

## Treasure Hunted

“Drop it over there.” Danica gestured to one side of the room, and the shimmering crystal troll that she had summoned nodded, setting aside the last of the fallen masonry between her and the castle’s old vaults. The short, curvy human wiped sweat off of her pale brow as she banished the spirit, taking a deep breath. Her gatekeeper magic might have meant that she didn’t have to move all of the collapsed rubble herself, but maintaining the summoning for the excavation had been exhausting. Reaching up, she loosened the ties on her jerkin, letting her skin breathe a little bit more. It was warm down in the bowels of the tower ruins, muggy and humid, and she could feel her leggings sticking to her skin. She kept her black hair cropped short, ragged on top and shaved down on the sides, but that just meant more room for sweat to drip into her large hazel eyes. It wasn’t ideal, but it was the cost of doing business. Another adventurer might have been able to help, but she wasn’t about to split the reward.

And there it was, just as she’d expected. The vault doors were ancient, wood worn and cracked, but the lock was intact. Quivering with anticipation, Danica pulled out the slender iron key that she’d found in the guild library, tucked into a book in the back. She’d discovered it while search for information on another mission, to deal with a rare but unimpressive type of slime that was infesting the local sewers. Immediately, she’d realized what a catch she had - a record of an adventurer’s old trove, hidden for them to recover later and then lost when they died.

Triangulating the old tower had been easy enough; it was a ruin on the edge of a nearby farming village, which had served as a keep back when there was netherrealm activity in the region. Once the local dungeons had been cleared, there was no reason to occupy it, and it had fallen into disrepair. Danica had arrived alone, under the cover of night, and had spent the past several hours working her way towards the vault and the magical armor hidden within.

The door swung silently open, and Danica used the last of her magic to summon a wisp of light to enter ahead of her, checking for traps. The armor was exactly where it was meant to be, standing on a pedestal in the middle of the room. It was gleaming purple, with sleek lines and silver highlights, gauntlets closed and helmet down. Danica approached the armor, letting out a soft coo. “Aren’t you

special,” she murmured, running one finger over its surface. Even after all these decades, it was pristine. It would fetch her a fortune.

She was still admiring the plate when the armor’s left gauntlet came up and grabbed her by the throat.

Danica let out a shocked gasp, reaching up instinctively to wrap her hands around the gauntlet’s wrist. As she did, the armor stepped forward, lifting her off the ground in a single, smooth motion and raising her head to be level with their own. Through the narrow visor of the helmet, Danica saw a pair of pale blue eyes glittering back at her, and her struggle to free herself redoubled as she realized that the armor was occupied!

But her best efforts were useless. She could feel her head swimming as the hand around her throat tightened, cutting off her air. Her legs kicked helplessly at her attacker’s armor, bouncing off the metal without effect. The wisp of light above her flickered in and out with her focus, casting the room into shadows around her that merged with the darkness clouding the edge of her vision. Danica tried to croak out another spell, but the hand was too tight, leaving her gasping helplessly.

The figure’s other hand came up, holding a dark flower bulb. The right gauntlet loosened a fraction, and as Danica instinctively tried to gasp for air their left hand shoved the bulb into her mouth. As she felt it touch her tongue, it cracked open, and thin roots began to spread out, following her saliva and breath. For a moment, Danica choked as the roots rapidly expanded, filling her mouth, stretching her jaw, and reaching into her throat. She gasped for air, and a thin trickle made its way into her lungs, the roots tickling her nostrils from inside as they filtered the air she was breathing back to her, absorbing the moisture in her mouth and muffling her cries for help.

The armored attacker released her throat, and Danica fell to the ground, coughing into her gag. Black petals bloomed, stretching over her lips as thin tendrils wrapped around the sides of her head and entwined behind her, strapping the flower tight.

“Ggg-plll...” Danica scrambled backwards on her hands and knees, staring up at the armored form as they stepped off the pedestal. They walked towards her, slow and certain, looming over her as she reached up to pull uselessly at the bulb. Petals fell to the ground, but more replaced them, and the plant responded by tightening its grip on her, choking her until her hands fell back down to the

ground. She shook her head desperately, staring up at her captor. *“uheee..” I’m sorry.*

*“You will be.”* The voice was harsh and distorted, a man’s deep tones that echoed through the room. Reaching down, it grabbed Danica by the front of her jerkin, and she screamed through her gag as it tore it down the front, leaving her large breasts to spill out in front of him. She raised her hands to cover herself, and the armor grabbed both her wrists with one hand. *“No.”*

Easily evading her resistance, the armor flipped her onto her stomach, pressing her breasts into the dusty floor. Black ribbons erupted from between the slits of the armor, shooting past the man’s gauntlets to wrap around Danica’s wrists. She screamed again as she felt the ribbons work their way up her arms, pulling them tighter and tighter together behind her back. Danica was not particularly flexible; when she wasn’t in the library, she focused on honing her endurance by multiple-summoning. She cried out in pain as the ribbons pulled her arms closer, feeling her shoulders screaming in agony.

