**Going Deeper**

The search for Jenny commenced immediately. Mike, Tink, Beth, and Cecilia searched the known rooms of the home while Abella searched the perimeter of the house. The fairies had split up for their own search and Zel was busy inspecting the front room for any other clues.

Mike was checking under his own bed, a cold sweat on his brow. While he was certain that Jenny wouldn’t blame him for this, the doll was known to be volatile and would see the destruction of her house as the ultimate insult. He was also worried that she had been taken by the rats, not sure what they had planned for her.

“Mike!” Zel’s voice carried from downstairs, and he banged his head on the underside of the bed. He scrambled out, rubbing the back of his head once he stood. At the top of the railing, he leaned over to look at the bottom floor.

“You find something?”

“Come down and look.” Zel’s voice carried from the living room. He ran down, jumping the last three steps. Zel was on her back, her body stuffed into the fireplace. Just the lower part of her face was showing, her upper body covered in soot.

“What did you find?”

“This.” Zel lowered herself, her arms still up the chimney. Her face was red while she pulled, her arms dropping a few inches at a time. She was making quite the mess already, but with one last pull, it rained soot and ash down on top of her, a black cloud billowing out across the room. Coughing, she held up a large mass.

“What the fuck is that?”

“A rat.” Zel grabbed the bundle and unfolded it. He grimaced when the dead creature's mouth popped open, its tongue hanging out. “It was stuffed up the chimney. Sideways. Wait… yeah, its head isn’t facing the right direction either.”

Mike swallowed the lump in his throat. That would be Jenny’s doing. “She doesn’t happen to be up there too, does she?”

A red light burst from the chimney, landing on the floor by Zel’s feet. Carmina landed at Mike’s feet, a cloud of soot billowing from her upon landing.

“Nope. The chimney is clean.” She grabbed her antennae and shook them with both hands, scattering more ash. “No rats, no doll.”

“Shit.” Mike helped Zel stand up. Her tail was now black with soot, and she had dark smears along her cheeks like warpaint. “Any clues where they went?”

“I imagine back to rat land. However, I did a quick survey of the rooms upstairs. They certainly didn’t come out of those, they are still sealed shut. This means they have found a new entry point.”

“I really don’t need this.” He ran his hands through his hair in frustration when he got an idea. “Hey Tink!”

Upstairs, he heard the pitter patter of feet on wood, and the goblin launched herself down the stairs, her hammer clutched tightly in one hand. Seeing there was no danger, she relaxed. “What husband want?”

“Use the goggles. See if you can spot their footprints.”

Tink smacked her forehead, clearly appalled that she hadn’t thought of it. She turned a knob and slid her goggles over her face, the Divine Object bowing to her demands. Several lenses flicked in and out of place, her eyes now large behind them. They had been in a hurry trying to find Jenny, not thinking the rats were likely where she was. Scanning the room, she waved her hand for them to follow and disappeared around the corner. They walked through the large dining hall and into the kitchen. Tink knelt down by the sink, opening the cabinet door slowly.

“Oh fuck.” Mike could see it from here, a hole chewed in the back wall. It was just large enough for him to squirm through on his belly if he could make it past the pipes. “This sucks.”

“Mm-hmm.” Tink looked around the edges of the hole. “New hole. Rats make today.”

“Any sign of Jenny?”

Tink shook her head. “See footprint of living thing only.” She crawled underneath for a closer look and stuck her hand up the hole. She withdrew a piece of red fabric. “But no need goggles now. Ghost doll in here.”

“So I guess I’m going in.” Mike crouched down, but Tink pushed him away.

“No go. Hole get tighter, husband no fit.” She was already squirming in when he grabbed her by the ankles and dragged her back out, her skirt lifting up to reveal bare green buttocks.

“You’re not going in alone either. We will find another way.” He looked at Zel. “We need to put together a search party to go in the walls. I suspect we will run into trouble, so would appreciate any potions you may have for us.”

“You got it.” Zel gave him a mock salute and left.

He turned his attention to the grumpy goblin by his feet.

“Go get yourself a bigger hammer. We’re about to make rat jam.”

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Beth’s first thought upon Jenny’s disappearance was that she had run for the safety of the Labyrinth. She had gone up the stairs to her bedroom, opening the closet door only to discover that it was still a boring closet. She could hear the others calling Jenny’s name, so knew that she was alone on the third floor of the house. She closed her door just in case, then lifted the sleeve of her blouse.

The finger marks on her arm were nasty burns, and they were bleeding near the tips where Oliver’s claws had touched her. Stunned, she touched the wound gently. It didn’t hurt too bad, but the skin around the wound had gone numb.

She opened the door of her room and skulked downstairs where she saw Zel digging in the fireplace. Going past, she entered the small bathroom on the first floor, closing the door behind her. She flicked the light switch and took off her shirt, trying to get a better look.

“You look startled.” Oliver stepped out from behind her. She spun in place, but he wasn’t actually there.

“Is this… is this a trick?” Beth faced the mirror. Oliver watched her, his eyes aglow.

“Oh, I am very much here. In a way.” He grabbed her reflection and gave it a squeeze. She felt a light pressure where his hands were, but nothing more.

“What do you want?”

“I think that should be obvious.” He stepped around her reflection and stood just behind the mirror’s surface. “I thought I would get you when you fell into that reflecting pool but was unable to grab onto you tight enough. Lucky ducky.”

“You want me.”

“Good guess.” The light above the mirror cast a shadow behind Oliver onto the back wall. His shadow was taller than it should be and had a pair of wicked looking horns. The bathroom in the mirror was cast in an eerie red glow.

“Why?”

“I have my reasons. Loneliness. Curiosity. Mainly though, because I want you back here with me.”

“And why would I go back to you? You were going to trap me for all eternity.”

