from a time when all the beastkin had a common enemy. An enemy that was still around.

“Do you really think?” Tialla said unsure. “The Aeon Worm?”

“I don’t know that for sure,” Tara admitted. “The actions of the elves fit the M.O. of the worm. I think there’s a more important thing to consider. If it is the worm, then we’ve secured our Beastkin alliance.”

“So, this is just a hail Mary?” Eranor questioned. "Just a last attempt to form an alliance to save yourselves?"

“It is,” Tara admitted. “Even in the state Pal Miqo is in we know how the cards are stacked right now. This is our only shot, and I’m taking it.” Eranor sighed in disbelief, but Tialla stared at the ring. “We know that General Castor is coming back, and when he does the ring will let you know if he’s been corrupted by the worm.”

Tialla kept staring at the ring in thought. If this whole thing wasn’t already intense enough then adding the beastkin’s ancient enemy to the mix made it even more intense. The Aeon Worm was a fifth dimensional being, impossibly old, older than the reality Tialla and Eranor knew. Tara was right. If this old, ancient, enemy was at the heart of the elve’s conquest, it would be the one thing that would unite all of the beastkin together, and would fix all of their problems. Even still she hoped that it wasn’t true.

“How does it work?” Tialla asked with a hint of terror in her voice.

“I’m not sure exactly. I’ve never had the opportunity to see it actually work,” Tara explained. “But I’m sure you both know the stories as well as I. Somehow when you wear the ring you can tell who is under the influence of the worm.” There was a pause, and Tialla held the ring in her hand delicately. It was a significant piece of history by itself, and the implications it brought were severe. “When Castor returns, just make sure someone is wearing the ring. He’s high enough up the chain of command that if the elves are communicating with the worm, then he would likely have made contact as well, and the ring should show the taint on him.”

“Do you really think?” Eranor asked.

“She’s right,” Tialla silenced Eranor. “It’s our best option to secure an alliance, and beyond that if they really are just agents of the worm.” A heavy silence hung in the air. Every beastkin knew the danger of the worm, the entity writhed away at the center of the planet, and if it was ever released from its containment, it would destroy all of reality. The Aeon Worm was a fifth dimensional being trapped in the three-dimensional plane, and it was constantly scheming to escape. It has existed across all of time, and all possible permutations of time, before it was captured and contained here. It has immense knowledge, knowledge that had tempted many a good person into risking the very reality they were in to get it, and the worm would inevitably lead them through some scheme to free itself. If the elves really were being led by the worm, their conquest would not only mean the enslavement of all beastkin, but it would eventually mean the end of the world. The stakes would be even higher. Though the alliance would be secured, the beastkin would be faced with a fight they could not loose.

Eranor gulped, the severity of things hitting her. Tara was less affected by the severity, but even she felt the instinctual fight or flight response beastkin had to their first and most ancient enemy.

“We’ll do it,” Tialla said with determination.

“Of course, you will,” Tara said dismissively. “There’s no other option.” Tara stood up to leave.

“Are you leaving?” Eranor asked appalled. “Just like that?”

“I’ve said what I need to say, and queen Tialla knows the stakes.” Tara said quickly.

“Nothing to say to me? Nothing to say to your daughter that you sold to save you skin?”

“What would you like me to say? I’m not sorry. I’ve done what I always do. What it takes for our people to survive. There’s nothing I can say to you that will make it ok, and you have every right to feel that way. I will say that I am glad that you seem to be doing well here.” Eranor sighed wholly unsatisfied.

“Sweetie,” Tialla said quietly grabbing Eranor’s hands. “There’s nothing you’re going to get from this,” Tialla said sympathetically. “You need to let it go, don’t let it fester in you.” Eranor looked at Tialla, and then to her mother who was standing by the door to the room with an emotionless expression.

“Where are you going to go?” Eranor asked flatly.

“To the Border Mountains,” Tara said plainly. “We have allies among the dwarves that will keep me safe until the storm passes.”

“What about dad?” Eranor said with a hint of sadness.

“He’s going to stay behind,” Tara said finally starting to show a little emotion. “He’s going to stay with his people until the end.”

“While you hide in the mountains?” Eranor accused.

“To keep our culture alive,” Tara said regaining her emotionless composure. “If none of us are left, then our culture and history will be erased and forgotten.”

“That’s just an excuse,” Eranor spat back.

“Earnor!” Tialla scolded her. Eranor sighed. She knew her mother was actually right here, that without her surviving their culture would be erased by the conquering elves, and she was disappointed in herself that she forgot that only to sneak in a final jab, though at the same time she felt her mother deserved more than a jab.

“Just go please,” Eranor said closing her eyes. Tara nodded silently and left the room, making fast pace to leave the country as well.

“Sweeite,” Tialla said comforting a gently sobbing Eranor. Eranor looked up at her in response. “You did good, and I’m proud of you. Ok.” Eranor nodded yes. “Let’s go back up, we both need some ice cream.”

Prisoner of Progress Chapter 21

 Tialla’s vision was filled with that of King Joshua’s. She was literally looking through his eyes. Thankfully he was standing in front of a mirror so she could actuallysee his body. He was doing the same. King Joshua’s vision would be filled with Tialla’s and she had her own mirror, situated just above the magical crystal that was allowing this scrying to happen. It was customary for scrying session like this to take place in front of a mirror so each party could see the other, and for an official call like this, the tradition was certianly upheld.

“Obviously I’m disappointed in the outcome King Joshua,” Tialla spoke but she could only hear her own voice coming out of the magical crystal in King Joshua’s room.

“Believe it or not I am also disappointed in the outcome,” King Joshua’s crossed his arms in thought. “But I didn’t have a lot of choice. We’re just outclassed by the elve’s technology. I hope that your own advances will match up to theirs when the time comes.”

“I only hope that there will be enough time,” Tialla replied.

“Though obviously this may all change should you discover the presence or the worm.”

“Right,” Tialla replied unsure. King Joshua’s expression changed as he noted the hesitancy in her voice. Tialla was thinking that even if the worm were here, and it secured her alliance, king Joshua’s comments were still true. Their chances of winning didn’t go up, just their obligations. Neither possibility was particularly compelling.

“You should find out soon,” Joshua said ignoring Tialla’s reservations. “General Castor has just left, and he’s making his way to you to get your answer, and I think your answer should be already decided.”

“Indeed,” Tialla said disappointed. “Though I express again that I am not happy. You have forced my hand though. We need to stick together if either of our nations is to get through this.”

“Agreed,” Joshua said with a strange version of happiness.

“You will have to excuse me now Joshua,” Tialla said with a diplomatic bow. “I do have to prepare for the general’s arrival.”

“Indeed,” Joshua commented. “I hope you will let me know the results of this meeting soon,” Joshua said referencing the twig ring and the potential connection to the worm.

Tialla’s vision was dark for a moment as the connection of the scrying was terminated, and she blinked a few times as her regular vision returned to her.

“Well, that went about as well as expected,” Eranor said speaking up from her corner of the room.

“It’s exactly what we expected,” Tialla shrugged. “It’s all up to the twig ring now, if it can save the alliance.”

“You seem unsure,” Eranor approached thoughtfully.

“Well, even if they are being influenced by the worm, what Joshua said was right. They have such an advantage in technology. Us joining together to stop the worm won’t change that. We’d just be marching off to die.”

“You’re not wrong,” Eranor agreed. “Though I think you’ll get to that point eventually, it’s just a matter of time.”

“None of it matters until we know if Castor is under the influence of the worm or not,” Tialla shook the doubts out of her head. “So, let’s cross that bridge first.”

