

Dragon Noble, Part 1 (Noble to Dragoness TF Preg)

By FoxFaceStories

A Commission for Jorgamund

Josefina Asquith is a shrinking violet of a noble who is the 'spare' of her otherwise powerful family. Never one to like being in the spotlight, she leaps at the chance to investigate ancient draconic ruins alongside her noble boyfriend Stepan and friend Ursula. But when she finds a glowing red orb and touches it, Josefina is shocked to find that her body is slowly changing to become a mighty dragoness broodmare, destined to rebirth the entire dragon race. Soon the shy young noble will find herself the centre of a kingdom's attention!

Dragon Noble, Part 1

Wake Up

Josefina had to be woken in her tent once again. The other three members of the team were irritated, though her paramour Stepan at least showed some understanding.

"She's a member of the royal family, after all," the nobleman reminded the others.

"Yeah, the *spare* of the royal family," Ursula said. "She's, like, five spots from the throne between her older brothers and her nephews. She's literally here *because* she couldn't be bothered playing court back in the capital."

"Now, now," said Izabela, the professor in charge of their expedition. "I know you and Josefina are friends, Ursula, but one should not insult a member of the royal family. Unless, of course, one has been granted charge over her." She sighed, raising her voice. "Lady Josefina, can you *please* wake up so that we may *finally* get to our duties! We are waiting on you, and we don't have much light today! We can't keep delaying, I only have so *much funding!*"

Josefina stirred, groanings. Gods above, she *hated* getting up early in the morning. Well, to be fair, anything before midday was considered 'early' in Josefina's mind. She was not by any account an early riser. Still, she managed to pull herself out of her sleeping mat and throw off the covers, albeit with a glacial pace.

"M'up," she said. "M'up. I'm up!"

"Thank the seven heavens," Professor Izabela sighed. "When can you be ready? Can I come in?"

"N-no. Not dres'd yet."

She yawned loudly, stretched, and got up. Ursula rolled her eyes.

"Maybe I should go in," Stepan said.

“Please, that’s much too scandalous,” the professor said. “I know you and Josefina are . . . close, but this is a respectable expedition and I can’t risk having the royal family view it with scandal.”

“I’ll go,” Ursula said. “I’ll be the lady-in-waiting.” She barged into the tent while Stepan and the professor looked the other way. “By the Black Mountain, Josefina. You’re not even changed!”

“M still wakin’,” the noblewoman replied, hair still mussed. “Need coffee.”

“You need a hiding. You’re lucky I’m your friend. C’mon, let’s snap to it!”

Ursula practically dragged her hopeless royal friend up and began to help her change. Josefina smiled awkwardly, realising perhaps that her tardiness had worn the group a little thin. It was understandable: she had always been a bit hopeless. It was the whole reason she was here.

“I made you a new thing last night,” she said as Ursula helped deal with her bedraggled black hair, and applied enough perfume to make her presentable before doing up her clothing.

“Oh, what is it?”

“It’s on my little shelf. I thought you might like a jade dragon this time.”

Ursula beamed. “Oohhh! Let me see! You take over from here, and for the Gods’ sakes make sure you eat some bread.” She practically *shoved* it into Josefina’s mouth before going to the little dresser and picked up the item Josefina had made. It was crude, but not unimpressive. Josefina had always been a fidgeter, much to the annoyance of her family and social peers, but in magic university she had taken to creating little figurines and models and ornamental displays from just about anything. Over time, she started using little tools, even ruining her hair pins to scratch in details, to the frustration of her teachers. This time, she had worked away at carving a little dragon out of jade, and applied various paints and chips from other rocks to bring it to life.

Ursula gave a little squeal. “I love it!”

“I thought you might. I was up last night worrying, so I had to calm myself, so I worked on it.”

Ursula sighed, once again reminded of why she cared for her friend so much. “You are very, *very* lucky that I like you, Josie.”

Josefina smiled, feeling just a little better. “I hope I haven’t held up things too much.”

“It’s not midday, so it’s not a complete loss. But if we don’t go soon I think the professor will explode. And frankly, so will I Josie. I want to deal with this ruin. It could be the key to bringing back the dragons!”

Josefina didn’t believe it for one second, but she wouldn’t dare mention it to her friend. For one, the very prospect made her nervous. She didn’t like confrontation, or

standing up to people, or conflict in general. Even perceived conflict. And for two, she loved how excited her much more studious friend got about the expedition.

“Okay, I’m ready. The professor won’t be *too* mad, right?”

“Josefina, you technically are her boss. Technically.”

“I know but, well, I don’t *feel* like her boss. Gods, I don’t want her to be angry.”

“Then wake up earlier!” Ursula said with a chuckle. “Or next time I *will* send in Stepan just for the scandal.”

“You wouldn’t dare!” Josefina replied, pale cheeks going red.

“Oh, I would. I want to investigate dragon ruins Josie, even if I have to drag my friend to them. Now c’mon!”

She pushed her friend out of the tent, and Josefina stumbled into Stepan’s arms. She looked up into his handsome olive complexion, his short black hair curling under the sunlight. He gave a grin. “Finally up, I see?”

She gave a weak, embarrassed smile. “S-sorry.”

“It’s okay. I think it’s kind of cute.”

“You do?”

He gave her a light peck on the mouth. “Really, I do.”

“It we are *done* with the romance?” Izabela said. The dark-skinned professor pulled at her dreadlocks before adjusting her glasses. “I would like to move us to the ruin now. We have a lot of work to do, and only so many hours of daylight.”

“I’m so sorry, Professor Izabela,” Josefina said. She covered one eye with her dark hair, before realising she was ‘hiding’ again, something she had been told over and over again by tutors not to do. “I don’t know what - I just - I’ll do anything I can to help! I’ll get much more involved today. I promise!”

The professor sighed. “Well, it’s a kind of enthusiasm, I suppose. Did you at least get that reading done like I asked you?”

Josefina went pale. Well, *paler*. “Um. I - I forgot.”

Another sigh. “Josefina, you are a member of the royal family, so I must pick my words carefully. But it would be good if you could commit as fully to this expedition as Ursula and Stepan here. We are struggling to keep this class running as it is. You are a good young woman, but at twenty years old you must have *some* passion?”

Josefina was stumped. Many had asked the question before, but always it was the same - she didn’t have one. Archaeology interested her, but she always found herself on the periphery, and that was where she preferred to be.

“I’m - I’ll try my best,” was all she could muster, appearing once more the shy girl. Even with just four people present, being the centre of attention was galling to her.