Thankfully, the ribbons stopped moving before Danica’s shoulders gave way, twisting around her arms to tie themselves into a series of tiny bows. The gatekeeper sobbed as her attacker stepped back, trying to squirm across the ground away from him.

*“You should not have come alone,”* the man in the armor said. *“Although I knew that you would. Thank you for answering my call.”*

For a moment, she didn’t understand, then a chill passed through her. He had access to her guildhall. Somehow, he had planted the map, and the key. How had he known she would take it? Or had he simply been waiting for anyone?

She pushed herself to her knees, feeling the pressure of the ribbons behind her. Her breasts were smudged with dirt, aching from her fall, and she could feel the man behind her watching her struggle. Slowly, Danica pushed herself to her feet, then turned to face him. She could feel new tears welling, but she was an adventurer. She would not die on her knees.

*“Brave,”* the man said. *“But foolish. You should have stayed down.”*

And then he was moving. A blur of purple, flickering in and out of her field of vision in the fading light of her wisp. She stumbled backwards as he dashed past

her, feeling the brush of his hands on her shoulder, and then yelped almost soundlessly into her gag as the belt holding her leggings in place was sliced off. She heard him behind her now, approaching again, and as she tried to turn to face him she stumbled over her own falling clothing, landing hard on her bare ass.

She looked up to find him looming over her. There was something almost reluctant in his stance, looking down at her helpless form. But then he knelt, grabbing her ankles before she could kick him again, and used her fallen leggings to tie her lower legs tightly together. *“What now?”* he murmured, one gauntleted hand stroking her calf. The cool metal ran along her skin, raising goosebumps. *“How will you resist? What spells will you cast?”*

Danica moaned hopelessly, tears welling in her eyes. Her spells required sound and gestures, not to mention energy that she was desperately low on. She sagged in her bonds, staring helplessly up at her captor. *“Plsss....”* she begged.

*“That’s what I thought,”* her captor said. Reaching down, he lifted the woman up, slinging her over his shoulder like a sack of flour. He reached up, slapping her ass and drawing out another yelp of pain and shame. *“All your vaunted spells, and this is what you are reduced to. A treasure to be claimed.”*

Danica let out a garbled protest, but she couldn’t exactly argue. She was humiliated, bound, and now being carried down into the depths of the tower, breasts and ass on display - not that it mattered, because no one was watching except for her captor. She’d been so sure that this was her path to treasure, to finally earning the respect that she deserved. Now she just had to pray that she’d been careless enough to leave a trail her guildmates could follow to save her.

The armored man carried Danica through a doorway at the back of the treasure vault, and down a long flight of stairs to a long rough-hewn tunnel, its walls lined with torches that glowed with a faint blue flame, each one winking out as they passed and casting the path behind them into shadow. She squirmed helplessly in his grasp, staring backwards at freedom slowly vanishing as they continued on. She’d had no idea that this was here; it must have been an old netherrealm tunnel that connected to the dungeons. With them clear, it had become a passage somewhere else. She’d heard about this; these tunnels could lead to fae realms unconnected from local reality, allowing their sovereigns to spread their influence far and wide. Was she in the clutches of a fae knight?

Time fell into a confused, hypnotic daze. The flower blooming in her throat restricted her air, faint dizziness adding to the sense of unreality as the armored man carried her deeper and deeper into the darkness. Its roots dripped something down her throat, a thick syrupy sap that pooled in her stomach and kept her pangs of thirst at a minimum as the hours wore on. The man carrying her never paused, never looked back at her, never put her down to rest. Whatever his thoughts were, he was keeping them to himself as he carried his prize to whatever his goal was.

Finally, however, the space around them began to brighten. The dim torches were replaced by chandeliers hanging from the ceiling, glowing wax dripping to the floor. The armored man pushed open a heavy door, stepping through into a humid chamber, with rough dirt on the ground and clay-fired walls.

“Welcome, my vanguard,” came a cool voice, cutting through Danica’s thoughts like a knife. “I see you have brought me a new treasure for my collection.”

The man nodded, lifting Danica off his shoulder and turning her to face his mistress. “A gatewarden, milady. Danica is her name.”