“What is the plan to cross that bridge?” Eranor asked. “Planning to have Rose and I go all slave girl again so he won’t notice us wearing the ring.”

“No,” Tialla answered quickly. “Because you’re not that, and you never should have been. Besides there’s no reason to pretend any more. The lines have been drawn and I’ve no reason to try and impress him.”

“But,” Eranor said knowingly.

“But,” Tialla sighed annoyed. “You are right about my plan. Even not dressed as a slave you are … cute.” Eranor giggled and curtseyed, though her outfit today wasn’t especially cute, a plain looking white dress, she was happy to play into her role. “He shouldn’t be expecting us to have the twig ring at all and even less that the cute kitten in the room would have it on. So you’ll wear it, and then let me know what you see.”

“It’s a great plan, I’m glad I thought of it,” Eranor giggled. “I’ll have to pick out something especially cute.”

“You seem to be enjoying the idea.”

“I have grown an appreciation for being the cute kitten in the room.”

“Me too,” Tialla agreed. “And it seems like you’ll get your chance pretty soon. He seems to be on his way, we should get ready for him.”

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The preparations for general Castor’s return were rushed, both because their notice was short and because now Tialla and her country were not in a diplomatic mood. Even still, some customary diplomacy was still observed. Tialla was dressed in an appropriately fancy dress. A dark blue almost purple dress with a long and volumous skirt.

Eranor was with her, also dressed well. Her dress was a bright pink with white ruffles, and a short skirt that went into the bodice at the front and back in a v shape, showing off the pink and white diaper cover with ruffles on the butt. Though the diaper was covered there was no doubt that’s what she was wearing under that diaper cover. A white harness with a white leash, and a white pacifier on a white ribbon clip completed the look. All of this loud outfit of course was serving the goal of hiding the real centerpiece of her look, the twig ring resting on the index finger of her left hand.

Tialla looked over at Eranor and quickly turned away with a blush.

“I saw that Nana,” Eranor giggled.

“I can’t help it you look so …”

“Adorable? Cute? Sweet?”

“Distracting,” Tialla sighed.

“Well, that’s the plan isn’t it,” Eranor shrugged.

“That is the plan,” Tialla said with another blush. “I just… I wouldn't have picked something quite so showy. You’re supposed to not be my baby slave anymore.”

“And I’m not,” Eranor spat back. “I picked this outfit out all by myself. Good thing to. If it’s got you distracted it should be good enough to get Castor distracted. At least keep him from looking at my ring. Don’t be shy. Take my leash like you own me.”

“I don’t officially.”

“It’s a good thing that officially is not the way that matters,” Eranor held out her white leash. Tialla couldn’t help a smirk as she took it in her hand.

“Tia, he’s here,” Rosewood said entering the room, dressed in typical clothes especially compared to Eranor. A white tunic with green pants. Tialla took in a breath and nodded, following Rosewood, and Aldyn who was waiting just outside to the hangar.

General Castor did not make the effort to show off like he did on his last visit. His airship simply and without fanfare drifted slowly down onto the landing area, the setting sun glinting across its hull causing Tialla to wince a bit as it hit her eyes. With much less ceremony the ramp to castor’s airship opened. A small guard of elven knights followed the general as he exited with his two pet slaves. He was dressed in his military uniform, a simple grey shirt, and pants. Even he knew that the pageantry of this visit wasn’t needed, though he seemed to spare no expense in having his slaves dressed in their revealing and uncomfortable restrictive gear.

“Ah Queen Tialla,” Castor said with a smug air. “It’s so good to see you again. It seems you have one less slave this time.”

“Eranor actually isn’t a slave any longer,” Tialla said curtly. Castor looked over Eranor’s ridiculous outfit, completely ignoring her ring, and giggled a little.

“Could have fooled me.” Eranor gave an overexaggerated curtsey in response.

“I picked the outfit out myself, I’m glad you appreciate it.” Eranor said with backhanded politeness.

“I do appreciate Miqo dressed a certain way that’s for sure,” Castor gestured to the two Miqo behind him, crawling around on their elbows and knees with their bare breasts and privates exposed thanks to their slave outfits. Eranor couldn’t hide the look of disgust at that comment, though Tialla managed by closing her eyes.

“With greetings done,” Tialla said loudly, signaling that little side conversation to be done, “We should move on to talks. I’m sure you are eager to return home to Hyur after all.”

“You’re right of course, though we will have to stay here for the night since it is already so late if that is acceptable to you queen.”

“I will not deny a diplomatic envoy, no matter how distasteful I find it. You may stay.” Tialla started walking, Eranor and Castor followed. Castor motioned for his guard to remain by the airship as he followed Tialla and Eranor. His own slaves were struggling to keep up with the brisk pace.

Eranor glanced back to Castor as they walked, subtly moving the ring on her finger. If she understood it right, she would just be able to tell by looking at him whether the Aeon Worm had spoken to him or not, but he looked normal. Pompus, arrogant, and bigoted, but that was all normal for general Castor. Eranor’s skippy, innocent, step did well at hiding her uncertainty. Not that the alternative was much better, but seeing that Castor was apparently not under the influence of the worm, that his conquest and destruction of Miqo culture was just garden variety nationalism, was disappointing. Disappointing that such evil could not be so easily explained away. Was it preferable that this was just all too real manifest destiny over some impossible evil Eranor could barely comprehend? She didn’t know the answer to that, and to some extent it didn’t matter.

“You will wait for us out here won’t you sweetheart?” Tialla interrupted Eranor’s thoughts, the group had arrived at the small meeting room. Eranor looked behind her, at Castor’s expectant face, and the panting tired faces of the slave Miqo behind him. Struggling to even take full breathes with their uncomfortable gags forcing their mouths open.

“You don’t mind watching over my pets, do you?” Castor asked smugly.

“Really general?” Tialla protested.

“What?” Castor raised his arms in defense. “If she isn’t a slave, as you say, then she should have no problem watching over my pets.”

“That’s not exactly the issue general,” Tialla said indignantly. “I’m surprised you would even leave them behind like that.”

“They can be somewhat distracting,” Castor sighed. “As can your own...” Castor paused not sure what to call Eranor.

“It’s fine Tialla,” Eranor cut in quickly. “I don’t mind.” Eranor expertly hid her emotions behind a cute smile.

“See no problem,” Castor smiled. “Maybe she wants to catch up with her old officials.”

“I don’t think they’re much for conversation at the moment,” Tialla responded curtly.

“It’s fine Tialla,” Eranor said more sternly. “I’ve got it under control.” Tialla turned to Castor with a frown, but he was smiling.

“Let’s just get this over with,” Tialla said quickly and quietly. “We won’t be long anyway.”

“Quite right,” Castor added. “I should hope not. I am eager to get a good rest on my ship.” Tialla didn’t respond, but opened the door to the room for Castor to enter into first. Leaving Eranor alone with Castor’s two slave Miqo.

Prisoner of Progress Chapter 22

 Earnor stood in thought on the other side of the simple door as Tialla and Castor delegated the specifics of their deal on the other side. On a cursory look, one might think she was behaving similarly to Mayor Dalia, who was so beaten into submission that she was anxiously waiting by the door for her master’s guidance. The reason for Eranor’s sudden stop was not because she was anxious to see her Nana, but rather because she was lost in thoughts at what to do.

Their plan to use the presence of the Aeon Worm to help force an alliance had fallen into shambles. The elves weren’t under the influence of the worm, they were just seeking expansion for their own reasons. Really, they were just back where they started. The whole Aeon Worm thing was always a backup plan, a hail Mary shot in the dark. The fact that it turned out not to be true wasn’t the end of the world. One might even say that because the worm wasn’t involved, the world was less likely to end. Eranor couldn’t help but feel like she failed though.