“And I still will, given half a chance.” Oliver pressed his fingertips against the glass. “What if I say pretty please?”

“How are you here? You aren’t allowed here, the geas should have kept you out.”

Oliver chuckled. “I’m afraid I’m not going to explain it to you, but you’re a smart girl, I’m sure you’ll figure it out. However, I will tell you everything you wish if you want. All you have to do is come inside.” He tapped the glass and it rippled. Beth felt a hot breeze fill the small bathroom. “Just mind the faucet when you crawl over it. You might bang a knee.”

“Fuck no.” Beth shook her head, putting her shirt back on quickly. Her reflection passed through Oliver like a ghost, his features scattering like smoke. He blew her a kiss and grabbed her reflection’s breasts, giving them a squeeze. Spectral fingers groped her through her shirt and Oliver licked her neck.

“See you later,” he said when she ran out of the door.

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Mike had the dagger strapped into the back of his belt and a small hammer in his left hand. He stood in front of the smoking room door and helped Tink pull off the boards they had nailed over it. Cecilia had already gone inside to check for rats and had come back with a thumbs up. Zel stood in the hall, rummaging through one of her saddlebags. Now that she was mostly human, she had no easy way to carry everything.

“Here you go.” She handed over four vials. “The red one is to stop the bleeding, drink it or pour it on the wound. The green one is to get away without being seen, but it will only work on one person. Pour it over their head. The yellow one is in case you get trapped somewhere, it’s essentially a powerful acid, so be careful with it. This last one is only in case of emergencies.” The last vial was stoppered in a thick glass bottle with a skull drawn on it. The contents looked like black sand with tiny leaves. “It will only work on living things. Unstopper the cork and either throw it or run. Under no circumstance should you be nearby when it goes off.”

“Thank you.” Mike tucked the vials in his pockets. Abella was balanced on the window sill, shaking her head.

“I wish you’d let me go with you.”

“I wish you could. I need you to stay here in case the rats or Jenny return. Also, you’re too big and we could easily get separated. Oh, there you are.” Beth had joined them, her face pale. She looked like she was going to be sick. “Naia said you can hang out with her in the fountain if you would feel safer.”

“What?” She seemed lost in thought. “Oh, yeah. Sorry. When this is over, I have something we need to talk about.”

“Okay.” He felt his stomach sink a little. He hoped she wasn’t thinking of moving out. Truth be told, it was kind of nice having another human around. “Where are the fairies?”

Tink put her fingers to her lips and whistled. Seconds later, the fairies arrived, hovering overhead.

“Who is coming with me?”

“I am.” Carmina hovered forward.

“And you two are clear on your roles?”

“Rat patrol.”

“No rats in the house.” For the first time ever, they appeared to be serious. They each pulled a spear out from behind their backs.

“Where did you get those?”

“Tink made them.”

“Good for stabbing.”

“And throwing. We’ve been practicing.” With a wink, they immediately flew off, separating at the stairwell. Mike let out the breath he had been holding.

“Wait.” Beth grabbed his shoulder before he could go into the room. “You should reset the sundial.”

“Oh.” He had done it this morning, but the wisdom of doing so again was sound. If he got caught up in the walls of the house, he would have more time to get back. “Be right back.”

He jogged down the hall and then down the stairs. Upon opening the door, he slowed. The last thing he needed was to let anyone watching know he was in a hurry. Casually stepping off the porch, he walked across the yard to where the sundial sat. It was waist high and over a foot across. He placed his hands on it, the arcane energy crackling beneath his fingertips.

“Bit early for that, isn’t it?” A man in white stood just outside the opening to his home, right between the stone lions. It was Sebastien, a man gifted in the creation of sand golems. In fact, this was a golem of Sebastien himself, a fact discovered early on when Mike had tried calling the cops about a suspicious figure in front of his house. He had watched from the window as Sebastien had collapsed into a sandpile in the gutter just as the police arrived. It wasn’t uncommon for Abella to drop heavy things on him either, and he had asked her to stop because the large pile of rocks out front was starting to attract the attention of the neighbors. Anything that happened inside the protective field of the house was essentially invisible to the outside world, yet another perk of the geas around the house.

“Nah. Wanted to sleep in tomorrow is all.” Mike grabbed the dial and gave it a twist. A blast of magical energy crawled along his arms, verifying that the correct person was turning it. Satisfied that Mike was the Caretaker, the energy sank into the ground, permeating the soil and then concentrating on the stone lions watching the entry. Mike had Sofia look into them, but there was no information on what they could be. Nevertheless, they would immediately come to life in a blaze of fire and kill anyone attempting to attack the house using magic.

At least, that seemed to be how it worked. For the hundredth time, he wished the house came with an instruction manual.

“Interesting. You don’t strike me as someone who sleeps in.”

“Well, gonna be a late night. Found something interesting, gonna check it out.” He knew he had struck a nerve when Sebastien’s composure slipped. Sebastien and his fellow magic users, known as the Society, were convinced that something extremely powerful had been hidden in the house. Mike was beginning to suspect they were right, but he knew only slightly more than they did at this point.

“Have a good day, Mr. Radley.” Sebastien turned away, walking across the street to where a black car had been parked. Mike could just make out the collection of tiny wooden spears stuck in the back of his head and neck, making him look like a balding hedgehog. He gave the sundial one last twist, rotating it as far as it could go. The shadow of the pointer now claimed that it was nearly five o'clock.

“You’re a great security system but shit at telling time.” He gave the stone dial an affectionate pat, grateful for the peace of mind it gave him and went back inside.

They were all waiting for him by the door to the smoking room. The tension immediately increased once he helped Tink rip the final board off the wall.

“Ready?” He asked.

