

The Witch's Struggles

Salvation Day, 1 SE (Salvation Era)

Trapped in the darkness, the Witch of Ugallu seethed.

It had been a day since the witch's plan had been undone, leaving her trapped in the body of the would-be Grand Commander of the Templars. Twenty-four hours of ticklish hell, interspersed with stinging pain and the aching arousal that followed it. She knew that because the Order of the Sacred Martyrs had been spending those twenty-four hours preparing for their grand celebration, to announce to the world that the Witches had been defeated, and salvation was at hand, and thanks to her idiotic desire to humiliate a defeated foe she could hear every word of the servants gossiping, straining, and setting up for the celebrations.

Metrice was furious beyond measure, but she knew that she had to be thoughtful. She had nearly no arcana, and no way to find a new host. She needed time, to grow to understand the arcane makeup of this prison and to steel herself against the bees crawling over her skin. She could feel them reinforcing the honeycomb holding her tight, adding an extra layer of pressure as her body was squeezed tighter and tighter.

Her only consolation was that she wasn't quite alone. Above her, she could hear the increasingly frantic moans of Rowan Tamyr. For the first few hours of her captivity, the Templar trapped in her former body had been doing her best to mock the witch, but the feeling of the hive pressing in on her had pushed her to a frenzied attempt to tear herself free and now she was silently suffering, enduring the stings of dozens of bees against her most sensitive regions. Metrice could faintly feel them flickering, feeding Rowan enough arcana to keep her alive. It was a small mercy. When she was out, perhaps she would add that ticklish spell Harrion had devised for her to her nemesis, and make her stay even more hellish. It would only be a matter of time.

One Week After Salvation Day

Escape was not going well.

Metrice had listened to Harrion give his grand speech, announcing the dawn of the Salvation Era. Every word, magically enhanced to wash over a crowd of thousands, had literally stabbed at her skin, sending off waves of ticklish agony that she couldn't resist. When she had, despite her desperate attempts to stay still, started to wriggle, the bees had responded in force, sending her into a haze of pain and lust that had taken a day to subside, only to be replaced by more ticklish tortures as Harrion 'magnanimously'

allowed the Order's students to rehearse for the monthly hymns in the hall. She could practically hear the malice in his honeyed voice as he promised them that their efforts would 'bring smiles to the faces of all who heard them'.

If it weren't for the constant distraction, Metrice was sure that she could crack this spell. She'd been doing her best to harness the arcana from the dying bees, trying to craft a sensory spell that would let her look at the framework of the hive, but every time she came close there was more sound from the hall, another wave of sensation across her body, and then pain and lust. And her guess had been correct. A week of constant stimulation hadn't brought her *close* to orgasm, and the haze of need was starting to interfere with her calculations.

It would be fine. She just needed to be patient. Not that she could be anything else, with layers of honeycomb pressing against her body, nostrils flaring as she struggled for every breath, a constant skittering sensation running across her as every nook and cranny of her skin was turned into a repository for honey that leached the power from her as it former. Patience was her only remaining option. The alternative would be to break, and she was never going to break. She was the Witch of Ugallu, the second witch to learn the art of divinity without being guided. She had cast down every foe she had ever faced, and Harrion Fucking Waker was not going to be any different.

She just needed to be patient.

One Month After Salvation Day

"MMMMM!!!! MMMMMMMMM!!! MMMMMMMM!!!!"

Metrica threw herself against her bonds, heedless of the pain, feeling her muscles locking up as the bees stung her again and again. Fuck those fucking godsdamned bastard piece of shit Templar assholes! She was going to tear them apart! FUCKERS! She just needed to come! Just once, she needed to reach climax, and everything would be fine again, but these FUCKERS wouldn't let her and they kept bringing in more music and there were celebrations every day, why was this body so ticklish, why hadn't she included an escape hatch right away, why was the pain so arousing and sweet and swirling around inside her like a shroud, pressing down on her thoughts and she needed to come she needed to come she needed to come please could somebody just show a moment's mercy please let her come...

Salvation Day, 2 SE

"Today marks the anniversary of the salvation of Rabshekah!" Harrion's voice was amplified by magic as he stood on the balcony of the great hall, overlooking the vast,

crowded square outside. Faintly, Metrice could hear the cheering of the crowd, adding insult to injury as their joy at her defeat filled her body with a tingling, itching sensation, too far away to fully trigger the tickling spell but loud enough for it to rack her body with unpleasant sensations. She would have wriggled to try to carefully adjust to a more comfortable spot, but her muscles were completely frozen, locking her with her fingers curled and her toes splayed out. The bees were even more aggressive than usual, having been disturbed by the honey gathering taking place at the bottom of the hive, and when the Templars and their servants had begun walking through the halls to prepare for the day, Harrion had made sure that their paths echoed through the hive, sending Metrice into a frenzy of muffled laughter as invisible nails raked over her toes and dug into her arms, which in turn had prompted the bees to sting her even more fiercely than usual. She was entirely paralyzed now, her body wracked with lust and Harrion's words subjecting her to even more ticklish agony.