She finally turned away from the door, deciding that pacing was better than just standing still. She also felt weird waiting around in the same way Dalia was. She turned around and walked toward the middle of the waiting room where Corinthus was struggling in obvious annoyance to find a way to be comfortable in her decidedly uncomfortable restraints. The two locked eyes for a moment. The fire that was in Corinthus' eyes from the last time she was there was still flaming in her eyes, but her demeanor was more annoyed than ready to strike.

“Am I going to bother you if I vent for a moment?” Eranor asked the bound Corinthus. Corinthus rolled her eyes and lifted her bound arm in a gesture to remind Eranor that she didn’t have a choice. It seemed that being constantly paraded around naked had loosened the general’s decorum. Eranor blushed a bit, though the general didn’t say no. “We had a plan,” Eranor said taking the twig ring off her finger and showing it to Corinthus. “We were thinking maybe the elves were under the influence of the Aeon Worm, and that would finally convince everyone to band together to stop them.” Corinthus grumbled a little. If she could talk, she would have told Eranor that it was obvious they weren’t under the influence of some cosmic being, they were just entitled assholes. Eranor got the gidst of that even without Corinthus saying anything. “I know it was a shot in the dark, but I can’t help but feel like I let Nana down you know?” Eranor locked eyes with Corinthus again. Corinthus gave a questioning look, shooting a quick glance to Dalia still pacing by the door. Eranor grew flush at the silent accusation. “It’s not like that!” She said defensively. “Well not exactly like that, I guess. It’s complicated.” Corinthus scoffed, and Eranor sank a little. She found the general’s distaste at her submission hurtful, thought it was clear Corinthus was long past caring who she offended any more.

Eranor let Corinthus have space for a moment. She did have a right to be angry or annoyed at Eranor’s submission to Tialla, even if she understood that it was freely given now. That Eranor would volunteer to take part in a relationship that Corinthus had been a victim of understandably upset her. At the least Eranor could give Corinthus the freedom to not be burdened with her inner thoughts, which now were turning to what exactly to do.

Without the alliance, nothing would stop Castor from pillaging through the Miqo countries, and eventually Biscotti and the Naga countries. Even if they weren’t outright pillaged an attack was certainly inevitable. She pondered for a moment what to do. There had to be something. She involuntarily fidgeted with her collar around as she thought, feeling the shape shimmer with the slightest bit of magic. That’s when Eranor got an idea. A pretty awful idea all things considered, but that’s what things were coming to it seems.

“Corinthus?” Eranor questioned making her way back over to the captive Miqo. Corinthus grunted in annoyance but looked Eranor in the eyes. “General Castor, he does … use you right?” The fire in Corinthus’ eyes lit anew with anger and she shot Eranor a glare. Eranor held her hands out defensively. “Hold on I just … I have an idea.” Corinthus was still visibly angry but was listening.

Eranor held out a finger to tell Corinthus to pay attention as she magically removed the collar from around her neck, breaking it apart into small, almost liquid pieces of metal before reforming it into a small dagger shape.

“My collar is made from a very reactive metal,” Eranor explained. “I don’t even need a magical focus to move it around like this. I barely need to use my hand. Neither would you.” It took a moment for Corinthus to grasp what Eranor was saying, but seeing the dagger floating in Eranor's hand finally got things to click for her. She angrily slammed her arms on the ground and grunted, as close to a command as she could manage.

Eranor glanced expectantly at the door. Something this severe was probably something she should discuss with Tialla first, but there also wouldn’t be another chance to set this up. She doubted she would ever have another moment along with Cointhus again.

“Where do you want it?” Eranor asked quickly. Corinthus grunted something through her gag and licked her teeth. “Ok,” Eranor got the idea. She focused her magical energy and broke the floating dagger, and former collar, into small pieces, hovering them in a loose circle. She got on her knees and brought the circling bits of metal down to Corinthus’ mouth. “Do you have it?” Corinthus licked around her gag again and focused. Eranor felt a slight pull on her invisible grip of the floating metal as Corinthus reached out with her own magical energy to grab it. Eranor let go, and let Corinthus take full control of the metal. She immediately formed the pieces into the dagger shape, that floated just in front of her face, before breaking it back into smaller pieces, and bringing those pieces into her mouth, hiding them behind her teeth.

“You need to be sure to wait for the right time. When you’re alone. When he …” Corinthus cut Eranor off with an angry grunt. She had spent countless hours being beat or locked in a small cage thinking of nothing but how she would kill Corinthus if she ever got the chance, and she did not appreciate advice from Eranor. “Fair enough,” Eranor conceded. “Listen I’m … I’m sorry. I know you look at me dressed like this, and probably hate me. You’re right to, I don’t blame you. I wish I could have protected you from this. No one deserves it.” Corinthus exhaled dismissively. With the apology Corinthus was able to look past her initial emotion, and realized she didn’t really care. Whether or not her former princess chose to live a life of weird baby subservience or not, it wouldn’t change her own predicament. Only she could change her own predicament, and she welcomed the new opportunity to do so.

“You know that if you do this …” Eranor trailed off letting the implication sink it. It didn’t take a genius to think through the scenario fully. Corinthus could get a lucky shot in on Castor, but the chances of her escaping from that alive were basically zero. It was clear that she didn’t care anymore. She would give anything for her revenge. She would let Eranor, Tialla, the whole of Naga and Miqo, and maybe even the whole world burn if she could get a chance to kill Castor. Her own life was nothing. She basically was nothing now, just an object to show off and give pleasure, and to beat when her master was bored. All of this was somehow conveyed to Eranor with a single melancholic but angry look. “You’re brave, I’ll never forget you.” Corinthus scoffed again. She didn’t care who remembered her. Her pride as a general, her desire to be written about as a hero in her country’s history books had been beaten and exposed out of her.

On the other side of the door a decidedly less one-sided conversation was reaching its conclusion. Tialla and castor had finished working out the details of their cease fire, and a timeline of when Tialla had to remove her soldiers by, as well as time frame where the elves would not invade Pal Miqo. A simple but tense negotiation, that had been wrapping up as Eranor was concluding her conversation outside.

“There is one other thing, something of a practical matter,” Castor winced a little expecting some outcry at what he was about to suggest. “We will need you to make an official declaration, suspending all slave trade in the Miqo countries.” Predictably Tialla’s expression hardened.

“Practical my ass,” Tialla spat back. “I know exactly what this is. It’s another dig. A way to make us look weak.”

“Regardless of the reason I must insist,” Castor said with a sigh. “If we do not hear a declaration to that effect withing the week, then the council will not honor our timeline, and I cannot guarantee the safety of your soldiers still in Pal Miqo.”

“Mother fucker,” Tialla cursed quietly.

“I didn’t think you would take it so negatively. You seem to be quite the abolitionist. Or maybe slavery by choice is more accurate to your sensibilities.”

“Fuck you,” Tialla spat back.

“As you say,” Castor relented. “I do not need an answer, and, clearly, it’s a touchy subject. The answer will be if we hear your proclamation or not.” Tialla crossed her arms silently.

“We’re done now,” Tialla sat up and moved to leave. “You may stay here tonight. In. Your. Ship.” Tialla made sure to specify this. “And you will leave first thing tomorrow.”

“As you say my queen,” Castor gave a quiet if smug bow. The two silently exited the room, both in very bad moods. Castor made a clicking sound and his two slaves took practiced positions at his heels. Corinthus shot Eranor a glare as the group made their way toward their airship.

“Follow them would you,” Tialla ordered a guard in an unusually bossy tone.

“Yes queen,” the guard answered quickly and got to work following the general.