The professor's expression softened. "Well, that's all I can ask. You can do the reading while we're there, and help with some of the lifting. I'll make sure we're following good protocol. Stepan, we'll use your magic-detection to aid our uncovering, and Ursula will be there for transcription and treatment of any magical vessels we may find."

They all gave their confirmation loudly and proudly. Well, Stepan and Ursula did. Ursula very much did.

"Then let's head. Don't forget your water and supplies! The desert is not to be trifled with!"

They set out on the walk to the nearby ruin. It was only a couple of miles away, but the heavy sands that covered it made camping close impossible, and they had only excavated enough of the entrance to start their discovery, and so could not camp within. Ursula bounced with excitement, uncaring of her heavy pack, simply eager to see more. Stepan walked alongside Josefina, holding her hand and testing several detection spells with the other, anxious about his own abilities, especially before the eyes of the professor. And Josefina kept her head down, feeling embarrassed already, but hopeful that things would improve. After all, at least she wasn't in the capital, under the eyes of the court and the public. Here, at least, she could enjoy her boyfriend's presence, the fresh air, and feel a bit more free.

The expedition was into the arid Southlands at the edge of the Iralis kingdom, though even this was nominal control. It was effectively a natural border that did not hold much in the way of civilisation, except for the bones of a long gone one. Everyone knew that the southlands had once contained a draconic civilisation: their bones littered the wastes, as did ancient tombs, crumbling underground citadels, and expansive lairs. Even the stones of long-vanished cities which held their human servants and tributary cities were present, though these had long since been pilfered. Still, the place held a remarkable interest in the imagination of Iralians. After all, the dragons were long gone, disappeared into legend and myth, with only bones and ruins to tell their tales. But all the legends and myths carried one central feature: Whether they were rulers or servants, kind creatures or self-interested ones, the very presence of dragons alone made the world flourish in a golden age. Crops were more plentiful, creatures more bountiful, disease practically non-existent. Wars, while still a feature of life, were greatly reduced compared to the modern era, and the art of magic was beyond anything even students like Ursula and Stepan, whose talents were impressive, could imagine. And with the end of the dragons - however it had come, for the stories

differed - this golden age had come to an abrupt end. Everything since then was but a pale imitation of this long lost age of greatness.

For Iralis, being a kingdom at the epicentre of what was once draconic civilisation, this was particularly felt. Technically, one of the great edicts of the throne was to see a return to the age of dragons, though this was only a centuries-long formality of ascension to the throne. Still, it showed how central dragons were to the tales, plays, entertainment, culture, architecture, and even magic of the kingdom. For Iralis tended to produce the strongest magic users, a fact long associated with the notion that they drew from the remnant arcane essence of the long-dead dragons that once inherited the region.

Which was why there were still funded expeditions to the Southlands, even if they rarely produced anything of real value. This latest one had only a paltry four members: Professor Izabela, Stepan Fastwright, Ursula Montway, and of course, Josefina Asquith, who was the only reason the expedition went ahead in the first place, despite her lack of studiousness. As the five-times-spare to the Iralian throne, Josefina grew up living a life of luxury with no responsibilities. Overshadowed by the 'more important' members of her family, it quickly became clear that she did not have the temperament for court life at all. To her father's despair, she proved to be a terrible marriage match. She was a shrinking violet: shy, wilting, and totally uninterested in matters of politics or religion. She stuttered and embarrassed herself at galas and major cultural events, and fumbled her speeches before important dignitaries. Even her appearance reflected this: she was of regular height, yes, but she regularly had her black hair cut just to below her chin rather than a long royal braid, and it was always a bit bedraggled, curling all over the place messily. She was slim, thin-hipped (not a good sign for child-bearing either), and lacked the tall height her good breeding should have ensured. All in all, she felt utterly out of place in the capital of Herathon.

The only thing she ever really showed even a meagre interest in was archaeology, so she was shunted off to a magic academy to study that and be out of the way, which was where she met Stepan and Ursula. The former of whom was a handsome, olive-skinned magic user of lower birth. Like Josefina, he could be a bit awkward, though for him it was because of the circumstances of his low birth compared to other students. He was always afraid that he would be kicked out of the academy unless he excelled, since his low-birth meant he was effectively only there because of his talent. And yet Josefina was in awe over the things he could do, even simple summons of illusions. Not to mention he was a handsome young man with a stout appearance, short curly black hair, and the beginnings of a moustache that she found most attractive. After a lot of dancing around, vaguely complimenting each other and getting embarrassed about it, he had eventually asked her out, and she had accepted with some nervousness. They'd only had a few kisses, but enjoyed each other's company.

Ursula, on the other hand, was a short woman with pale skin and gorgeous blonde hair pulled back into a ponytail. She had fine looks, but a rabidly obsessed mind. Where Stepan simply wished to increase his understanding of magic, and Josefina had no true idea what she wanted, Ursula was a dragon obsessive. She was studious in her work, always learning more, and even held open fantasies about being the one to find a way to bring dragons back into the world. And yet despite their differences, she had actually become good friends with Josefina, finding the royal noble lacking the pretensions of other students, and endearingly kind. For all her nervousness, and frequent lack of interest in subjects, she was generous and interested in people, even if they made her frightfully nervous. She never forgot anything Ursula told her about her own life, her interests, and she actually took her ambitions seriously. And she also made those adorable figurines as gifts: a non-verbal way to communicate her care. So when she noticed that the student of low-birth named Stepan seemed to be interested in Josefina, she'd taken great pains to interview him, interrogate him, and make sure that her vulnerable, shy friend was not being taken advantage of. And when she was sure of this, she immediately set about bringing the two together after months of careful planning and egging on both sides.

In the end, the three of them became a close-knit group, despite their differences. Their chief interest was in archaeology, and while Ursula was most obsessed with dragons, they were each captivated by the myths and legends, and talked about them often. So when Professor Izabela approached the king's administrators and requested funds for an expedition to a potential new draconic ruin, it was granted immediately: with the proviso that Josefina be taken. And Josefina, in turn, asked that her friends be included. The desperate professor agreed immediately, particularly given that Stepan and Ursula were her best students. With her class in danger of being cancelled, the forever stressed professor was keen to find something big as a last ditch measure to save it. She adored her students, but as a forty-five year old woman who had studied draconic ruins for literal decades, she had seen them come and go, wax and wane. Well, mainly wane these days. She needed to find something to justify her budget, and this was her last chance.