Everybody nodded. Assuming that nothing attacked them, they would disperse, leaving Abella to watch the door. He pushed forward, Tink sliding past to enter the room first. It was cold, the breeze from the broken window chilling the room. A wind current formed in the open doorway from the pressure difference, but nothing in the room seemed to want them dead.

Yet.

“Close it. We will try to check in if we can.” He watched Zel close the door and heard Abella’s stony skin drag across the wood. His best guess was that she was sitting in front of it. He looked at Carmina, who sat on his shoulder. She held a tiny spear, her eyes focused on the opening in the wall where the couch had been.

“I’ll scout ahead.” Cecilia faded, her ethereal form barely discernible in the light. She floated into the opening and they waited for several minutes while she made certain no traps had been set for them.

Tink was beginning to grumble to herself when the banshee reappeared, giving them the all clear. Mike crouched down to get inside, and Carmina’s body lit up with magic, casting a glow on the tunnel. They had plenty of spare flashlights, but Mike preferred to save them just in case they lost their fairy guide. Carmina turned into a ball of light and flew ahead of them.

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Beth closed the door to Mike’s bedroom once she was certain one of the fairies wasn’t trapped inside. She walked past his large bed and the mismatched rug on the floor to his bathroom. The large tub was empty, so she sat on the edge of it.

“Oh. This is much nicer than the last place.” In the tub in the mirror, Oliver sat up, his top hat falling off his head. He sat next to her and placed an arm around her reflection. “So where are we? And honestly, who has a bathtub this big?”

“You would know if I asked you.” Oliver was a demon with the ability to answer any question. Once asked, he knew everything needed to give an answer. It was part of how she had tricked him and escaped in the first place. “And I’m not going to.”

“Ooh. You’re so clever.” He teased the front of her breast, making one of her nipples erect. “That’s part of why I can’t let you go.”

“And the other part?”

“I’ve taken many lovers, both human and demon. You are the first who seemed so… interested… in my demonic side.”

“My interest is waning.” In truth, she still felt a sexual attraction to the demon. If not for the fear that he would imprison her soul for eternity, she wouldn’t mind another fling. Where Asterion was pure muscle, Oliver was lean and intellectually intriguing.

“Maybe we can arrange another game?”

“You won’t be caught off guard so easily this time.” She threw him a sarcastic smile. “And I guess you won’t be nearly as giving in bed either.”

“Won’t know till you try.”

“So is this your plan? Annoy me until I give in?”

“Well… it’s plan A. Show up anywhere there is a reflection, maybe trick you one day into standing in a puddle. The water would go perfectly still, and I would grab you and pull you in.” Oliver was salivating, his grin revealing sharp teeth. “What a fun surprise that would be.”

“That’s enough out of you.” Naia’s voice came from the drain. Oliver looked around in confusion until the faucet turned on, the tub filling with tens of gallons a second. Naia rose from the water, a beautiful white gown on her body and her arms crossed.

“Oh. The nymph.” Oliver yawned. “What are you going to do, get me wet?”

“Yes.” She wrapped her arms around Beth, holding her tightly. The water in the tub exploded outward, creating a vortex of water that filled the room. Beth was immediately soaked in warm water, holding her mouth shut. Through the rush of water, she heard Oliver sputter and release a stream of curses. She felt Naia’s lips on hers and resisted at first, but when the water failed to recede, she gave in. The nymph gently blew oxygen into her mouth, which she gratefully inhalled.

The bathroom was full of water for several minutes before it finally receded. Beth expected the room to be soaked, but it was completely dry. There was no sign of Oliver.

“Thank you.” She gave Naia a hug and let out a tremendous sigh. She hadn’t told Mike what was going on because he had his own issues to deal with, but had gone straight to the nymph once he departed. Convinced that Oliver may just be a mental breakdown waiting to happen, Naia had suggested using the mirror in the bathroom to lure him out.

“He’s a nasty one for sure.” Naia sat in the tub and patted the edge. “Wanna tell me about your ex?”

Beth laughed and sat inside the tub instead. She was low enough that she could no longer see the mirror, so hoped that meant Oliver couldn’t see her either. “The night before I came here I got pushed into a mirror dimension where a demon tried to trap me there.”

“That much I know.”

“Well, I glossed over some details.”

“Interesting.” Naia had pulled her knees up under her chin and was leaning forward. “Tell me more.”

Beth took a deep breath and let it out. She felt comfortable with Naia, like talking with a best friend or a sister. She wasn’t great with other women. She dressed sexy for herself, but had been accused of doing it for attention. And none of her girl friends could ever know about her secret lust for monster porn, nor her strange stash of dildos. She constantly felt like a book that had been misfiled in the library with a nice cover.

“When I was stuck there, I might have… fucked him.”

“Oh!” Naia’s eyes flashed. “Tell me everything!”

Naia’s excitement soon became her own. Beth told her about the bet she had made, about how hot his body felt against his. The encounter with the demon had been scary, but she had been intensely attracted to him, wanted to dominate him and make him come. At Naia’s prodding, she revealed more, soon describing her encounter with Asterion and her lifelong fetish for the creatures from her stories. At no point did it feel like it was awkward, and Naia actively listened the whole way.

Once she finished her tale, she looked at Naia. “So what do you think is going on with Oliver?”

“That’s a great question. He’s obviously found a way to link with your mind. He’s also a powerful demon. I bet we could talk to Ratu about it. Or maybe Sofia knows something - she’s been in the Library trying to dig up info on the Rat King, she could look into that too.”

“Not Ratu.” Not yet, anyway. The thought of falling through the reflecting pool gave her the shivers. What if Oliver really did get a hold of her this time?

Naia started to ask why not, but realization dawned in her eyes. “We could send one of the fairies with a note or something.”

“We should do that.” Beth looked over her shoulder. She half expected to see Oliver tucked in the corner of the ceiling through the mirror, but he was obviously lying low for now.