“That bad?” Eranor asked. Tialla just sighed in frustration.

“Every time he comes here, he manages to get under my skin,” Tialla said with a pout. “He wants me to make a proclamation. To ban all slave trade in the Miqo countries.”

“Well, I mean that sounds like a good thing,” Eranor began.

“It is,” Tialla said back quickly. “Or at least it would be. That’s why it’s got me so riled up,” Tialla paced out her frustration. “As much as I want to be happy about this, I can’t be.”

“It’s a sign of capitulation,” Eranor said knowingly.

“Not just that it …” Tialla struggled to form words.

“It stole your moment.” Eranor filled in Tialla’s missing words. “That’s probably something you wanted to do on your own. Something that would have put you in the history books as a real progressive thinker and kind queen, but now …”

“Now it’s just going to put me in the history books as Castor’s bitch,” Tialla said pointedly. “That fuckin prick.” She took a moment to catch her breath and calm down, then gave Eranor a serious look. “Does that make me selfish? That I wanted the glory and credit for stopping the salve trade.”

“I mean a little,” Eranor answered honestly. “But I don’t think that’s the whole story either. It’s more than just you taking the credit. It’s supposed to be a good thing, and now he made it so it’s not a good thing. He spoiled it.”

“I think that’s a very generous reading for me,” Tialla answered honestly. “I appreciate it.”

“Well, I wouldn’t be thanking me just yet,” Eranor said with trepidation.

“Why not?” Tialla’s face scrunched in concern.

“There’s no trace of the worm,” Eranor sighed. “At least from what I can tell.”

“That’s fine, it was a long shot anyway,” Tialla tried to comfort Eranor.

“Yeah well, I may have done something bad. Because I didn’t know what else to do without the worm to make the alliance work.”

“What do you mean by something bad?” Tialla said with concern. “I mean what could you have done?”

Corinthus ran her tongue behind her teeth, cutting it slightly on the sharp metal hidden there. She tasted the blood.

“Cages now!” Castor barked. With a quick spell Corinthus felt an electrical shock run through her collar and dissipate through her body. She held in her yelp of pain, but Dalia couldn’t help herself and cried out. She never got used to the constant shocking to get her to follow commands, and she couldn’t deny the effectiveness of the system. She was hobbling as fast as she could into the airship and into her master’s room, where their two tiny cages were. She and Dalia both scrambled inside. Even with the doors wide open, they knew better than to try and leave the confines of their cages. They would get shocked again, more painfully. Castor entered the room a little later with a sigh.

“You two should get warmed up for later,” he said casting another spell. With it Corinthus felt a familiar vibrating from inside her privates. Some machine planted in there by the elves meant to stimulate her at the press of a button. To get her sexually frustrated and more eager to please her master when the time came. She hated how effective it was. She grunted in frustration as she found herself involuntarily raising her bottom in the air and grinding it against the back wall of her cage. She was hoping for any tension to get her release, but she knew she wouldn’t find it in her infuriating bitch suit. Dalia had taken to whining and panting in the way she knew Castor loved. Hoping to be filled with her master rather than trying to get herself off like Corinthus was.

“Not now Dalia. Later tonight,” Castor sighed shutting both Dalia and Corinthus’s cages, leaving the girls to whine in moan in their cages in sexual frustration.

Corinthus hated herself right now. She always did when Castor did this too her. Because despite how much she hated him, all this stimulation made even her beg to take his cock. Because she knew, through repeated training, that if she did take his cock, then the vibrating machine in her sex would finally be turned up enough for her to reach climax. Though this time another thought filled her mind that increased her anticipation even more.

Later that night her master took her out of her cage. She was more obedient than usual. Begged to have her master’s cock in her mouth. He even took her gag off, and she relished him with the most humiliating words she could think of as she begged to be used. Really buttering him up, getting him excited to have his dick sucked by a former general now turned into a pet bitch. And she did do that. For probably the first time since she had been forced into being his pet, she actually let herself enjoy it. She lost herself in the moment pleasuring her master, and she did a good job if his moans were anything to go by. It was strange. She wanted him to finish in her. It was a weird mix of sexual desire and murderous intent. Because as he did finish inside her, and filled her mouth up with his cum, she finally struck.

Corinthus formed the metal hidden behind her teeth into razor sharp knives, and bit Castor's dick off. Castor’s screams of delight were replaced with screams of terror, as the salty taste of cum in Corinthus’ mouth was replaced with the sweet taste of blood and revenge. She could hear the cries of guards from outside his cabin. The soldiers always heard what their general did in his quarters, so they no doubt heard his blood curdling scream as his dick fell off the onto the floor and left him bleeding.

Corinthus only had a moment to react, but to her it felt like an eternity. She really got to savor this moment, the mix of shock and terror on Castor’s face. The look he gave when she formed the metal into a dagger in her mouth and started slashing away at his ankles. The soldiers came in the room about the time Corinthus had General castor on the ground. They only had time to watch as she mounted his screaming body, and sliced his throat with her dagger.

The look on Castor’s face, would fill Corinthus’ vision for the rest of her short life, and the sound of his gurgling, gasping, dying breathe would be the song that sang her off to the afterlife. She felt she could say with a cruel irony, that this might have been the best sex she ever had. She stuck the knife in his eye for good measure before she felt the most intense shock of her life as the soldiers activated her collar on its lethal setting.

Prisoner of Progress Chapter 23

 Tialla stood by a window overlooking the landing where General Castor’s ship was resting. She had a finger in her mouth and was chewing her nail anxiously. Behind her, Aldyn and Rosewood were also struck with grave faces. Eranor was behind them all feeling ashamed. She hadn’t been yelled at, but she could tell everyone was mad at her for causing this.

“I don’t think us waiting here will make anything happen faster or slower,” Aldyn said hesitantly.

“And what exactly am I supposed to do?” Tialla snapped back.

“Wait,” Rosewood shrugged. “It’s all we can do.”

“Well, he just said …”

“Waiting here by the window,” Rosewood cut Tialla off. “Is only helping your anxiety get higher.” Eranor grimaced too. She felt like all the stress was being directed at her.

“Well, If I leave then I won’t know what’s going on, AND I’ll be anxious.” Aldyn or Rosewood did not comment on that statement. “Kitten,” Tialla turned to Eranor suddenly. Eranor stood up at attention.

“Yes Nana,” Eranor said robotically, eager to perform whatever task was about to be asked of her to stay on Tialla’s good graces.

“How’s your diaper? Do you need a change?” Tialla asked with a strange seriousness.

“No Nana I …”

“Surely you must. You’ve been in that diaper for hours now. I’d be shocked if you haven’t leaked.” Tialla kept a flat, serious, tone. Aldyn and Rosewood look at each other both puzzled by what exactly was going on. Tialla didn’t wait for an answer, walking up to Eranor and grabbing the diaper shown off by her dress. True to her thoughts her hand was a little damp when she removed it from Eranor’s diaper. “Just like I thought, you’re leaking. Come on, you need a diaper change.”

“It’s fine,” Eranor said quickly. “There’s more important things happening. Surely you can get someone else to do it.”

“You’re my baby and I’m going to change you,” Tialla said with a grunt. “Obviously I’ve been a little lax. I need take care of this.”

“But …”

“You are getting a diaper change Kitten,” Tialla said in her practiced dominating tone.

“Yes Nana,” Eranor went into a submissive mode at Tialla's dominant voice, bowing her head as Tialla clipped a lead onto her harness and lead her away.