It was just a shame that Josefina couldn't quite understand the urgency, and seemed to enjoy just being away from civilisation a little too much.

The Red Orb

They had been at the ruins for hours, and despite the initial interest, Josefina was getting a little bored. Stepan seemed to know what he was doing: he was constantly engaged with the

professor, probing the walls of the ruins for magical traps, determining where certain wards were in place, and even detecting several fake walls that were physical illusions that he had to dispel. He beamed as the professor praised his work, reaffirming it with her own expertise. Ursula translated and transcribed the various etchings on the walls, and conferred with the professor also on the theories of what this place could be.

“Definitely a temple of some kind, I agree Ursula,” Izabela said, looking around the chamber they were in. “Too small for any dragon, and yet as we can see, it is also full of draconic inscriptions, runes, and even some of the language of the ancients.”

“Renewal chamber,” Ursula said excitedly, adjusting her blonde ponytail. “What could it possible mean?”

“Hopefully something big. Stepan, come over here. The inscriptions seem to indicate these next chambers could be important.”

He did so. He squeezed Josefina’s hand as he passed, gave her a little peck on the cheek. “You okay?”

“Yeah. Feel a bit out of place.”

“You always feel out of place, dear.”

She gave a small embarrassed smile. She hated how easily she blushed. “I know. But I’m not an expert. I struggle with it all. Gods, I’m useless.”

“Nonsense. You’re helping in your own way.”

“I’m a pack mule. A royal pack mule.”

“But better being a pack mule than a pampered member of the royal court, right?”

She actually giggled. Stepan always had a way of making her feel better. “You’re too cute. Father would hate you.”

“Well, at the risk of making a dangerous statement, I’ll take that as a compliment.”

She kissed him back, until an impatient grunt from the professor informed them both that Stepan should probably hurry up.

“Josefina, you move our equipment to the other antechamber please. We’ll investigate this next one, but I think we can set camp inside there now that it’s clear.”

“Yes, professor,” she said, nodding. She didn’t exactly love being little more than hired muscle, particularly since she was so lithe she practically lacked any muscle at all, but at least it felt like contributing. And besides, being alone with her thoughts could be heaven in its own way. She let the group go ahead as she shifted packs and torches and the temporary tents they’d brought with them into the antechamber. The echoes of Ursula’s excitement carried from the distance, and it made Josefina happy for her friend. She was jealous of her passion, and wished she had as much, but passion always felt like something that brought attention, and she hated attention. Stepan was the only one that gave her

attention she actually kind of liked. So instead she simply worked in her own way, grateful to not feel like a member of the royal family and instead just like an ordinary girl.

After twenty or so minutes work, the group ahead wasn't done. They talked excitedly about something, but she decided not to interrupt them and make a fool of herself. Instead, she simply sighed in relief, enjoyed the silence, and rested against a nearby statue.

Only for part of the statue to shift, groan, and then disappear entirely as she fell back *through* it into a chamber that none of them had even discovered.

"What in the heavens!?"

She managed to get up, feeling very dusty and even more embarrassed. She was incredibly grateful that Stepan had not seen her at that moment, as she knew she looked ridiculous. She mussed up her hair, making it 'orderly' in its own slightly chaotic way, and had a look around.

"Oh, it's boring."

She was disappointed. For a mere moment, her imagination had set loose, and she'd wondered about all the different kinds of wonders that could be in a hidden chamber. But it just had a small stand and a number of strange inscriptions, none of which she could read. That was Ursula and Izabela's specialty. With a sigh, she turned to leave, catch up with the group, and inform Stepan with a bit of humour that she'd found a new chamber using her own blunt 'magical detection' prowess.

But then she stopped as her foot rested on something round and metallic. Curious, she bent over and picked it up. It wasn't particularly large, able to just barely fit into her dainty palm, though it was heavier than expected, as if made of stone. Its exterior was plain, though there was the faint impression of a runic inscription long worn away, and perhaps some indentations that were made to be representatives of scales.

"What are you?" she asked.

At the moment she spoke, suddenly the orb lit up. She squeaked as it turned a bright red, the runic inscriptions illuminating so powerfully that she could barely look at them. Her heart races as a dragon's roar rushed through her ears, echoing through her mind. An influx of power, red like a raging fire, coursed from the orb and straight into her belly. She tried to throw the object away but she was stuck in place, unable to move for a moment as more and more of that energy thrummed in her core, becoming intensely warm. For a brief moment she was terrified that it would kill her. That she would die, and no one would understand why. She wished in that moment that she had done something important, committed to some passion or even just a cause. Given something to the world so that she wasn't just a shrinking violet of a royal 'spare', trodden on by others.

She wished she had done more than just kissed Stepan.

She wished she had been bold.

But then suddenly, as quickly as the process had started, the flow of red energy stopped. The orb stopped glowing, and then disintegrated into dust in her hand, joining the other piles of dust upon the floor. It was as if the orb had never existed at all. There was a brief residual warmth in her belly, a short glow that emanated through her light clothing. It almost looked like the pattern of that runic inscription; circular, with intersecting like the maw of some great beast. Or dragon. Then that too dissipated, and she was left hovering and whimpering in terror.

“What. Was. That.”

She waited, squeezed her eyes shut. Waiting for something, *anything* to happen. But nothing did, and in the minutes that followed her heart rate began to slow back to its usual rhythm. She pulled up her shirt, looked at her slim belly. Her skin was still pale, perhaps a bit more so from the recent fright, but there was no mark at all. Not a runic symbol, not even a burn or mark where the strange energy had flooded into her.

“Maybe it was nothing?” she said to herself. “Yes, it was old. Ancient beyond ancient. There’s no way it worked. Or did something. Whatever it was meant to be.”

In fact, she had no idea. She loved the digsites, the atmosphere of it all, the process of uncovering ancient treasures and knowledge. But the actual recognition of devices and relics, particularly magical ones, was mostly beyond her. After all, for all that she had learned *some* magic at the academy, it was mostly rudimentary compared to Ursula, and especially to Stepan.

“Oh Gods, what if it was important though?”

The thought hit her that she had just wrecked something ancient with her idle curiosity. She had hoped it was important, but now she hoped far more that it was *unimportant*. After all, it evidently held magic in it, perhaps even dragon magic, however decayed. She peeked out of the hidden chamber, terrified that the others were there, had witnessed or heard what had happened. But there was no change. Their conversations echoed distantly, ignorant of what had occurred.