“There’s something else we could do.” A mischievous grin crossed Naia’s lips. “I could examine your soul.”

“My soul?”

“Yes. Magic powerful enough to track you here is likely tethered to your soul. Depending on how, I might even be able to remove it.”

“That would be great!” Beth scooted in the middle of the tub. “What do you need me to do?”

Naia chuckled. “My brand of magic relies on a lot less clothing, if you know what I mean.”

“Oh.” The realization hit her. Of course.

“I can sense some discomfort at the idea.” Naia moved closer, her fingertips tracing circles on Beth’s knee. “But I wonder how much of that is you and how much of that is society telling you it’s wrong.”

“I...uh…” Beth had never really thought about it that way. She was very much into dick, but there was something about the soft curves of the nymph that she also found appealing.

“I wouldn’t even have brought it up if I didn’t sense something else. Curiosity maybe? Ooh, and regret.” Naia was closer now, crawling on her hands and knees. Beth was sitting cross legged, and now one of the nymph’s hands was between those legs, palm planted firmly on the tub surface below. “My lips aren’t the first, are they?”

“No.” Beth’s voice was little more than a whisper.

“I can feel it, you know? That desire inside of you, that unanswered question. What would it be like…” Naia’s free hand was on Beth’s upper thigh, squeezing gently. “...to be with a woman who knows how your body works? Something different than a giant dick, the soft touch of a woman who wants you to moan in her mouth while she fingers you.”

“Oh god.” She hadn’t noticed them at first, the magical bubbles that now floated around them. One popped by her nose, sending a rush of blood straight into her groin. “Are you using magic to seduce me?”

“Not this time.” Naia winked. “I’m just amplifying what is already there.” She slid her hand along Beth’s jaw and up behind her ear, stroking her neck softly.

The ensuing flashback was intense. Beth was back in college again, drunk at a party. The girl across from her was Irina, a goth exchange student from another country. It had been harmless flirting at first, a ploy to get boys to bring them drinks, but the other people at the party had vanished from the periphery of her vision, her sole focus on those dark lips in front of her. There had been tender touches and a few kisses. They had begun to explore, but she had backed down at the last second.

“Not this time,” Irina said, her dark eyes turning blue. The memory popped like one of Naia’s bubbles and she was back in the bathroom.

“I’m wearing too much.” Beth tried to unbutton her pants but Naia stopped her.

“Leave them on. For now.” She winked, making Beth tremble. She had no idea what the nymph had planned, but she trusted her.

Naia leaned forward, pulling Beth’s head toward her own. Beth closed her eyes and saw Irina once more, frozen in a moment that had gotten away. It had been a question she was always afraid to ask, but she knew that soon she would have her answer.

Soft lips touched her own, spreading heat throughout her body. She moaned, giving the nymph an opportunity to suck tenderly on her lower lip. Everywhere the nymph touched her, a ripple of arousal traveled the length of her body, their waves overlapping somewhere deep in her stomach. She touched Naia back, opening her eyes to see what she was doing. Trepidation filled her, uncertain of where she should start.

“It’s easier with the men, isn’t it?” Naia asked. “Everything begins and ends with their penis. Well, for most of them anyway.”

Beth nodded. Her boyfriends had been few, and they had rarely satisfied her the same way a session with one of her dildos had.

“We women are built different. We crave intimacy of the whole body. A touch here. A kiss there.” More ripples were spreading through Beth. This was no longer her imagination, but magic running across her skin. Her clothes were rippling as well, and she noticed that a small pool of water had formed beneath them, liquid tendrils climbing her legs to vanish beneath her clothes. “Our bodies are the string instruments of the sexual kingdom. To someone who knows how, any string can be plucked to generate the desired effect.”

One hand passed along the upper curve of Beth’s left breast, pushing her blouse open to slide inside. Naia’s fingertips were warm against her skin, caressing the bottom of the breast. Her thumb circled the base of Beth’s nipple, teasing it fully erect before sliding across the top.

“Your skin is so soft.” Naia’s breath was hot against Beth’s ear. “It’s part of the game, isn’t it?”

“Game?” Beth said the word between breaths. She was panting lightly now, trying to push her crotch into the nymph’s other hand.

“You don’t even realize it. Your desire to be conquered.” Naia let go of the breast and moved her hand into Beth’s hair. She grabbed a handful and yanked it back, making Beth whimper. “It’s just one half of your sexuality, to play the part of the soft, demure little princess.”

“What?” Naia forced their mouths together, causing Beth to moan. Little pulses of water were teasing the edges of her labia now and she was now moving her hips back and forth on the bottom of the tub.

*The game is played in two ways*. Naia’s voice was coming from nearby bubbles, each one popping to release a scent that made her think of a thunderstorm in the forest.

*Play it soft and demure, lure in your lover.* Pop. More tendrils teasing her clit, swirling just out of reach.

*Make them think they have the upper hand.* Pop. Now they teased her asshole, moving in slow circles around it.

*Then conquer them instead. Take the upper hand and use them to get off.* Several bubbles popped, flooding her senses. Her pants were now soaked, the fabric rippling with the water beneath. Her thighs were being squeezed in several different places by the water that had enveloped her, a massage that had the effect of making her groin throb. No matter how she moved, she couldn’t get the pressure on her clit to increase, Naia deliberately teasing her with those tendrils.

*But secretly…*

Naia’s tongue was in her mouth, her magic pouring into Beth. She was having trouble catching her breath, gasping between moans.

*Deep down…*

Water snakes now toyed with her breasts, her waist and stomach circled with swirling water. She hadn’t even noticed them.

*You’re hoping that you will meet your match.* Her hips were lifted off the ground, the fingers on her skin pulsing with power. The room took on a pink and purple glow, the air suddenly filled with magical bubbles that lifted her and floated free, hovering above her. The bubbles were playing music now, different string instruments that played together in perfect harmony. Naia broke the kiss, floating over Beth as if they were both underwater.