There weren’t a lot of restrooms in the central pyramid that had changing rooms in them, especially on the upper levels. Still, it didn’t take long for Tialla to find the one there was. Put there by necessity on the off chance anyone had to bring their children to work with them, or if they had a disability. Thanks to the late age of beastkin children they could both use the same changing station. This also meant the restraints used to keep squirmy children from moving were there as well. Tialla took a quick and practiced approach to laying Eranor down on the changing table and securing her to it as tightly as possible. Eranor noted this and kept still as much as she could, even if the restraints meant she couldn’t move much anyway.

“I’m sorry,” Eranor said, not looking at her Nana who was currently removing a leaking diaper from her waist.

“Why would you be? I wouldn’t be sorry if I had done it,” Tialla said flatly. Eranor’s uncomfortable silence was her answer.

“You’re mad at me,” Eranor stated.

“My feelings are complicated right now,” Tialla responded, wrapping the diaper up and throwing it in a trash can nearby. “At the moment I’m just stressed, which is why your diaper is getting changed.” Eranor remembered Tialla saying that taking care of her was a calming experience. It seems that was being put to the test. “I don’t know if I’m mad at you,” Tialla had grabbed a new diaper from the diaper bag she had thought to grab on her way out. “It seems pointless to be. It's already been done, getting mad about it won’t change that.”

“It would be easier if you were,” Eranor sighed. “Then you could just spank me until I cried and lock me up forever as punishment.”

“I would never do that, Eranor,” Tialla said in a flat tone. “You know that.” Tialla said as she was delicately cleaning Eranor.

“Yeah, I do … just,” Eranor wiggled. “It would be easier.”

“Things aren’t always going to be easy,” Tialla said sagely. She slid a new diaper under Eranor and continued wiping and started applying powder. “Even if you hadn't stepped in, this whole situation is far from easy.”

“So, what do we do?” Eranor fell limp, her exposed privates sitting in a fresh diaper while she lay strapped to a table was not what was making her feel exposed and vulnerable right now.

“Play it by ear,” Tialla taped up the new diaper snuggly. “See what happens.”

“What about us?” Eranor gave a melancholic look. Tialla looked back at her and sighed.

“It depends on how this goes to be honest. I’ll need time to get over it either way, but you’ll always have a place in my home though.”

“I don’t know if I’d want to stay if I can’t be your Kitten.”

“It’s only been like a month Eranor,” Tialla said practically. They both shared a look as they both knew that the time didn’t matter to either of them. Even if it had only been a few weeks it felt like forever. “We’ll figure it out,” Tialla finally said releasing Eranor from her restraints. “It doesn’t matter right now, we have to deal with one problem at a time.” Tialla clipped the lead back to Eranor’s harness, and was noticeably less anxious after going through the diaper change.

“You’re timing is impeccable Tia,” Rosewood said urgently, as Tialla entered the room again with Eranor in tow.

“Several guards just left the air ship,” Aldyn elaborated.

“Well,” Tialla stopped for a moment to process. “Let’s go see what happened.”

The group of four all quickly walked down to the air ship, where several humans were standing around the gangway.

“Queen Tialla,” one human among the group of four spoke up, and the others made their way back to the interior of the airship. Tialla noted a brief tug on the lead she was holding as Eranor abruptly stopped moving. Tialla looked back at her and noticed a shocked expression.

To Tialla, Aldyn, and Rosewood the Human before them looked average. A little on the older side with grey hairs peeking through the blonde and a weathered face. He wore a grey set of heavy armor, with a little bit of adornments to denote an officer rank, but to Eranor he looked decidedly different. To Eranor, a thick black ooze seemed to secrete out of the human’s skin, and bubble up even through his armor where it dripped off of in thick globs. The blobs of ooze evaporated into a black smoke as they hit the ground only to be replaced by another glob as more oozed out of him. He also moved oddly. He seemed to skip forward in time, like he alone was moving at a different rate to everyone else.

No one else seemed to see this though. Tialla recognized that Eranor’s expression was off, but couldn’t glean anything more than that. She wouldn’t have time as the human closed the distance before she could pry for more iformation.

“Captain Card,” the human gave a small bow of introduction. “I’m glad you’re here, we’ve had a bit of an incident that you need to be informed of.” Tialla’s attention was turned away from Eranor, who nervously scooted as far away as the lead would allow her.

“What manner of incident captain,” Aldyn spoke up gruffly.

“It’s the general,” Card paused a moment. “He’s been killed.” The faces of the four beastkin were less shocked and more resigned. “Forgive me, but you don’t seem that surprised,” Card said with a knowing look.

“I’d advise you not to make assumptions,’ Aldyn said as a low threat.

“I meant no disrespect,” Card said in a defensive stance. “Just making an observation.” There was an expectant silence that Card took as invitation to continue. “It was the general’s pet, the former general Corinthus. Somehow, she smuggled in very peculiar bit of metal into her mouth. It was very reactive so she was able to shape it into a weapon and use it to attack the general even without a magical focus or even using her hands.” Card reached into his pocket and out came several metal beads that he held floating in his hand. “Does this look familiar?” If there was any doubt to anyone left, Card formed the bits of metal into their original and perfectly smooth collar shape which hovered above his hand. Tialla looked at the collar and back at Card. Aldyn and Rosewood followed her gaze and the air grew tense.

“Should it look familiar?” Tialla gave a challenge.

“It should at least on a cursory level,” Card accepted the challenge. “I believe your own pet had one similar to it, at least in design.”

“What are you suggesting?”

“Nothing,” Card said quickly. This comment garnered a few quizzical looks from Tialla, Aldyn, and Rosewood. “Allow me to continue for a moment,” Card casually floated the collar to Tialla who took it in a smooth motion, letting it float around her wrist. “General Corinthus, amazing fighter that she is, managed not only to kill General Castor, but all his commanding officers as well. She took out every elf on board the air ship.”

“She did what?” Rosewood said in shock.

“You expect us to believe that general Corinthus was able to kill all of the elves on board? In that pet suit Castor kept her in?” Aldyn said in obvious disbelief.

“It was quite shocking,” Card said crossing his arms. "Perhaps it was something in this collar she had that gave her extra vigor. Maybe it had some enchantment on it. Shame we don’t know where she got it.” The faces of everyone soured as the message hidden in the words had become clear. Just as it was obvious to Card that Corinthus got that collar from Eranor, it was obvious to the four beastkin that Corinthus would not have been able to kill all the elves on the airship without any help. Cleary Captain Card was involved in some way in the elves' death. Both parties knew these lies, and both parties were denying they were lies. Because revealing the truth of what happened would be bad for them both.

“What will you say to the council?” Tialla asked.

“The truth,” Card said plainly. “Things are already in motion, there will be no time to replace Castor. We humans will have to lead the coming attacks ourselves. We would anyway to tell the truth. Even with a general over us, it’s always the humans doing the dirty work for the council of elves.”

“And you’re fine just doing the dirty work of the council of elves?” Rosewood asked pointedly.

“I am fine,” Card said exhaling. “I am fine because the elves are doing what they always do. Getting full of themselves and overconfident. I will march their forces across the Miqo countries, and bash their machines against Biscotti. They will be stretched paper thin, and it will ultimately be their downfall.”

“Awfully forthcoming with that information,” Aldyn commented.

“Perhaps,” Card said thoughtfully. “Just trying to make a connection. Letting you know that we’re not that different.” Card gave an official looking smile. “Ah, but as I’m sure you can understand this recent tragedy has somewhat accelerated our time table.” Card’s tone shifted to something more mundane. “We’ll be leaving shortly. We must bring the elves back into elven territory for a proper burial, and you may be happy to know that we plan on burying his two Miqo slaves in their homeland, once the invasion begins in force. Surely her act of bravery will make her go down as a hero.”