“Thank the Gods,” she sighed. “They don’t have to know.”

She moved quickly down the ancient ruined hallways of this buried temple, and found the trio pouring excitedly over a number of relics. They were all pots and amphoraes and a variety of other holding devices. Ursula in particular was trembling with excitement, so that the professor refused to even let her *touch* one of the items.

“Just translate that shelf while I take this one, Ursula. Stepan, you cast some protective magics on these for transportation. I don’t know that they’ll be enough to continue our funding, but it’s certainly an exciting start.” She turned, saw Josefina standing in the entrance. “Oh, Josefina, you were quiet as the ghost of Mahlarr! Are you okay? You look pale.”

Josefina gave a nervous nod. "I'm okay, thank you. I was just feeling a bit lonely. A bit scared."

Stepan moved to her, gave her a little hug. "It's okay," he said with a smile. "Come look at what we've found. Ursula can't keep herself away, and I need someone to translate her language to mine."

Josefina gave a slight giggle. She wasn't the most knowledgeable student like Ursula was, but she was an expert in interpreting Ursula's excited ramblings when her keenness for history and discovery overwhelmed her.

"I'll get right to it," she said with a smile, as the team continued to work over the items. Relief flooded through her: everything would be alright. No one had discovered that she'd lost an important artefact, especially her best friend or the professor. She got to work with Stepan, and helped move the items once they were stabilised.

It felt good to have a role, even if it was small.

First Night Fevers

The excavation was as much of a success as they could have hoped for when it came to their first full day. Still, there was much of the ruin still to sift through, and Stepan was already practicing his spellcasting in order to shift the sand away, while Ursula searched up spells that could help fill in the missing spaces of ancient etchings. The professor guided her in doing so, and recommended Josefina try to "start a little smaller" on magic detection spells. Unfortunately, those always flustered Josefina, for whom magic never came easily. Instead, she practised minor illusions of little dragons flying about. She could impress Stepan with them later when they had a late night talk. It made her blush to think of his lips on hers, but also sent such a flutter through her that she almost became anxious in the presence of *herself*.

Her stomach growled as she practised, so she stopped her incantations for a moment and tucked into her rations. She was quite ravenous, and courtly manners were something she always struggled with, so it felt good to just be able to eat with her bare hands, even if she did so with a lady-like delicateness.

Stepan approached as the sun was dimming and sat down beside her. "Wow, you're really hungry, huh? Not looking very royal, my Lady."

"Mhm hngry," she muffled between bites of biscuit and bread. She swallowed them down. "It must be all that hard work. I was doing a lot of heavy lifting, for a royal."

He chuckled, kissed her on the cheek. As always, she blushed at the contact.

“Don’t eat too much! We’ve only got so much rations. Besides, I rather like your body. You’re very . . . lithe.”

She raised an eyebrow, not sure how to take that. “I’m short and thin,” she responded. “And I’m not pretty.”

He kissed her on the lips. “You are very pretty,” he said.

“The girls in the academy whispered behind my back. And Ursula is beautiful.”

“She is, I agree. Do you know what she’s not, though? She’s not *you*. And I think you are very beautiful.”

Josefina looked away. She grabbed another biscuit to stop her stomach growling. Gods, she was strangely hungry. “You just want me for my money,” she joked.

“Oh, yes. That’s true. I’m low-born, so it’ll go down real well when I marry you and could conceivably become part of the royal family.”

“But then you’d have to murder my brothers and help me claim the throne so you could be my king-consort,” she added, grinning.

“Oh, that’s easy!” he said, twirling his finger in the air and summoning a brief illusion of a dagger. “We go from youngest to oldest, obviously, and then secure power with the military.”

“Of course, *even I* know that. Father taught me during one of his boring lessons.”

“Hmm. The real question is what do you do once you’re actually Queen? You’ll be in the spotlight.”

She gave a sweet, teasing expression his way. “That’s the best part. I’ll wall up the palace, and let you make proclamations on my behalf. I can just do whatever I want, be whatever I want to be.”

“And what is that?”

She froze for a moment, trying to think. “Well, I’m not sure yet. But I’d have no one pressuring me to do things I don’t want to.”

Another little kiss from Stepan. “Then it’s a wonderful fantasy, murder aside. Plus, I’d look pretty handsome with a full beard and a kingly outfit.”

He would. She could imagine it. Even as her stomach growled for more food, there was a sexual tension in the air. The two stared into each others’ eyes, their gazes locked beneath the glittering starlit sky. She felt a deep arousal grow within her, and she pulled away, squeaking in her shy, mouse-like way.

“Time to go to bed!” she cried.

“Yes. Yes, I’m sorry. Time to go to bed. Ursula and the Professor are already in camp. No doubt reading and translating into the wee hours of the morn, but in their tents. I should join you. I mean, I should join them. I mean, I should join them in the sense of being in my own tent, away from you, but not *away* from you.”

“Same. I need to sleep with you. I mean, engage in the act of sleeping with you, in the sense that I am asleep and you are asleep and we are both in separate tents.”

Another stare. Another ripple of lust. Her stomach growled.

“Goodnight!” she said, then turned tail and speed-walked to her tent.

“Don’t eat too much!” he exclaimed. “You’ll run out of rations.”

“I won’t!”

She restricted herself to just a half loaf of buttered bread with some preserved jam upon it. It tasted wonderful, but her stomach continued to growl. And she continued to think of Stepan.

“Why am I so hungry? And why am I . . . I’m not even going to say it. I’m going to bed.”

She did so, but her stomach continued to twist and turn.

Josefina woke in the middle of the night. She’d been dreaming. Something about dragons, and great red scales, and a great cave filled with glorious dragon eggs. She had felt powerful, and heavy, and *magical*. But she was also the centre of something, gazed upon with wonder by many. In a lot of ways, it had seemed as much a nightmare as a glorious dream. But the part that made it feel *fantastic* was Stepan. He was there, gazing at her in wonder and love and attraction. Ursula spoke of her brilliantly, and even the professor was in awe. Her entire family too.

Her stomach growled, long and loud like a great beast. For the briefest moment, she thought she saw a glowing red sigil beneath the fabric of her night shift, but then it disappeared. It was probably a trick of the light.

“Black mountain,” she groaned in her spacious noblewoman’s tent, “I’m staaaarving.”