She vaguely remembered that Sylvaen had hated this sort of thing. She wondered where her old rival was now, and if she was in the same torturous hell.

Harrion went on, talking about a new era of peace and prosperity, discussing the new nations forming as the servants of the Witches were defeated and promising a spectacle as prisoners would be displayed to the crowd to atone for their sins with shame and lust, and each word stabbed into her like a very ticklish dagger. Metrice vowed silently that this would not be the end. She *would* break free. Not today. Today, it was all that she could do to remain sane. But one day, she would be free, and then it would be Harrion screaming for mercy as she tickled every inch of his body.

11 SE

Rowan was having one of her fits again.

It had been some time since Metrice could hear her clearly. The hive had crushed the pair of them down enough that only the edges of her face and the soles of her feet were uncovered, and the weight of it made breathing nearly impossible, but every so often, the feeling of total isolation and weight obviously became too much for the would-be Grand Templar, and she began to shake the hive with her attempts to struggle free. It never lasted long. Even now, Metrice could feel the wingbeats of bees hurrying past her body, climbing up the honeycomb trails to sting their recalcitrant prisoner into quiescence, pushing her to the brink of orgasm and locking her muscles tight to prevent it, holding her in a maddening hell.

There was a time when these moments had been a modicum of relief for Metrice, but that time was past. She could hear the servants outside planning some festival or another, but that didn't matter either. She couldn't even work up the energy to fear the

effect of the sound of the crowds. It had been... how long, since she had tried to work a spell? Months? Years?

It didn't matter. None of it mattered. Harrion had won, and she would hang here in the darkness and become part of the hive, never to see her vengeance.

33 *SE*

"Please, your Worship, my daughter did nothing wrong."

"It is a father's right to believe that, my child, but the fact is that she was caught spreading unfounded rumors and undermining the wisdom of the Order. Such blasphemy cannot be permitted to spread."

Harrion's silky tones brought Metrice out of her latest daze. She had lost track of how long it had been. The hive had long since consumed her, layers of thick comb smothering her face and making breathing even harder than it had been. The haze of lust as the enchanted honey leeches into her skin was overwhelming her thoughts, and most days the faint noise of the Grand Hall was no more than a background hum, sending ticklish ripples up and down her ribs. Only during ceremonies was it enough to tease her into a reaction, to set off the chain of stinging and need that was her life. But of late, Harrion had not been at those ceremonies. He preferred to give his speeches outside, where more could hear him.

"But this punishment, your Worship. It degrades her. It humiliates her. She will be lost to us for years to come."

"Nonsense, my good man." Metrice couldn't see Harrion, but she could imagine the smirk. He had chosen to speak with this man here, where he would be overwhelmed by the majesty of the cathedral. "Sexual degradation is a holy act. It reminds us of our place in the universe, to sacrifice ourselves for the pleasure and good of others. Besides, she needs only service ten thousand men." His smug tone reminded Metrice of herself, when she was glorying in power. How long ago had it been? "But I understand. I will send a few dozens soldiers to meet her tonight, and they can... help her to find her peace more quickly."

There was a moment's silence, and then a garbled cry of rage and the sound of a dagger leaving its sheath. Within the hive, Metrice's body spasmed as she heard the man throw himself at Harrion, screams of anger and pain from both of them washing over her. The guards were responding, their shouts adding new shivers down her spine, but she could already tell that it was too late.

This one time, she couldn't tell if her gales of laughter were from the ticklish hell she was in, or her delight at being able to listen to her foe die. And for the first time in over thirty years, as pleasure surged through her body, she felt her muscles clench and buck, the overwhelming sensations building past the ability of the poisons once again entering her to stop, and she climaxed explosively, decades of lust building to a culmination that overwhelmed her senses and caused her to pass out.

101 SE

Trumpets sounded, and shivers ran down Metrice's spine. She held still, gritting her teeth against the sensations running over her, letting her mind float freely above the haze of desire that filled her. The temple had been talking about nothing but the upcoming centennial celebrations for weeks now, and whenever a new dignitary arrived, either from one of the Order's outlying regions or from an allied nation, the trumpets sounded again, like a thousand tiny fingernails running into her armpits and digging under her ribs. The bees were also more active; the hive had been raided for honey to make gifts for all of the visitors, and while the beekeepers were in no danger of reaching up into the hive's heart and learning its secrets, it had left the bees more frenzied, more prone to reacting to the slightest movement with vicious stings and new layers of restraints.