“An appealing thought,” Rosewood said curtly. Card smiled and bowed again. “I wish you well Queen Tialla.” Card calmly turned around and made his way back into the air ship. Tialla, Rosewood, and Aldyn all looked at each other and moved toward the rear of the landing area, as the air ship was already preparing for takeoff. Rosewood and Aldyn’s faces were twisted in thought, but Tialla only had one particular thought on her mind.

“Eranor,” Tialla turned to the Miqo on the end of her leash. “What’s going on?” Eranor gulped and shook a little. She was grappling with the reality of what she saw, and now starting to understand what it meant. Eranor twisted the twig ring that was still around her finger.

“I saw it,” she said in a quick hushed tone. “On Captain Card.” She held up her hand with the twig ring on it for emphasis. “The worm! He’s been talking to the worm!” This even got Aldyn and Rosewood’s attention. All three looked shocked, as the depth of the situation they found themselves in suddenly washed over them.

A whir from the air ship’s engines caused the group to look at it, as it slowly lifted itself off the landing and slowly left toward the elf border.

Prisoner of Progress Chapter 24

 Eranor waited nervously just outside of the bathroom. She was naked, and she was currently averting her eyes from Tialla who was also naked and busy preparing for a bath. To say things had been tense would be underselling it. They had just inadvertently uncovered something major. That the humans were being manipulated by an ancient evil entity, the Aeon Worm, and that these humans, at the behest of the worm, were going to drive the Elves forces across the Miqo lands with the intent to spread their forces thin. Then, presumably, they would destroy the Elves later. This was only discovered because Eranor had indirectly caused the death of the elves general, which had set off a chain of events leading to where they are now. The whole scenario had changed, and Eranor wasn’t quite sure where she stood with Tialla, which is why she was turning her head away in modesty.

“Eranor,” Tialla said flatly, snapping Eranor out of her trance. With nothing else to look at, Eranor’s eyes were moved to the bare naked Tialla, who didn’t seem very perturbed about being naked, unlike Eranor. “You’re acting weird.”

“I’m just not sure if you’re still mad at me or not,” Eranor admitted.

“I’m past it,” Tialla said with a sigh. “I’ve got other things on my mind now.”

“Yeah I don't doubt it,” Eranor nodded in agreement.

“Come on,” Tialla motioned to the bathroom. “I want you to bathe me.” Eranor blushed a bit and the two entered the bath room together. It hadn’t been the first time they had done this together, in fact it had become rather frequent, but the mood was different this time. Eranor diligently got to work turning on the faucet and getting soap ready.

There was a time where Tialla was self-conscious about getting bathed. She thought it upset the power dynamic between her and Eranor. Now she was confident ordering Eranor to clean her while maintaining her dominant energy. Tialla breathed out a heavy sigh as hot water hit her and Eranor began to gently clean her.

“What do you make of all of this Eranor?” Tialla asked flatly. She kept facing forward and since Eranor was behind her, Eranor couldn’t get a sense of where Tialla’s emotions were at.

“I’m not sure what you’re asking?” Eranor said nervously.

“Your opinion. I’m asking your opinion,” Tialla responded quickly. “Eranor, sweetie, I really need you right now. So, let’s just not think about the Corinthus thing ok.” Eranor stood still for a moment processing that request and trying her best to push past her insecurities.

“Ok,” she said simply and got back to washing Tialla.

“So,” Tialla continued. “What are your thoughts?”

“Well …” Eranor spoke and then paused. Not because she was still nervous, but because this was a tricky situation and she needed to think. “I guess the best thing to do, is nothing,” Eranor said after a moment of thought.

“You mean let the elves go through with their conquest?” This was the first moment Tialla moved a little, though not enough to turn completely around. “Even knowing that letting them continue is exactly what the Aeon Worm wants?” Eranor didn’t flinch because she knew this wasn’t an attack on her ideas. Tialla had the same thought, and had this reservation about it. She wanted to see if Eranor had a perspective that would alleviate her concern.

“Well, here’s how I think about it,” Eranor explained as she rinsed Tialla off. “Whether or not it is what the worm wants to do, waiting is your best option. Card said himself that they’re going to wear the elves thin and make them weak. The best time to stop the worm from doing whatever it’s doing is when the elves are weakened.”

“And the plight of the Miqo?” Tialla asked. “They will suffer under the thumb of the Elven empire.” Eranor was quiet for a bit thinking that one over. She finished rinsing Tialla off and started rubbing a special cream into Tialla’s scales.

“You can’t be held responsible for every bad thing that happens to people,” Eranor said rubbing the cream in. “None of this is your fault. You didn’t make any of this happen. You’re just responding to it.”

“Isn’t it my fault though? If I have the capacity to help them and I don’t, am I not partly to blame for their suffering?”

“It’s not that black and white,” Eranor rinsed off Tialla’s scales. “You could stop the elves now, and you might actually be able to, but that’s not what will help them the most in the long run.”

“It feels wrong,” Tialla turned around to face Eranor. “To let this happen. Even if it is the best thing to do, it feels wrong.”

“It does,” Eranor simply agreed. “Because nothing you do is going to feel right here. It’s not that easy.” Tialla nodded.

“Ok your turn,” Tialla stepped behind Eranor. “Sit!” she commanded, and Eranor robotically obeyed. The sound of the faucet started again and Eranor felt a sprinkle of refreshingly hot water hit her back. “I appreciate you, you know,” Tialla said in a way that didn’t offer response. “You’re very smart, and I value your input. You would have made a great queen.”

“Thanks,” Eranor said enjoying the sensation of shampoo being rubbed into her hair.

“I am still upset at you for giving Corinthus a weapon without asking me first,” Eranor stayed quiet and let Tialla continue. “But we wouldn’t know where we really stood without that, and I guess there wouldn’t have been another opportunity. So, I’m glad you did.” Eranor was quiet still. Saying “I’m sorry” to this wouldn’t be truthful, so she didn’t say anything. After a moment, a giggle from Tialla broke the awkward silence. “My little assassin,” Tialla was rinsing Eranor off. “Crazy what these kids get up to when you look away for even a moment.” Eranor couldn’t help a nervous laugh. “I’ll just have to keep you on a shorter leash, I guess.”

“No complaints from me,” Eranor laughed.

“I’ll bet not,” Tialla said knowingly. “It’ll be nice to go back to simpler things when all of this is over. Just spending time together.”

“That would be nice,” Eranor had closed her eyes to enjoy the sensation of being cleaned. She opened them again when she felt Tialla running her hand all the way down her tail.

“Had some special tail shampoo imported,” Tialla explained. “Gotta have my kitten looking her best.” Eranor blushed as Tialla shut off the faucet. “Thanks for talking with me,” Tialla said in bright spirits. “Now come on,” Tialla playfully swatted Eranor’s bottom. “Let’s get you ready for bed. You’re sleeping with me tonight so that means your thickest diapers.”

Tialla was true to her word. She lay Eranor on her changing table and put her in the thickest diaper she had with a booster as well. It was not that much thicker than what she usually wore, but the intent was there. With her diaper on, Tialla slid a small night gown onto Eranor, and then coyly closed a thick leather collar around Eranor’s neck with a secure but not constricting tightness.

“Nana I …” Tialla put a finger to Eranor’s lips.

“You’re regular collar is being held for now, and it’s not particularly suited for what I want to do to you anyway,” Tialla smirked attaching a lead to a d ring at the front of the collar. Eranor gulped. “If you want to stop or slow down say ‘tabaxi’ ok.” Eranor nodded. “Say it once just for practice.”

“Tabaxi,” Eranor spoke unsure.