She spoke a brief incantation to give herself light, and immediately moved to her rations. She didn’t care in that moment that she had to pace herself, she was simply too hungry to care. Josefina had never been so hungry in her entire life. She wolfed down her biscuits, her preserved bread, the dried meats, and the many preserved fruits. She ate and ate and ate, slowly becoming more awake, shocked at how deeply, *agonisingly* hungry she was. She burst from her tent after she’d had most of her own food. She needed more. She was feverish with need.

The expedition’s shared reserve would have to do.

She bolted beneath the starlit sky. The honeywine - the professor’s favourite, and shared only to the group of twenty-year olds lightly to give them some constitution under the

sun - was calling to her like an old friend. She grabbed the jug that held it, removed the stopper, and drank so deeply that it dripped down her cheeks.

"M-m-more!" she cried. And more she had. She held her stomach as she ate. It was pressurised, taking in far more than she should be eating. She tried to stop, but her hunger was too powerful.

"This isn't - eeurgh! - right!. It's n-not natural!"

But she needed to feast. As she did, another feeling rose, as if displacing her slowly shrinking hunger. The image of Stepan returned to her mind, with his handsome westerner features. That olive skin. The dark curls of his hair and his pretty grey eyes. He was strong, stout without being too stolid. And, as much as it made her feel guilty, knowing he was born a commoner enticed her further. Every time she kissed him it felt like breaking a sexual taboo. Every time she kissed him she wanted to do more than just kiss.

"Ohhhhhh G-Gods," she moaned, as the lust rose within her. It was like a great forest fire sweeping through her body. Her womanhood roused, becoming moist as it did during those most tender moments. Her nipples stiffened in her small but pert breasts. Even her skin felt sensitive to the touch, as if it yearned to *be touched*.

"Stepan," she stammered. "N-need Stepan."

She needed him more than words could say. When they kissed, or lightly touched one another, she had often thought about . . . that act. But never more than a nervous imagination. An anxious excitement. Another taboo that the shy royal would never dare break, for fear of the scandal.

Not so now. The need was too urgent. She stuffed one last rasher of salted meat into her mouth, chewed it, gulped it down, then moved to Stepan's tent. It was thankfully further removed from Izabela's and Ursula's. It would 'not do' to have a man so close to the women of the camp, at least for the traditions of Iralis.

But it would do for her purposes. Her feminine slit was almost starting to drip its juices down her thighs, she was so aroused. Her breathing was quickened as she opened the tent carefully, silently, then folded it closed behind her. With a brief incantation, she could see Stepan still asleep in the now-dim light of her magic. He was gorgeous, but useless to her as he was. She had enough to sense to rouse him slowly.

"Stepan. Stepan. *Stepan*."

His eyes slowly opened, and upon seeing her they went wide. "Josefina? Wha - what's going on? Did something happen?"

"I - I need you," she managed.

He pulled himself out of his sleeping mat, and her eyes focused on his bronzed chest, revealed by the two undone buttons of his shirt.

"What for? Is something the matter?"

She kissed him softly, placed her hand on his chest in such a daring manner that even with all the horniness in the world she couldn't help but feel nervous about. He pulled back, clearly shocked.

"Josefina, this is - I'm sure - we can't!"

But she was already fumbling with the buttons of her own night shift. "I know, I know! But I was so hungry Stepan. Really hungry. And now I'm so very, *very* aroused. I can't think of anything but you. I need you. I want you inside me. I *have* to have you inside me."

She pulled away her night shift, revealing her naked chest. Stepan looked away . . . but only for a moment. He returned his gaze. Josefina often felt like a stranger in her own body, but she'd always loved her perfectly symmetrical breasts. They were small, but not tiny, and full enough that they had an elegant shape topped with full pink nipples. They were, as she had been told by one of her handmaidens once, "quite lovely." And evidently more than enough to entice her boyfriend's gaze.

"Are you - are you sure about this?" he asked, but it was already clear that he was aroused too. She'd never, ever done the deed, and wasn't sure he had either, but she could see the erection of his member in his pants, and it only made that desperation to be filled all the stronger.

"YES!" she all but shouted, launching herself upon him.

Stepan stood no chance. Soon the virginal pair were kissing, touching, squeezing, caressing each other's bodies, and removing what remained of their own clothing as well. When Stepan's manhood was released from its confines she gasped at its impressive size, but barely had time to take it in: he took her by the shoulders and positioned her on her back. She spread her legs automatically. Somehow, her body knew exactly what to do. What it needed. She didn't say it, but the thought of his seed inside was something she needed more than anything.

"In - in me!" she cried.

He kissed her, panting, wordless as he then nibbled at her breasts, causing her to moan. She was about to scream at him, demand that he fuck her as if she had all the power of the throne behind her. But he beat her to the punch, positioning his hard cock against her dripping wet lower lips.

And entered her.

She groaned in an unexpectedly husky tone as he slid his girth inside her. It was unlike anything she had felt, but she had certainly imagined what it would be like several times, including when she slid her own fingers inside herself. But this was more potent than even those imaginations: her inner tunnel gripped him, interior muscles massaging his cock even as he went further and further in. Finally, he reached the apex of his entrance, so that

she could feel his hips against hers, and his balls against her skin as well. She shivered in delight.

“Yesssss, I need this!”

“Oh Gods, Josefina.”

Stepan was overcome, but he too had a fire inside him. He had wanted to go this far for a long time, but the actual act of having sex with a king's daughter, even an unpopular one like Josefina, it was absurd. But now, here she was, in heat like an animal. He began to thrust, bringing his impressive length almost entirely out of her sex before plunging back in. She clung to him, kissing his neck, his chest, his muscular arms.

“D-don't stop! I need you to cum inside me! I want your s-seed! Please! Fuck m-me!”

She'd never felt such passion, not even in her most private, aroused moments. More than anything, her body craved her lover's semen, required him to ejaculate within her. Her continued to thrust, changing position only to stroke her pink nipples, bringing her little bubbles of pleasure.

And then the dam burst. The pleasure built and built as he thrust and thrust. He was about to climax and he knew it. The real risk of what he was doing rose up within him, and he began to pull out. Somehow, Josefina sensed what he was doing and gripped him with her legs, refusing his escape.

“N-no! Need you in me! Need it all in me! Need to - to - to -”

The thought came that she thankfully chose not to voice. She needed to be *bred*. It was an alien thought. It was not hers. She didn't even want kids! She was glad that as a spare she wasn't expected to produce them!

But her words were enough to cause Stepan to groan loudly and spurt his seed deep into her. It was hot, sticky, wet. She whimpered, overwhelmed by her own climax. She raked her nails down his back and only just managed to silence her wails of pleasure, reducing them to passionate squeaks.