Oh god, Beth thought, realizing that they were, in fact, underwater. It was hard to tell, but tiny bubbles had formed over her eyes, allowing her to see underwater. When she tried to breathe, the bubbles rushed into her mouth to fill her lungs with life giving air.

The tickling fingers along her pussy turned into swirling vortexes, her pants and underwear sliding free of her body to get caught up in the magical maelstrom around them. Her labia parted and she grunted to accept the intrusion of a large water cock. When she looked down, she could see it, colored purple by Naia’s magic. It wasn’t as thick as the Delightful Dragon, but the edges of it rippled like a snake trying to shed its skin.

“Oh god!” Her voice was swallowed up by the water. Naia’s body had become translucent, merging with the watery sphere she was trapped in. As the water cock slid into her, she flailed her arms. She desperately wanted to grab onto something, anything.

*That lack of control scares you, doesn’t it?* Naia grinned, lowering her mouth toward Beth’s stomach. All that was visible of her now was her head and torso, her body now gone. *But it does something else for you too.*

The nymph clamped her mouth onto Beth’s swollen clit and Beth screamed under the water, grabbing onto that thick, curly blue and green hair. She pushed herself into the nymph, her whole body aching for sexual release. The dick inside of her had filled her up and now vibrated, its surface rotating and spinning in differents parts of her. It was like thousands of tiny hands had sprouted, massaging her from the inside.

“Please, please, please…” She begged, her words floating away from her. Her whole body was humming, and an aura had formed around her that connected her to the water. Images appeared in the bubbles around, memories of masturbating with her dildos over the years. She watched as they synced up, each one zooming in on her face that first moment she would penetrate herself, her mouth open and her eyes rolled back in ecstasy.

The nymph was no longer just inside her body. She was now in her mind, playing back Beth’s greatest hits.

She felt a gentle pushing against her ass. She let go of Naia’s head and grabbed her ass cheeks, pulling them apart for the large cock that entered her from beneath. It hummed inside of her, resonating with the other through the thin perineal wall between them. Naia’s tongue was now a steady stream of water against her clit now, like a removable shower head on full blast.

The two cocks took turns filling her up and her legs kicked frantically. She felt the orgasm building, but couldn’t seem to get enough air. She was being reprogrammed, all control stripped away from her. Her insides churned with excitement, the light around her body streaming brightly through the water like a sunbeam. This wasn’t just Naia getting her off. The nymph had filled her up, stretching her holes until she felt like she would burst.

*You won’t come until you beg me.*

“Please!” Her shout was muted.

*Not good enough.* Naia kept up her assault, holding her just on the edge.

“Let me come, please…” She was almost hyperventilating, the bubbles streaming into her mouth. She wanted to take a nice, deep breath and let out the scream that had built up inside of her. She hovered on the precipice of perhaps the biggest orgasm she had ever had, staring down into its depths with hungry eyes.

*What will you do for me?* She could hear the smile in Naia’s voice. *Just begging isn’t good enough.*

Beth’s whole body hummed now, her arms floating uselessly at her side.

“Anything.” She couldn’t think, her brain stuck in overdrive. What on earth could such a creature want from her?

*Anything?*

“Name it!”

The lower half of Naia’s body appeared in front of Beth’s head, legs bent as if she was sitting on her knees. It created an odd illusion, as if the nymph was sitting in a magical hole that exited up above. Those thick, wonderful thighs opened in front of her. Naia’s clitoris was a large, luminescent pearl the size of a marble.

*Take that final leap.*

Beth didn’t have to be asked twice. She grabbed onto Naia’s legs and pulled them toward her, burying her face in the hairless, puffy lips in front of her. In her mind, she wanted to caress, tease, and seduce. However, once she took that thick pearl into her mouth, she realized that it was somehow giving off oxygen.

*Feel free to be rough.* Beth sucked it in and swirled it around her mouth with her tongue. There was no tact or planning, just pure, sexual instinct. Naia’s moans emanated from the bubbles around them. Beth used her fingers, sliding two in and exploring. She pumped Naia hard, gasping when the water pumped her back. They began to rotate in the water, and Beth was now taking in larger gulps of air from Naia. The orgasm was building for both of them, Beth’s fingers slipping free when she could no longer control her arms. Instead, she wrapped them around Naia’s thighs and pulled her in, squeezing her ass with both hands. Naia moaned, the vibration traveling up Beth’s stomach.

Beth’s back arched, her fingers clamping down on Naia’s skin. Unable to control herself, she took in a deep breath, the water cocks humming inside her body. The light around them soaked into her skin, filling her with warmth.

When she screamed, the cocks expanded inside of her, filling both of her holes to an extent she never knew was possible. The air rushed out of her lungs in the form of hundreds of bubbles, and she was so full she felt like she couldn’t take another breath. Naia disappeared and then reappeared, her mouth finding Beth’s. A swirling vortex of water focused itself on Beth’s clit, and Naia kissed her, filling her lungs with air once more.

The second scream was nearly as loud, and Naia inhaled it from her, the glow from her body transferring to the nymph. Beth shuddered, losing control of her limbs, but Naia held her close, kissing her tenderly. When the third scream came, the cocks suddenly pulled out of her, triggering a fresh wave of aftershocks through her body.

The room dimmed, the lights cutting in and out. The sphere of water around them burst and they both fell into the bathtub beneath, the water catching them both. Beth’s vision was blurry, her whole body so weak that she couldn’t move.

The nymph held her head above the water, her whole body warm with power. Naia wiped moisture from Beth’s eyes, clearing her vision. Beth took several deep breaths, each one beginning with a sigh. They sat this way for several minutes, or maybe even an hour, she had no way of knowing.