“Yes. There you go. Good girl,” Tialla praised in a condescending way. “Now come on little Kitten.” Tialla continued her smile as she led Eranor on a short leash out of the nursery and into her bedroom. Eranor's face was flushed as Tialla led her onto the bed, and tied her leash to the bed's foot board. There Eranor waited silently as the still naked Tialla opened a cabinet next to her bed and got out a plain white diaper as well as some changing supplies. She sat down on the bed and grabbed Eranor’s leash again.

“Change your Nana into her night diaper Kitten,” Tialla spoke confidently, but the redness on her cheeks and her shallow breathing gave away that she was just as flustered as Eranor was. Eranor hesitated a moment at the situation, but felt a tug on her leash in response. “Hurry up,” Tialla chastised gently.

“Yes Nana,” Eranor gulped and got to work. She had to admit that it was strange being on the other side of the diaper change for once. What didn’t help was Tialla distracting her with wanton looks and occasionally playfully tugging on the short leash.

“My you really aren’t very good at this,” Tialla teased as she pulled Eranor to be on top of her. “Explains why I’m the adult in our relationship.” Eranor blushed. “Finish up.” Tialla deliberately pressed against Eranor’s breast to help her up.

“You’re very playful tonight, Nana,” Eranor commented finally able to tape the diaper on Tialla snuggly. Tialla squirmed a little.

“I am,” Tialla admitted. “Can you blame me? This stress does horrible things to a girl.” They both giggled at the before Eranor yelped, finding herself yanked by her leash back down on Tialla.

Tialla grabbed Eranor’s hips and situated her so that their diapers were touching. Tialla bit her lip and started grinding against Eranor’s diaper. Eranor let out a short breath, the intensity of the moment getting to her as well.

“Nana,” Eranor said in a quick soft breathe. Her speaking was cut short as Tialla’s hand shot up her night gown and grabbed one of her breasts.

“Come on Kitten, you’re telling me you never got off in your night diapers growing up,” Tialla said smugly. “Every princess I know has, and you’re a princess just like me.”

“Y-You’re not wrong,” Eranor said in a moan, getting more into her grinding.

“So, let's get off like only princesses do,” Tialla said in earnest. Conversation between the two was replaced with a series of haughty breaths and distinctly yearning moans.

“Pull my leash Nana,” Eranor moaned. Tialla did, landing Eranor on her chest. Tialla took it one step further and grabbed Eranor’s hair moving her head to her own exposed breast. Eranor instinctually latched on and began suckling as the two continued their grinding. Eranor's face was kept stuck to Tialla's breast as Tialla held the leash tight, not That Eranor wanted to unlatch. The moment reached a fever pitch until, with one final exhale from both of them, the room was silent. Eranor rolled off Tialla so she was lying next to her, and the two took a moment to catch their breathes.

“Tia that was,” Eranor said breathing heavily.

“Yeah,” Tialla agreed. “I uh … I guess I got kinda pent up today,” Tialla admitted with a blush.

“A bit?” Eranor laughed. Tialla joined in too playfully tugging on the leash to plant a slow deliberate kiss on Eranor. The two were silent again after the kiss, and held each other in a gentle caress, their legs entwined around each other, and their diapers crinkling gently as they squirmed in each other’s embrace.

“We probably need to get new diapers,” Tialla said quietly. “I think I’ve pretty well rubbed all of the fluff out of place.”

“Yeah, we probably do,” Eranor agreed. “But maybe in a moment. Let’s stay right here for a sec,” Eranor buried her head into Tialla's chest.

“Eranor,” Tialla giggled. “No, we’ll both fall asleep before we get changed if we lay here.”

“But it’s comfy,” Eranor whined.

“I know, but we need to change. Between the two of us, this bed’s gonna be soaked in the morning unless we’re in fresh diapers,” Tialla reasoned. Eranor pouted in response. “Tell ya what,” Tialla smirked. “If you get up and get changed, we’ll both wear baby diapers and onesies to bed. How does that sound?” Eranor’s eyes couldn’t hide her excitement, but she was still in a playful mood.

“But you’re already nakey,” Eranor smirked. “Can’t get better than that.”

“Mmmhmm,” Tialla played back. “You can’t fool me little girl, I know you wanna see me in a onesie more. And you better remember that you got off tonight too. Getting to see Nana in baby clothes and getting off in one night is not something that comes about that often.” Eranor laughed and stood up. She made a move to leave but was caught on the leash. “Yeah, that’s not coming off tonight.” Tialla said with authority.

“I’d rather keep it on anyway,” Eranor said in a dreamy breathe.

“I know,” Tialla said confidently. “Come on Kitten.” Eranor giddily followed behind Tialla back into the nursery.

Prisoner of Progress Chapter 25

 Tialla was standing in a small room with General Aldyn and Eranor, though Eranor was standing off to the side as she wasn’t part of the rather tense conversation between Aldyn and Tialla.

“Are you sure about this Tialla,” Aldyn said sternly. “I must disagree with your plan here. The Aeon Worm is our ancient enemy. Its presence warrants action, and with its presence the rest of the Beastkin will rally to us.”

“I appreciate your input general, but I’ve made up my mind,” Tialla said crossing her arms. “And it’s because the other leaders no doubt see things as you do, that they cannot know the truth. Our best chance here is to let the Worm’s plan progress to an extent and strike when both it and the Elve's forces are weak. If the other leaders know, they will try to intervene before then.”

Aldyn crossed his arms in disappointment, but then gave a half smile.

“You really have grown up,” his half smile turned into a full one.

“Why thank you,” Tialla nodded in acknowledgement.

“Guess I’m losing a lot of my power. No more de facto leader general Aldyn our queen’s got scales now.”

“She sure does,” Tialla smirked.

“I’m proud of you. Your folks were stupid to want to waste the potential you had.” Tialla nodded in agreement.

“I do have one job for you though,” Tialla said seriously. “We can’t directly help Biscotti in the coming attack, but we can still help them indirectly. I need you to forward our research on our magic artillery to them, covertly of course. If Card’s plan is to run the Elves into a wall let’s give them a sturdy wall to bash their head against.”

“My queen,” Aldyn bowed with a salute, an official sign that the order was received.

“Are you two done flexing on each other,” Rosewood said entering the room.

“I wasn’t flexing,” Aldyn said defensively.

“Sure,” Rosewood said in disbelief as she stood next to Aldyn, wrapping her arm around his. “You ready to do this Tia?”

“As I’ll ever be,” Tialla sighed. “How do I look?” Tialla directed the question at Eranor. Eranor looked Tialla over. She was wearing a regal looking purple top with a white undershirt that fanned out into a small white skirt, and some blue pants.

“Very stately,” Eranor nodded. “I think the onesie this morning was cuter though.” Tialla brushed Eranor off with a small blush.

“I’m still not sure this is the best thing to do either,” Aldyn said mostly thinking out loud. “I mean it’s the right thing to do, but to make such a major change in a time of crisis is risky.”

“There’s no half assing this, we gotta go all the way,” Tialla assuaged Aldyn. “And it’s something that’s long overdue.”

“Agreed,” Aldyn nodded. “I’m just worried is all.”

“It is a risky time,” Rosewood agreed. “But we’ve raised our queen right. She can get us through it.” Tialla smiled at the praise.

“Let’s do this,” Tialla said with determination.

A large crowd had gathered in the public area of the central Pyramid, a group of dignitaries and officials were in the front of the crowd. A small stage had been set up and the crowd was expectantly waiting for their queen to give her address.

Tialla unceremoniously exited from her room behind the stage, though the crowd was too tense to offer more than a small applause at her entrance. Scary things were happening in the world, and the people knew that this address wasn’t likely to be a positive one.