Danica’s eyes went wide with horror as she took in the room. It was a large cavernous space, with roots dangling down from the ceiling. In front of her was a fae woman, tall and ethereal, with brown skin and rainbow-streaked hair. Her lips were curled into a cruel smile as she looked over her newest prize.

Against the wall, the roots were dangling over three naked bodies, two humans and an orc, each one bound in a different way. One was tied up in a tight ball, with her knees pressed into her breasts, her head forced down, and her arms crossed underneath her; she was hanging in the air, hundreds of thin roots wrapping her so tightly that her dark skin was almost invisible. Another was stretched out tight, his arms over his head and his feet buried in the dirt, the roots curving around him in a spiral as they clung to his skin, eyes shrouded by black blossoms and chest heaving for breath as the roots pressed tightly around him. The orc was bent over backwards, her arms and legs both drawn towards the ground as the roots around her stomach pulled her up towards the air, staring helplessly at Danica as her long hair was pulled towards the floor, leaving her neck taut and her face straining with effort.

All three were covered in black blossoms like the one in Danica’s mouth, all three had more roots pressing into their crotches, twitching in the womens’ pussies and all three asses, and all three of them were members of Danica’s guild, who she’d

thought were away on missions. Her heart dropped as she realized that she wasn't the only one being targeted, and she mewed helplessly into her gag.

"Yes," the fae woman cooed, stepping forwards to run a sharp obsidian fingernail across Danica's cheek. "Your guild owes me a debt, and I'm collecting." She turned her attention to the man in the armor. "Robart owes us five adventurers in exchange for this lovely armor, and you're the fourth."

Danica looked up at her captor, eyes wide. Behind his visor, the man looked away. Robart wasn't just a member of her guild. They had been lovers for a time, and she'd thought he had left with good feelings. She hadn't seen him in months; she'd thought he was dead. "Rbb...?"

*"It must be comrades,"* Robart hissed. Now that she knew it was him, she could hear the voice behind the distortion. *"I swore an oath."*

"And an oath sworn to my queen is not sworn lightly," the fae woman agreed. "Queen Morrigan values her treasures, but she lets gardeners like me have our share." She patted Robart on the shoulder. "Just one more, my dear, and you will be free to go, with your shiny new armor and the power obtained from your betrayals. Won't that be nice? But first, I want you to put this one in her place."

She gestured, and Robart nodded. He lifted Dancia, walking towards an empty space to the right of the other three adventurers. She screamed and thrashed, trying to break free, but she might as well have been fighting a statue. Slowly, deliberately, he tore the bindings off her leggings, then pressed her legs back against a pair of roots. They wrapped around her ankles, pulling them down towards the ground. Danica gasped at the strain in her muscles, squirming as best she could. More roots threaded down between the ribbons, pulling her arms even tighter behind her back, as they squirmed down over her crotch. She could feel them toying at her entrances, teasing her and stretching her, and she stared hopelessly at Robart. "Plsss..."

He shook his head, and pressed her body back. Roots wrapped around her chest, looping over the base of her breasts and forcing them out into bulbous balloons, and more wrapped around her neck to hold her in place. The roots began to press inside her, and she screamed into her gag as they began to twist and move inside her, a pattern of pain and pleasure that teased at her.

"Good, good," the woman said. "Now go, and find my final prize."

Robart left, and the fae stepped over to Danica, looking her up and down. “Not bad,” she cooed. “Your pain will feed my flowers quite well.” Danica could feel a blossom growing in her hair. Tears began to flow, and the roots lapped them up. “Oh, don’t give up yet,” the fae woman said, leaning in. “You’ve got years ahead of you. Unless...”

*Unless?* Danica looked up, feeling hope suddenly blossom. The fae offered bargains.

“This is a fine game, and I intend to keep it going,” the woman said with a wicked smile. “Once I have all five of you, I’ll let you beg me for release, offer up your own friends and families. I’ll pick one of you to free, to go and become my next hunter, and the rest will be buried alive.” She pointed down at the dirt beneath Danica’s feet. “So think carefully on what you might offer, dear. Imagine this suffering, but with dirt pressing down on you, the drip of your roots the only thing keeping you alive, struggling to breathe for years and years. And think of who you might be willing to offer up to that fate for your freedom, just as Robart did.” Her eyes sparkled with amusement. “I’ll leave you to it. Take care.”

As the woman strolled from the room and the torches went out, leaving Danica to struggle in the darkness next to her former comrades, Danica heard her laughter ringing out through the hall. The roots clenched tighter, and she gasped for breath as she felt them stimulating her, teasing moisture from her pussy on which to feed.

Would she sentence someone else to this?

Would the others?

She had a terrible feeling that she was going to find out...