“Still have regrets?” Naia finally broke the silence.

“Only one.”

“What’s that?”

“I’m not sure how anybody is going to top that.” They both laughed. Beth sighed, enjoying the feel of Naia’s fingers running through her hair. “So, did you figure it out? How to break the spell, or enchantment, whatever?”

Naia’s fingers stopped, and she felt the nymph tense up next to her. “About that. I’m not sure how to tell you this, but…” Naia sat up, moving across from Beth to face her. She took her hands in her own, holding them tightly. “Do you know how I swapped soul pieces with Mike?”

“Yeah?”

The nymph grimaced.

“I’m not sure how, but he stitched part of his soul to yours.”

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Mike walked slowly through the long tunnel, marveling at the random bits of furniture stuck in the walls. Occasionally they would pass a window that overlooked a random geographical feature. Mountains, lakes, and underground caverns were on full display for him, and he wondered if these were places contained inside the house or something else altogether.

“Hold up.” Carmina stopped the group, her body flashing three times. The tunnel branched off in two directions. She flew quickly down one path, her light fading away. Soon, the only light they had was the glow of Cecilia’s body, her eerie hair floating in the stillness of the cavern.

They waited in silence for several minutes, Mike’s eyes adjusting to the gloom. He knelt down to examine a piece of wood embedded in the floor. He touched it, wondering where the other side was. The wood radiated enough heat to warm his fingers.

“What the hell?” He waved Tink over, who touched it with her hands. She examined it with her goggles, her face screwed up in concentration.

“Hot wood attached to hot room.” She shrugged at him, the lenses flicking away from her face and disappearing. “Tink out of ideas. Maybe sauna?”

“Fair enough.” As long as the hot room wasn’t secretly on fire. He didn’t need the house to expand and then promptly burn down. What happened in the unrevealed rooms anyway? Tink and the others had told him they fell asleep, but he suspected it was more than that. Did time just jump forward or was everyone in suspended animation somehow?

His mind went through all the possibilities, his theories getting deeper with every minute. It suddenly occured to him that Carmina had been gone for a very long time.

“Do you think we should go after her?” he asked.

Tink jumped at the sound of his voice. She had been leaning against the wall and had apparently dozed off. Her hands tightened around her hammer and she jumped forward, brushing her skirt off. Cecilia was staring down the tunnel Carmina had traveled down. Her milky white eyes couldn’t see, at least not on the visible spectrum. Her view of the world was completely different than his, and she was currently focused on something.

“What is it?” Mike moved in front of her to see better, his body blocking her glow. His eyes quickly adapted and he saw a faint red glow swirling down the passage, steadily drawing closer. It was like watching a star fall from the sky.

“Run!” Carmina’s voice was full of panic. Mike turned to go back toward the house, but Carmina took the other turn, pausing just long enough to lock eyes with him.

“Not toward the house!” She sped away, her wings beating frantically. Loud clunking sounds came from where she had been, so they followed behind her, moving as quickly as they could. Tink was the slowest, so Mike picked her up and carried her slung over his shoulder.

“Husband go faster!” Tink patted him on the back to urge him on. Mike rolled his eyes.

“What is coming after us?”

“Scary chair!” Something metallic pinged off of the walls causing Mike to tap into his inner sprinter. They moved through a couple of twists in the tunnel and a dim light appeared at the end of the tunnel.

“Chair?” He wanted to turn, but he heard that metallic sound again. Tink’s legs kicked and she swung her hammer. She connected with something and he felt the shock travel through his shoulder.

“Run faster!” She smacked him with her free hand. His chest already burned from running with a goblin and he charged into the light. Gravity shifted dramatically, the world spinning rapidly around him while he fell sideways and crashed into the floor.

He was in a large food pantry and the hole had been chewed into the floor. The sudden shift in gravity had caused his fall, and he tried to stand. Tink had tumbled farther than he had and she was already up.

A shape burst through the opening and arced toward him. He rolled to the side, narrowly dodging it. He stood up and saw that he faced an old wheelchair that had been modified to hold a pair of machetes on sticks and some whirring saw blades affixed to the end of metal pipes. The blades whirred ominously without a motor to power them, and the chair spun in place, facing Mike.

Cecilia floated in front of him and moved away. The chair followed her instead, swinging at her instead. She dodged out of the way to hold its attention, her ethereal form safe from its sharp edges.

Tink leapt on the chair from behind and whacked at one of the pipes with her hammer. The chair bucked and nearly dumped her. Between spinning around and swinging, Mike couldn’t get close enough to help.

Carmina pulled on his ear.

“Block the hole!” She flew next to one of the empty shelves. “That wasn’t the only thing after us!”

“Jesus.” Mike looked down the tunnel and could hear them coming. He stayed on the other side of the hole and grabbed at the empty shelves, pulling them down. They were heavy, but easy enough to tip. He shoved them across the opening just as Tink knocked one of the machetes off of the chair.

“Stupid fucking slashy chair.” She swung at the center of the wheel and knocked something loose. One wheel wobbled dangerously when the thing turned, slowing it down substantially. Whoever had designed the chair hadn’t accounted for an attack from behind. The chair kept circling around the hole toward him and he kept dodging away, grabbing onto anything he could stack on top of the shelves to hold them down.

Something heavy slammed into the shelves, making the pile pop up a couple feet before slamming back into place. Blocking the hole wasn’t going to accomplish anything.

“Tink, let’s go!” He opened the door of the pantry and looked out. It was a room that looked similar to a kitchen, but more industrial and much older than his own. He didn’t see a fridge and the oven was woodburning. Cecilia rushed the chair, passing through it and grabbing Tink by the wrists to pull her free. Mike held the door open long enough for them to pass through then pulled it shut. The chair crashed into the other side, the saw blades piercing through the heavy wood.