“Thank you all for coming,” Tialla spoke officially into a magical device used to amplify her voice. “We are in the midst of very trying times,” Tialla went right into her semi prepared speech. “I know you all feel it. The Elven Empire has attacked Pal Miqo, and are making plans to conquer more Beastkin lands. Their goal is obvious, to take slaves to fuel their industry. Though I have secured our safety for now, we must prepare for the eventuality that we will be marched upon next. We must take the time now to set ourselves apart and against our aggressors.”

Tialla glanced nervously at the crowd for a moment before continuing. “The truth of our situation is that it is one of our own making. The Elves are conquering for slaves. They are participating in a system that we have not only created, but have been profiting off of since our earliest history. It is a system that has been deeply ingrained in our society, and it extends beyond slavery.”

“Even as a princess I would have been a victim of this system. In our highest levels of society, we trade our children off as spouses, though really, they are trinkets, objects, and pets. We do this for our own benefit; trading people for power. If my parents had not died, I would be a collared, meek, toy to some else, instead of the queen I am today.”

“And yet I am not innocent in all of this either. Our government runs on the back of these systems, the life I live is fueled by these systems, and I’ve leveraged these systems for my own gain. Though she is a free person now, my dear confidant, Eranor, came to me naked and in chains, as an object to be used and a toy to amuse me. I'm glad that, instead of treating her like a pet, or like the arm candy I would have been treated as, I've allowed the freedom to be her own person, and we are both all the better for it."

Tialla paused another moment to take a deep breathe. She scanned the audience, who were enthralled but waiting for her to get to her final point. “This system,” Tialla continued with conviction. “Is a poison that is corrupting every part of our society, and we are all either beneficiaries, victims, or both. The Elves are seeing us for what we are, a society weakened by this poison. If we are to stand against them and their conquest, we have to stand against them on this fundamental level; we have to purge this poison from our society to make us stronger.”

“That’s not something that will be easy, but it is something that needs to be done. People are people. They are not objects, they are not tools, they are not pets; they are people, and they should be treated as such. We won’t get to that point today, but I am taking a big step in that direction, and removing the most destructive part of this poison.”

There was a pause for effect, to make sure everyone listened to this part of the address. “Starting today,” Tialla’s tone shifted to a more demanding one. It was not unlike the dominant tone she used with Eranor, and she would have to appreciate the irony in that later. “The acquisition of new salves is illegal. Further, within ten days, all current slave contracts must either be renegotiated or dissolved.”

With her big moment dropped Tialla stopped to gauge the crowd. The reaction was subdued. The higher ups in the front had their faces awash with concern at the gravity and consequences of this decision. Further out in the crowd the reactions of the common people were more mixed. All were astounded, but some of those had that mixed with excitement, some with fear, and some with an air of uncertainty. In the crowd Tialla could spy a scant few people wearing collars. Even on these people the reaction was mixed. Tialla wondered how many of them were like Rosewood or Eranor were to her. Rosewood and Eranor were once her own slaves, and yet they were also some of the most important people in her life. Even Eranor, who willingly chose to keep her role, agreed that this was the right thing to do. Thinking of this steeled Tialla’s determination that what she’s doing was the right thing to do, despite the mixed reaction of the crowd.

“I also want to say here,” Tialla spoke again quieting the murmuring that had started in the crowd. “That Vas Naga will not leave these newly freed peoples behind. I will do my best to create a system that will support these people as they come into their own. A system that will allow them to be the best person they can be.”

“But the burden here is not entirely on the state,” Tialla shifted her speech to address her people directly. “This type of change will only be effective if we are all work together on it. We can only grow as a society if everyone in it moves in the same direction. So, I ask all the citizens of Vas Naga to join me in this effort. It is on you to treat each other as people, as equals. That is the only way we can purge this poison.”

“Officials will start visiting all of the slave holders we have on record in the coming weeks,” Tialla’s tone shifted to a more explanatory one. “If the contracts are not renegotiated by then, then they will do the renegotiating there. They will also be the first point of contact for newly freed slaves. Reach out and get the resources you need. Thank you all. I hope you will work with me to make a better Vas Naga.” The end of Tialla’s speech was met with more general applause then her entrance, but still the mood of the day was trepidation. Tialla exited as unceremoniously as she had entered.

Tialla let out a long exhale as she reentered the waiting room. Releasing all the anxiety and tension she had about delivering that address.

“You did great Nana!” Eranor congratulated.

“Thanks,” Tialla said while looking around the room. Rosewood and Aldyn had both left, both would have a lot on their plate now since Rosewood insisted on helping with the renegotiating of contracts, and Aldyn would soon be off to Biscotti. “Do you think that satisfies our requirements for our treaty with the elves,” Tialla mentioned one of the conditions of their alliance, that the Naga were forbidden to take Miqo slaves after the elven conquest.

“I’d say so,” Eranor nodded. “And then some.”

“It needed to be done. It’s a shame that this is what it takes to get us to change things.”

“Whatever works,” Eranor shrugged.

“I’m ready to head back home,” Tialla stretched. “How about you?”

“As long as I get to go with you,” Eranor said coyly. Tialla laughed a little and took Eranor’s hand.

“You’re so cheesy, it’s cute,” Tialla smiled.

“Since we are going home now, and you’re done being the big girl queen, we need to get you in a diaper,” Eranor stated playfully.

“Oh really?” Tialla played along. “I think maybe someone has forgotten that they are the Kitten here.”

“Oh, come on Nana,” Eranor had switched to whining. “I wanna read more of our book together. Don’t you wanna get all cozy with a diaper with me.”

“Well,” Tialla looked into Eranor’s face. Eranor was giving her best cute face to convince her. “I’ll give you that does sound cozy. I suppose when we get back, I can get into a diaper jus to be comfortable. After we get your diaper changed of course.”

“You don’t even know if I’m wet or not,” Eranor pouted.

“It’s a safe bet,” Tialla teased. “You work on a bit of a schedule you know; you’re usually wet by now. In fact, you’re due to be messy soon.” Eranor donned a deep blush.

“I do not have a schedule!” Eranor complained in vain.

“So, your diaper is dry then?” Tialla asked. Eranor looked away. “And you aren’t going to be messy when we get to our room?” Eranor blushed and pouted more at this question. She could arrive at the room in a not messy diaper, but she would be holding it in to do that, and that would be dishonest to the role she had chosen to play.

“No Nana,” Eranor admitted.

“Precious,” Tialla cooed. “Well don’t hold it in on my account. Go ahead and use your diaper sweetie, I’ll change you as soon as we get home.”

With a deep blush Eranor stopped her movements. Despite her efforts she still couldn’t mess her diapers quite as easily as she wet them. She looks at Tialla still holding her hand and smiling, encouraging her on. Under her Nana’s watch she squatted slightly and gave a tell tale grunt as she pushed out a mess into the seat of her diaper. With a sigh Eranor found herself in the increasingly familiar position of being in a messy diaper and needing a change.

“All done?” Tialla said in a teasing tone.

“Yes Nana,” Eranor answered in a submissive voice. With a devilish grin Tialla lifted up Eranor’s skirt and pressed Eranor's diaper, and the mess inside, against her. Eranor couldn’t help but squeal in a particular mix of embarrassment and arousal.

“You sure did. Right on time too. Good girl. Filling up your diapers like a good little kitten,” Tialla heaped on the praise, which only increased Eranor’s embarrassment and excitement.

“Thank you, Nana,” Eranor replied.

“You’re welcome, Kitten,” Tialla started walking again and Eranor followed. “I should have brought your leash with me,” Tialla mused. “Little Kittens in full diapers are just begging to be kept on leashes don’t you think?”

“Yes Nana.”

“Such a good girl,” Tialla said with contentment.