“Yes! Ohhhhhh y-yesssss, ahh! Nngh! UUhhhhh . . .”

He gushed inside her in several more torrents. The warmth returned, that strange warmth that had come from the orb. For a moment, the tent was bathed in red light as her stomach lit up with that same runic symbol around her belly button.

“What - what is . . . what is that?” Stepan asked.

But the act had taken something out of them. Something magical. He tried to sense with his magic what it was, but it was feeding *off* his magic, among other things. In the aftermath of his bliss he just managed to pull himself off of his still groaning girlfriend, and place himself naked alongside her. The two curled against each other for warmth, bare bodies pressed against one another, as the magically-induced drowsiness set in. The last

thing either of them saw was something like a runic connection form between them, shooting from Josefina's belly into him.

And then all was darkness, and dreams of scales, dragons, and eggs.

Josefina dreamt that she was flying among the clouds. Dragons were all around her, mighty and magical, beyond the scope of mortal ken. They were all the colours of the rainbow, except for one: there was no red dragon. She looked around in vain to try to sight in among the clouds, until she looked down at herself, and saw that she was the red dragon. She was confused: how could she possibly have become such a creature? As if to answer, another dragon drew close, flying parallel to her, wings beating as heavily as her own. Its mind seemed to communicate with hers.

You have accepted the orb. The change will soon begin. You will bring forth a new golden age.

She managed to speak. It didn't make sense. Why could she speak, if they couldn't? Or perhaps they chose not to.

"What do you mean? What change? What was that strange sigil on my stomach?"

It is the Rune of Rebirth. The final contingency of a dying race. And you, blessed child, unlikeliest of humans to be our saviour, have found it. And so you are now blessed and cursed in equal measure, burdened to perform a great deed.

"What deed? I don't understand, what are you talking about?"

But the dragon flew away, and then the pressure began. It erupted in her belly, and the overwhelming need to push came over her. Rain began to fall from the clouds, but it was not rain, it was *eggs*. Thousands upon thousands upon thousands of them poured from the sky, more than could ever be counted.

The pressure in her belly reached a breaking point.

Morning Growth

Josefina woke up feeling absolutely *wonderful*. The princess of the Kingdom of Iralis had always been a slow starter for the day, so it was sort of surprising to her that she had woken up early. But for reasons she was not yet cognisant of, it was like her body was satisfied at completing some great task, or at least the first major step in one. She felt fulfilled, literally *full* in a way that eating a wonderful meal brought. And, of course, she also felt the warmth of

another against her body. She shivered with nervous excitement, unbelieving that she had done the deed with Stepan the previous night, or that she had even dared to remain in his tent with him, least of all naked. He cradled her from behind, his bare crotch against her rear, his chest against her back, and his strong olive arm resting comfortably over her stomach. She sighed, blushing a little just at the remembrance of the previous night. The feeling of Stepan's member inside her. The series of climaxes she had felt when he had come within her. The utter *rightness* that came with being *bred*.

She stopped at that word. *Bred*. Little things that didn't make sense clicked together. She had her hand on her belly, but the angle made no sense. And that wonderful 'fullness' was starting to feel a whole lot more literal than she had first thought. Josefina rubbed her stomach, and was alarmed at how far her hand was from where it should have been. She looked down, and to her horror witnessed a sight that should not have been possible.

She was pregnant.

And not just a wee bit pregnant either. No, she had a taut, rounded half-dome of a belly, one that looked to be equal to a woman in her fourth or perhaps even fifth month. The skin was stretched, though thankfully without any terrible marks, but her belly button had most certainly popped out. From her perspective, she was *huge*.

"Oh Gods! Oh Gods what in the Nine Hells! Someone help me! HELP ME!"

Stepan woke in shock, scrambling back from her, naked. "Josefina - are you alright? What's happ-"

He stopped talking, his gaze frozen on her belly. "Is that what I think it is?"

She nodded, covering her womanhood and breasts with her hands. But there was no hiding the distended nature of her stomach. It was simply too big.

"H-how? Last night we - but that couldn't have caused this, surely?"

Josefina squeaked. There was a tiny pressure in her stomach. Well, tiny at first, but growing every second. She rubbed her belly, unused to its significant weight of heft.

"I don't know, Stepan. I woke up like this! I had weird dreams and last night we came together and then I had weird dreams again and there was that orb and - and now I look like I'm with child! Oh, what will I do? Izabela will kill me, and if not her, then my father will certainly take up the task!"

She winced, the pressure rising again. Stepan looked at her with awe and terror mingling on his face. He was beginning to breathe heavily, losing control of his breath. That happened sometimes, it required fresh air or magic to heal.

"You're pregnant. Oh Gods, I got the king's daughter magically pregnant, or something. And worse, *very* pregnant. I might have casted a spell without realising it, or even *miscast* a spell. Oh - oh God. Ohhh. Ahh. Ohh. Ahh. I can't breathe. It's s-so hard to breathe! You're pregnant, and I'm a commoner, and we - ahh. Ohhh!"

Josefina groaned as the pressure increased. "Stepan! Please, get ahold of yourself! Your magic!"

He nodded, still huffing. He made a brief incantation, weaved it about himself, and a stream of blue energy entered his lungs, calming them. "Ahhh. S-sorry, Josefina. I was in a panic. I still am. What in the Nine Hells are we going to do?"

"I - uughh - don't know," she whined. "I didn't want this. I didn't even m-mean to have intercourse with you last night. It was - ahhh - my f-first time!"

"Mine too," he said, beginning to dress into his trousers. "I'll get the others. We'll sort out a spell."

"No! They can't know! I'm a freak! And now m-my belly, it - OHHHH!!!"

The pressure peaked. She managed to get herself to a sitting position, but she proceeded to topple back as the unbearable tightness gave away. To both their shock, her belly began to *expand*.

"OOHhhhh G-Goooooossss!! It's t-tight! I'm g-getting b-bigger! NNGggggghghhh . . ."

She groaned in response to the discomfort, which was tempered by a strange pleasure. She felt her belly blow up, but it wasn't just her belly either. Even as it expanded, inch by terrible inch, she felt her spine adjust, new vertebrae clicking into place while others expanded. Her entire form stretched, and she didn't know what to do. Once again Stepan had to cast a spell on himself to control his breathing as he staggered back. He fell out the back of the tent even as Josefina continued to groan.

"Why d-does it f-feel soooo good! I d-don't want th-thissss!!!"