Tink took the opportunity to strike the whirring blades with her hammer. Sparks sprayed across the door and one of the blades broke off, stuck in the wood. She repeated the process on the other blade and it bent down, jamming in place. The door rattled, the chair trying to pull free.

“Good work.” He patted her on the head. The machetes were smacking against the door, but he doubted they could get any sort of speed with the chair stuck so close to it. “What the hell was that thing?”

“Spare parts and hell incarnate.” Cecilia said. She floated above the room, casting her gaze toward the floor. “I don’t see anything like that in here.”

“What is this place?” He walked toward the wall, looking for a light switch. Failing to find one, he noticed a lamp built into the wall. It had no bulb in it nor any wiring. Carmina jumped off his collar and turned into a ball of light, landing inside. The scattered glow lit the room enough for a better look around.

It was a servant’s kitchen. Long counters were built for food preparation and he could see old stains along the large table in the middle of the room. He was worried it might come to life, but he was pleased to see that it was bolted in place to the floor.

“It’s old.” Cecilia touched the counter with her fingertips. “I haven’t seen such a thing for over a century.” She traced her finger along the counter, removing a thick layer of dust.

“Cupboards empty.” Tink had stuck her head in the closest one to her. “No pots. No pans.”

“Knives?” Mike asked, trying to keep his voice steady.

“Um…” Tink looked at an empty knife block on the counter. “Tink hope not.” The pantry door behind them thudded loudly. Whatever had pursued them had piled against the door.

He was grateful they couldn’t get out, but it also meant they couldn’t leave that way either.

“I guess we keep going.” He signaled to Carmina who hopped out of the sconce and fluttered in front of them. The thick wooden door at the end of the kitchen was somehow ominous. When he touched the knob, he swallowed the lump in his throat.

“A chuisle mo chroí.” Cecilia whispered in his ear, the sudden chill of her breath making goosebumps stand up all along his neck.

“What?” He had no idea what she just said.

Cecilia smirked. “Allow me to look. It’s why I came.” She passed through him, a chill running through his whole body. She turned around to blow him a kiss while sinking through the door.

“Big screamer is big show off.” Tink hopped onto the counter and crossed her legs. She took a moment to rearrange a couple of the tools she had brought with her.

“Yes, but she isn’t very good at fixing things, is she?”

A small blush bloomed along her green cheeks. She cleared her throat while inspecting her hammer. From where he stood, he could see the gashes in the head of it. Behind them, the pounding on the pantry door had minimized.

Cecilia phased back through the door. “All clear.” She winked at Tink, who ignored her.

He pushed the door open. He was looking at a dining room with a plain wooden table. This room was devoid of any other furniture. He stepped inside and looked around. A thick layer of dust was here as well. To his right was a short hallway with some doors and to his left was a spiral staircase going up.

“I think we’re in a basement.” How did this figure into the layout of the house? He watched Carmina vanish down the hall, her lithe form flitting between the rooms.

“Heavy stuff gone,” Tink announced, pointing to some large scratches in the floor. His eyes traced the path back toward the wall. Clearly a large dresser or something similar had been against the wall.

“Looks like it was dragged away.” He could almost picture the heavy legs gouging out the wooden floor. The trajectory pointed toward the spiral staircase. “Whatever they removed, it wasn’t animated yet.”

“Hmm.” The lenses on Tink’s goggles flicked back and forth as she looked around some more.

Carmina returned, leaving a sparkling trail behind her. “The rooms are empty.”

“What kind of rooms are they?” Mike asked.

The fairy shrugged. He went to go check it out. They were similar in size to the small room they had found on the second floor. The wood had faded in places and he could see that they had been minimally furnished. “Servant’s quarters,” he guessed aloud. Where the hell were they?

Tink walked in behind him. He heard her lenses shift and she walked to the far wall.

“Secret compartment,” she announced, then stuck a claw in a gap in the floor. She lifted the loose plank to reveal a small compartment. Inside was a couple of books and a box. Tink handed the books to Mike.

“Interesting.” He opened one of the books and was surprised to see that it was just numbers. After turning a few pages, he realized he was looking at some sort of ledger tracking payments in and out. He closed the book and opened the other. The handwriting was very clean and in cursive, the language unfamiliar to him. Some of the words leapt out at him and he realized he was reading something similar to german.

Up in the corner, it had been dated in the year 1196.

“Holy shit.” He flipped through the pages. There was no way he was still in the house, it hadn’t been around this long. Or had it? He had always assumed the house had been built on this spot, but what if it had been moved?

Tink handed him a small pouch she had found. It had some coins inside. He pocketed them for later.

A brief search of the other rooms revealed nothing else of value and no signs of the rats or Jenny. They reconvened in the dining room, the sound of furniture banging against the pantry having dulled considerably.

Carmina flew ahead up the stairs and they followed at a slower rate. A lump had formed in Mike’s throat. He had expected to end up in the Rat King’s lair again, not in an ancient mansion. He felt woefully outmatched here and wished he had more of the girls with him.

The stairs stopped at an open archway and he stepped through. He now stood in a library, the shelves stuffed full of books. Large curtains covered windows on the far wall and Carmina hovered before the next door, waving them over.

“Your turn,” he told Cecilia. She phased through the door and stopped halfway. She backed up, a puzzled expression on her face.

“I can’t go any farther.” She looked toward Mike. “There’s a barrier.”

“Magic?” He grabbed the handle of the door and pulled. There was no latch and it swung open with a loud creak. He winced, then looked through the crack. He pulled the door open even farther, unsure of what he was seeing.

It was solid rock. He touched the cool stone, feeling around the edges of the door. There were no gaps between the frame and the stone itself. It was as if any leftover space had been filled.

