

## The Witch's Lost Garden

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Deep in the rolling hills of southern Varhalsen, there was a narrow fissure in a valley that, until a few months ago, had been home to a village of shepherds. Within the fissure was a rolling carpet of green vines, twisting into giant sunflowers that craned their necks for light. And wrapped inside each vines, squirming and struggling, was a naked human figure, fully swallowed by one of the plants that slowly crept across the valley to avoid its shadows.

Sitting on a hill looking down on the canyon, "Well," Alys said with a groan, "we've found the missing villagers. Fucking Thorton and Pleasance. Now what?"

The Witch Metrice quietly put a hand on Alys's shoulders. "Easy, love. Breathe." Their body had been that of Cardinal Radolph, a luminary of the Sanctified Order of Penitents who now stood only a few places from control of that sacred order, and Alys had to admit that Metrice wore it well. Rudolph had been a tall, lean man, with a hawk-like face and shaggy black hair, and Metrice had added a layer of muscle and a thin black beard to give themselves a slightly predatory look that sent shivers of delight down Alys's spine every time she looked at him. Knowing that the Cardinal was there, too, locked behind his own eyes, only made the frisson stronger.

She was less thrilled with her own new body, although it served. She wasn't used to the broad frame or the heavy muscles, she missed her carefully-sculpted large breasts, and while the skin tone was right she couldn't grow her hair out properly. Kheli Lasteer's position was *valuable*, and Alys understood why she had to be her, but she longed for the magic to shift back and forth between it and a more pleasing physique.

Which, in part was what had brought them to this tiny corner of nowhere. Alys had nearly lost herself over centuries in amber, and her witchcraft was weak and limited. Metrice was restricted to the arcana that Cardinal Radolph was able to gather; they could swallow his soul and move on to a new host, but that would ruin all of their carefully-arranged plans. As a result, the two had been on the lookout for any leftover magic their fellow witches had left behind before being

sealed away, and when they'd heard about an entire village going missing, they'd secretly gone ahead of the scouts the Order had dispatched to investigate and see if it was something they could use.

Now, though, they weren't sure what to do next. "Mobile plants," Alys complained. "Mobile plants that swallow people. What a pair of idiots. How do you direct them?" She frowned, looking down at the edge of the clearing. One of the plants was slowly crawling along the edge of the shadows, and the vine-wrapped form of the woman within was bucking as the movements sent vibrations through the thick vines plugging her pussy, ass, and mouth. As her movements became increasingly frenzied, the vine began to pick up speed, until, just as her body began to arch with a torrent of pleasure, it released a small cloud of pollen into the translucent pocket that held her head fast. Immediately, the woman's body went limp, and the flower stilled, pumping into her. A few moments later, a small bulb fell into the dirt, and the plant resumed its movement.

Metrice stroked their beard thoughtfully. While they tended to prefer the feminine form, there was nothing like a beard. "It's a generator," they said slowly. "Creating new plants out of sexual energies. And then those plants grow, and they're mobile so they can spread and capture new prey to slowly wring dry. I wonder how long the prey lasts? It looks like the plants are feeding them."

"Merchants only visit this village every two or three months," Alys said, thinking back to her briefing. "And the last visit was almost two months ago. So anywhere from three to six months that the plants have been holding those villagers." She leaned in, running a hand over Metrice's chest. "Struggling, blind and deaf, nothing to focus on but the motions of the plants and the sensations being pumped into them. Stunned with pollen whenever they get too active, forced to endure. Maybe this wasn't the stupidest thing Pleasance and Thorton ever designed."

Metrice sighed. "But not useful for us. The scouts will arrive tomorrow. They'll find the plants, save who they can and burn the rest." His eyes stared through the valley, calculating and considering. "Do you think it's worth acquiring a few bulbs of our own?"

Alys considered. "We have plenty of ways to torture people already."

"You just don't like living magic," Metrice teased.

"There is that. I don't want to spend the next few months getting digested while

we wait for someone to get close enough to hop into.” Alys looked down into the valley. “But they are interesting. Alright. Let’s lure one plant out and see if we can steal it.”

The two witches cast minor cloaking spells, Alys bending the light around them as Metrice silenced their footsteps, and began to make their way down the hill. Near the edge of the canyon, they could see a single sunflower that was out of synch with the others, having accidentally crawled in the wrong direction around a large rock. Alys saw that it had a captive, the bulge of her body squirming faintly inside the tuberous vine wrappings that made up the creature’s ‘body’. As the two approached, they could see that the tendrils Alys had observed were in the process of force-feeding syrupy sap down her throat, leading to intense struggles as she gasped for breath around each mouthful.

“Brilliant,” Metrice breathed, letting his soul sight look at the captive within her confines. “The sap intensifies physical sensation, to increase arousal and leave the captive unable to resist effectively. She’s probably barely aware of her surroundings. We’ll have to try to acquire at least one of the villagers that the scouts save.”

“What do we do with her? Pull her out?”

“Not worth the time.” Metrice pulled out a small jar of honey, made from the hive that had held them captive for so many years, and scooped some of it into his mouth with a spoon. “We’ll just shrink the whole thing, take it back. If it already has a captive it shouldn’t be looked for another one, and this way we have a generator, not just a fruit.”

Once they’d swallowed enough power, Metrice focused on the plant, aligning its power with their own. Gradually, the sunflower and its captive shrank down, both of them growing frantic as they realized something was wrong. Before the flower could escape, Alys pulled the stone up around its tendrils, and soon enough the two witches were walking away with a tiny flower secure in a stone vase, the human inside struggling even harder with the faint realization that something was holding her legs even more tightly secured than before.

“Alright,” Metrice said. “Let’s get out of here before the scouts arrive. We don’t want them to suspect anything.”

Alys nodded, looking down at the struggling form of a woman with a sunflower on

her head. “It’s actually quite pretty,” she said. “Once we figure out how it works, I might ask you to shrink it down again so I can leave it on my desk.”

“As long as you keep it trapped,” Metrice said. “We don’t need a bunch of tiny sunflowers running around eating mice.”

Chuckling, the lovers slipped away, leaving the rest of the valley to their fate.