Her belly lit up, the runic circle around her belly button intersected by dragon's teeth. It glowed a bright red, the magic she had absorbed clearly still within her, and now intent upon changing her. Josefina tried to stand, but the unexpected weight and altered sense of gravity caused her to land back on her ass. She squeaked as her hair grew out a little longer, as her shoulders widened, her rib cage too, though thankfully her breasts got not bigger. Still, she could only whine and clench her teeth shut as tendons shifted, as tissue grew, as muscles expanded.

Finally, it ended. She lay back, holding herself up with her hands, breathing heavily as her breasts bobbed slightly, and her enormous belly rose and fell. She looked fully six months now, though it was hard to tell: she was quite literally a bigger girl. She idly scratched her shoulder, feeling a rash that had developed from the strain. The same was true of her thighs, and a small bump just above her ass.

Stepan looked back to see Izabela and Ursula running towards his tent. Evidently, they had heard the commotion and were coming to investigate. Ursula raised an eyebrow, as did the professor, as they crested up the hill.

"Uh, why aren't you wearing a shirt, Stepan?" Ursula said.

“This is most irregular,” the professor added.

“I was - well, in my tent-”

“Josefina was gone. Ursula decided to check on her earlier. Then we heard her call out. Her voice echoed this way - did you hear her pass?”

A bead of nervous sweat dripped down Stepan’s forehead. Josefina could hear the commotion outside, and was panicking as well. She had no idea how much she had just grown, but it most certainly had to be related to that strange orb, as well as her odd appetites. Even at that moment, her appetite was returning, her large stomach growling like a beast. She scratched at the various itchy red parts of her body, not wanting to see her belly even if she was forced to feel it.

“Stepan,” Ursula said, slapping the man on the shoulder. “What’s wrong with you! She’s your girlfriend. It’s a simple question. Did you see her or - oh no. You cad! You absolute cad!”

It took the professor a few more moments to realise the train of Ursula’s thoughts, but then her expression became one of anger. “Stepan, open the tent.”

“There’s nothing in there!”

“Then you won’t object to opening it. If you have Josefina in there, against the strict rules of this expedition, the charter of our school, the code of gender mixing on camps, and - worst of all - the laws of our very kingdom about commoners cavorting with *princesses*, then I can tell you that trying to hide the truth will only bury you further beneath it!”

He coughed, barely able to control his breathing. It was like his worst nightmares were coming true. “N-no. You can’t-”

“I am your professor, Stepan. I order you to open it.”

“I’m telling you, she’s not in there! She must be over the hill!”

But Izabela brushed past her only male student and reached out to pull open the tent flap.

“NO, DON’T!” came the loud cry from inside the tent. It was clearly Izabela’s voice. Izabela and Ursula stared daggers at the man, who looked about to faint in the sun.

“Oh God, it’s not what it looks like.”

“I’ll bet!” Ursula said. “How could you be sooo stupid, you moron! I did all my work putting you together, but not for you to bed her without good cause! Are you a total nimrod?”

“DON’T COME IN!”

But the professor opened the flap. “You can’t hide Josefina. We have to deal with this situation. You don’t understand the risks, foolish girl. Especially if you get . . .”

“Pregnant,” finished Ursula, also sticking her head in.

The two looked at Josefina in awe, the woman not only physically bigger, but literally looking almost as if she were entering her third trimester of pregnancy.

“By the Black Mountain,” Izabela said. She and Ursula both saw the fading runic mark on Josefina’s belly, but not long enough to commit it to memory.

“Please,” Josefina said, trying to cover herself as much as she could, hiding her shame. Tears poured down her cheeks. “You n-need to help me!”

Her stomach growled. Loudly.

“And I n-need food! NOW!”

Josefina wolfed down the rations of the camp, despite Professor Izabela’s cringing concerns. Her hunger had returned, and it was arguably bigger than the night before. She was ashamed of herself, blushing terribly and continually facing away from the group as much as she could so that they did not see her terrible eating manners. She had been raised to be courtly and polite, and here she was eating with her bare hands with wild abandon, desperate to sate the monster within her that needed to be fed.

“Ohhhhhh . . . m-more!” she cried. “N-need more! Sooo hungry!”

“Princess Josefina,” Izabela said gently, “perhaps you could consider a pause in your eating. Whatever this magic is, it seems to be fueled by-”

But Josefina shook her head, wilting away. “P-please, Professor. I can’t s-stop it! I need more. I can’t explain it but it *has* to happen. I do not want this, and I feel terrible, but I *have* to.”

The beleaguered professor sighed, opened her satchel, and passed along some of the dried bread. “Perhaps you’ll want some preserved jam on-”

But uncharacteristically, Josefina simply snatched the food away and began chowing down upon it, a fact that made even Ursula shocked.

“I’ve never seen her like this,” the friend said. “Even when she was terrified of being seen as an outcast in the academy, or worse, a bratty royal, the closest she came to eating like this under stress was just a bit of overindulgence of the tennebar sweets. This is unnatural!”

“I’m w-well aware,” Josefina moaned, clutching her belly. It trembled, as if preparing to grow further, and she was thankful for Stepan by her side, rubbing her hand tenderly. She wanted him to rub her round belly, but there was no way she was risking another bout of impropriety. She already felt like dying of embarrassment from being seen in her tent!

The whole story had come tumbling out between her ravenous consumption of their rations, as well as a good portion of their honey wine. Josefina couldn’t hide her shame any longer now that it was made manifest on her body, and whatever humiliation that came from admitting she had ruined an artefact was insignificant against her desire to be normal - and

hopefully not pregnant. So she had told them every detail she could remember, repeating it over and over as the professor and Ursula both practically interrogated her. Naturally, Izabela was livid, but did her best to hide it.

Ursula did not.

“How could you be so stupid!” she had cried, batting her friend on the shoulder. “You’re smarter than this, Josie! And you promised I could see any draconic artefact you found to assess it, once Stepan had cleared it for magical traps, which this was *clearly* had.”

“I know,” the girl said miserably, trying to not rub her stomach, which was groaning for more food. “It was just a stupid curiosity. It looked harmless.”

She then told them about the previous night, with her prior bout of hunger as well as the . . . event that followed. Stepan went stony-faced as she tried to briefly allude without detail to the goings-on between them. She’d never even thought to admit such lurid and embarrassing details before, so most of her explanation had consisted of her repeating that she was “not that type of woman,” and that “it was the effect of the artefact, I swear it by all the heavens and their Gods!”