“Whoa.” Tink was looking at the door itself. The surface was uneven, as if it had been sanded down in random places. Mike stepped back to examine it and realized he was looking at a reverse image of the stone wall itself. He gently closed the door until it was open only a crack. Using his flashlight, he saw that the door’s surface matched perfectly.

“I don’t get it.” He looked at Tink. “Why would someone do this?”

“Tink think not on purpose.” She pushed the door shut. “Need find way out.”

“Windows maybe?” He walked to them and pulled on the curtains. They fell apart when he pulled, sending a cascade of dust across the room. He coughed, walking out of the cloud. He really wished they had brought some water to drink.

He looked up to see Tink, Cecilia and Carmina all looking out the window. When he turned around, he couldn’t help but stare too.

The windows gave him a birdseye view of the city, as if the room had been tilted perfectly sideways. They were high enough up that Mike could actually make out some surrounding clouds and a plane that flew beneath, and he instantly felt a small bout of vertigo take over.

“We’re in the sky.” He looked at door across the room. That couldn’t be true though, because they were also embedded in rock. They were easily a couple of miles up, but somebody would have noticed a large house embedded in an even bigger rock just floating there.

Right?

He snapped a picture of the city with his phone. This was a mystery he could deal with later, but he didn’t feel like coming back to do so.

“Tracks!” Tink shouted, making Mike jump. She was walking all over the room. “Stinky rat tracks, all over!”

“Where do they go?” He watched her circle the room for a few minutes then approach one of the shelves. She walked along it, her fingers tracing the titles. She eventually settled on a pair of thick books at the end and pulled them out. She stuck her arm in the gap and twisted something.

There was a loud click. She walked to the end of the shelf and grabbed the edge.

“Husband help too.” She was pulling on the shelf. Mike pushed from the other side and the whole shelf slid along a hidden track in the floor. They revealed a passageway that went about ten feet back and terminated in the same stone behind the door to the room. However, a hole had been chewed into the floor right in front of the wall.

“Hey, great job!” He gave Tink a high-five then ducked away when the books on the shelves launched themselves in his direction. He was knocked off his feet, the old tomes clamping down on his arms and legs. Several more collided with him, their covers flapping like angry birds.

“Tink!” Mike couldn’t see where he was going. The books that landed on the floor would flop around like fish then flip their covers open violently, launching themselves toward him. The books passed harmlessly through Cecilia who grabbed Mike by the hand to guide him toward the door. Some of the books were heavy enough that they felt like punches and kicks when they hit him.

The room stank of old paper and mildew. He squinted through the chaos and saw a faint red glow near the floor. He knelt down and grabbed Carmina from underneath a book that was actively trying to chew her up. When they entered the tunnel, a few books were able to follow, but the majority kept flopping around randomly.

He swatted away the few that had followed them, marveling at the large bruise that had already appeared on his arm. They got to the edge of the hole in the floor and looked down.

“Well. Okay then.” There were no tricks this time. The hole was in the ceiling of a large bedroom. A magnificent four poster bed was right beneath them. MIke jumped first, his stomach lurching into his throat before landing on the mattress with a thud. He rolled out of the way just as Tink landed.

“That wasn’t so-” the mattress snapped shut like a venus flytrap. Mike drew his knife and sliced it along the fold while Tink tried to squirm free from the inside. The bed was hopping up and down, making him think of countless horror movies with nasty poltergeists. The huge frame bent inward, trying to swat at him while he cut. Cecilia was holding onto one of them, keeping it from clubbing MIke in the head.

“Fuck!” One of the posts smacked him hard, his vision going dark around the edges. Growling, he sliced the offending post cleanly off, then did the same for the other one near him. Digging the blade into the frame beneath him, it took only seconds to slice the bed cleanly in two. It sagged and was unable to hop in the air nearly as far. He turned his attention back to the mattress and finished the job, pulling Tink free. Using the knife, he sliced off the other posts and then cut the legs off as well. The bed was now a small pile of wood, flopping limply on the floor.

“Tired of this enchanted furniture bullshit.” He stood up and got knocked over by a dresser drawer that had been fired at him from the armoire across the room. Tink flew into a rage and leaped on top of it, smashing the drawers before any more could slide out. She made the whole thing tip onto its front, whaling on the back with the hammer.

Ears ringing, Mike shook his head and sat down on the squirming pile of bed beneath him. This bedroom was still properly furnished and he feared that anything could ambush them at a moment’s notice. Tink joined him, breathing hard from exertion.

“Fucking Rat King.” She scowled at the ruined furniture across from her.

“I agree.” He stared at the dresser. Why hadn’t it attacked him while he was breaking the bed?

It was the same with the books. They had only attacked when they had opened the secret passageway.

“Triggers. They operate on triggers.” He looked at the bed. “I was too fast for it, but this one attacked when someone landed on it.” He looked at the drawer that had hit him. “And my guess is that one attacks if someone gets too far away from the bed. Maybe.”

“They they are traps.”

“Potentially.” The only way to know for sure would be to identify some enchanted furniture and then see if they could avoid triggering it. But then how would they know it had been enchanted?

“Tink hate rat house.” She gave the toppled dresser a kick.

“Agreed.” He put his hand on the door. “Cecilia?”

The banshee passed through and came right back.

“You’re not gonna like it.” She shook her head.

“Rats?”

“Worse.” She took the doorknob and opened it for him. The door swung out into a dimly lit storage room about twenty feet wide and a hundred feet long. It was lit from above by flickering fluorescent light tubes that cast ominous shadows in every direction. At the far end was a set of double doors. The cracked floor was made of concrete and the room was punctuated by metal pillars.

Along the walls, like silent guardians, stood random bits of furniture. Each one looked cobbled together from random household items. To make matters worse, several of them had sharp, glistening blades attached to their makeshift limbs.

Tink stuck her head around Mike, then looked up at him. “Tink know where knives went.”