Metrice was more interested in the gossip. Vengeance, it transpired, was a very nice tool to push her over the edge when she was at her peak. She'd managed to squeeze a scant dozen orgasms out of the infernal hell she was in over the last seventy years, and each one had been heavenly. It was her only joy, that and listening to the secret trysts, gossip, and blackmail whose speakers thought they were alone, using the tiny scraps of arcana she could gather to nudge at the listening spell she had crafted and expand its range. Rowan had fallen silent a few decades back. Metrice didn't know if her soul had given out, or if she was simply too far gone to react any more. It didn't matter much. Right now, she was much more focused on the quiet conversation happening in the halls just behind the grand chamber. Della was quietly sweeping the floors, humming a quiet tune that had become popular in the last forty years, oblivious to the fact that her boyfriend and her best friend were hiding in a closet together, sweaty and naked. The two of them had just been in the throes of it when they heard sound outside, and were, as near as Metrice could tell, staying desperately still, him still inside her and holding her tight against his body as the unsuspecting Della industriously swept a few feet away from them.

Metrice waited with baited breath, straining to listen as Della's sweeping took her closer to the door. *Open it... open it... open it...*

The sound of Della's sandals on the floor stopped. "Hello?"

Open the door...

“The door...” There was a moment’s pause, and then the sound of a door slowly opening, followed by a loud shriek as Della presumably got a full look at her traitorous lover. “YOU FUCKER!”

As the sound of a broom slamming down on various vulnerable bits of anatomy filled the room, Metrice was too surprised to sink into the bliss of orgasm. She let the ticklish echoes of Della’s revenge roll over her, thinking furiously. The maid had heard her. For just a moment, their minds had connected.

She could work with that.

229 SE

Today was the day. Metrice had spent years gathering arcana, squirreling it deep inside herself to keep the bees from sucking it from her skin, building tiny pockets of hidden power that she could draw on. She had spent the time finding ways to connect herself to the people of the temple, whispering to them in the darkness and letting her senses follow them away from the halls that she was supposed to be able to hear and back to their rooms. Rumors of hauntings and sinful dealings had spread through the lower classes, and a few servants had been rounded up and punished as possible heretics, but no one had ever suspected the truth; when Harrion had died so suddenly, he had taken the secret of the hive and its prisoner with him.

Metrica had found the perfect target for her first attempt at freedom, a young but politically savvy chaplain who was making backroom deals across the temple in the hopes of repairing the growing rift between the Righteous Order of Martyrs and the Sanctified Order of Penitents, who between them had fully coopted what remained of the Templars after decades of shrinking membership. Metrice had followed her progress for the past year, listening in on all of her actions, and was sure that she could take over and lead her negotiations to a darker end.

It was nightfall, and Celeste was retiring to her chambers. Metrice had no idea what she looked like aside from a few comments about her silvery hair and the obvious attraction that several of the men of the Sanctified Order had for her. She listened to the rustling of fabric as Celeste stripped out of her gown, and she struck. “Celeste,” she called out in her mind.

“What?” Celeste responded, and in that moment of connection, Metrice struck. For a moment, the souls of the Witch and the chaplain were intermingled, pulling on each other, and then there was a horrible draining sensation, and Metrice collapsed back into

her prison-body, screaming as the bees responded to her spell by stinging her over and over.

It was only after several seconds of agonized, muffled screams as her breasts and ass were subjected to familiar agony that Metrice realized that she wasn't screaming alone. There was another presence in her mind, subjected to the same pain, confused and shocked and utterly overwhelmed.

What's happening? Help me! Somebody help me! Celeste's pleas were inaudible to the hive, but Metrice could hear their intent as plain as day.

Well, well, she said, smiling. Quickly, she began to work, before Celeste could realize what was happening, binding the woman to her body as she had done so many times before. *You shouldn't have answered my call, Celeste. You gave yourself to me. It hurts. I can't move. Who are you?*

A witch. Metrice's cackle was wholly mental, but she could feel Celeste's horror. *And now, you are going to help me escape. I'll be using your arcana, draining you as necessary. But in the meantime, I'm going to let you handle some of the affairs of this body.* Delicately, she slid Celeste's sensations between hers and everything but her sense of hearing. Immediately, she felt her pain and lust grow faint, shielded by her prey. Celeste's mind became even more frantic as it was pulled into the centre of a ticklish, lustful hell that Metrice had known for centuries. *Enjoy yourself.*

No, please! I'll do anything, I... But Metrice was done listening. She quietly sealed away Celeste's connection to her, satisfying herself by feeling the body squirming slightly as the poison of the bees began to wear off, only to buck as they returned to punish it for movement. Celeste was trapped in the darkness, her muffled screams echoing through Metrice's body, and she sighed happily at the feeling of someone who wasn't her suffering for a change. It might take her a few decades to refine the process enough to escape properly, but it was only a matter of time now, and whenever her captive soul ran dry, she could steal another one and try again...