Ursula and Izabela looked to Stepan, who bit his lip, clearly unable to dig himself out of any culpability on his own part.

“You absolute dog,” Ursula said. “I can’t believe you took advantage of my friend! I can’t believe you failed to be a gentleman!”

“I’m sorry! I didn’t realise. But she was all over me, and saying these things, and I thought that -”

Josefina shrieked, her skin turning red. “Stop it! Please stop talking, all of you! This is humiliating enough already. I don’t want anyone to talk about that bit. I want you to fix *this*.”

She went on to tell them how she had woken with a belly, the red runic signs he had seen, and the inscription upon it. Moreover, how her body had actively *grown* in height and size. She had been a woman of a bit less than 1.8 metres before. Now, it was very clear she was at least two metres in height, if not taller. She was taller than Stepan now. Only the rather tall Izabella had a bit of height on her, but it wasn’t much. She’d somehow grown twenty centimetres in the span of seconds, and her belly had become larger as well. Not just in proportion to those other changes either: it had literally grown larger compared to the rest of her body.

Unfortunately, the explanations went no further, as she was wracked by further hunger, and the others had to discuss their thoughts and help soothe Josefina while she gorged upon their reserves of rations.

“What could possibly have caused this?” Izabela asked herself. “Such a change is astonishing, but I fear for my student’s life. Is she truly even pregnant?”

“We’ll have to see this chamber for ourselves,” Ursula replied. “And see this rune on her stomach again, should it reappear.”

“I can use my magic to detect when it returns, and to make an exact copy,” Stepan said. “That way we can heal my girlfriend. I feel so terrible about all of this.”

“Good! You were meant to help her come out of her shell, not make her even more awkward and weird!” Ursula snapped.

The professor stepped in. “Stop arguing, you two. We have research to conduct. Stepan, stay with Josefina. Ensure she remains in the shade and has enough to drink. We’ll plumb the depths of the ruins once more. Make sure our noblewoman doesn’t get into any further trouble.”

“And don’t *get* her into any further trouble,” Ursula added. “Try to keep your shirt on around my best friend this time.”

Stepan went to his girlfriend’s side under the shade of the professor’s tent, and took her slightly-enlarged hand. She whimpered a little, feeling utterly embarrassed. Her clothes were stretched far too tight, revealing much of her pale shoulders.

“I’m scared, Stepan,” she said.

“I know. Don’t worry, we’ll find out what this affliction is. I’ll do my best, I promise.”

He took her hand and kissed it. She blushed, as she always did, before scratching a red spot on her thigh. She did indeed look redder than she should have been. But he chalked it up to the sun.

Josefina startled, clutching her stomach again. It was hours later, and Stepan had not left her side. But the aches and pains and slight pleasures of further growth were coming. She could feel them.

“S-Stepan! It’s coming. I’m scared! I don’t want to grow again!”

“I know, my dear. I’ll be here. I need you to unbutton your desert coat and reveal more of your stomach to me.”

“But - but it barely fits! I might not be able to get it on again!”

“I know,” he repeated. “But I need to see the sigil. The rune.”

She nodded, bowing to the inevitable. Besides, she was afraid of splitting her clothing wide open. She did as he asked, and began to focus on her breathing as the professor had advised her to do when the time came. At least the others weren’t present. She was terrified of growing in front of them. She loved Ursula, but she would find it all too fascinating.

“Oh G-Gods. I c-can’t hold it off. I’m t-too full! OOHhhhh!”

She leaned against the hard stone behind her and held her large belly. She felt unbelievably pregnant already. How could women do this to themselves? It was absurd! She felt enormous, and heavy, and exhausted. But then the tremors began, and more changes were already on the horizon for her.

“NNGH! UUNNGGHH!!”

“The sigil! I can see it!”

“Get it d-down!” she groaned, as her limbs began to extend, as her spine elongated further, as something hard made itself known above her rear. “H-hurry!”

Stepan worked furiously, using his magic to copy its strange appearance. The rune was also growing, expanding as her belly expanded. Not just stretching either: as Josefina groaned terribly, her loins tingling in a reluctant bliss, the rune began to take on more complexity, with ancient symbols that looked draconic in nature appearing around the circular line, and even within the ‘teeth’ of the markings. A thicker vertical line appeared, like the linea negra of a deeply pregnant woman. It made Stepan uncomfortable to think about that particular portent.

“It’s changing! I’m getting it down!”

But all Josefina could do was groan even more loudly. This change was different than the previous expansion. Her womanhood, now deflowered so embarrassingly, was becoming wet and aroused. She panted as her nipples stiffened, and she had to fight the urge to feel her lower lips. She rubbed her belly, overcome with need. The base of her spine pushed out, extending a little, at least that’s what it felt like. Her ears seemed to burn, and her feet and hands flexed oddly without her permission. She clutched her gravid dome, gasping in waves of strange bliss as it bloated outward.

“Oh Gods!”

“Does it hurt? Are you alright?”

She clenched her eyes shut. “It f-feels t-too good! I’m feeling - oh Gods, Stepan! I need you again. I need you more than anything. I can’t explain it.”

Stepan swallowed. The girl already looked to be 2.3 metres and growing. Thirty centimetres in just a few minutes, far beyond anything natural. Far beyond the heights of most anyone, including men. Her clothing was being pushed to the very boundaries of what it could take. A seam gave. Followed by several more. Something was starting to rip apart. She had already pulled down her top slightly, simply so that her shoulders could be freed. And always her belly pushed outwards. He placed a hand on her enlarged thigh, trying to ignore how strangely arousing her panting was.

“We can’t, Josefina. You have to fight this, my dear. Ignore the feelings!”

“NO!” she cried, grabbing his shoulder with more strength than he assumed she had. “I NEED YOU! I NEED YOU TO BREED ME!”

She did. Gods, she did. By all the Gods and all the heavens and all the hells, and the Black Mountain beyond them all. The dream vision returned to her. The feeling of being gravid. The rain of eggs. Her body craved his seed more than she craved life itself. And with that need came a coursing of that now-familiar energy. A bolt of it shot out between them, from her belly straight into Stepan's chest. They both felt it at once; a strange connection between them. An unbreakable bond that let one feel the emotions and needs of another. Stepan was instantly overwhelmed by his girlfriend's arousal.

His cock hardened instantly, and her cravings transmitted straight to him.

"H-holy heavens," he exclaimed. "Wh-what just happened. I - I feel you!"

"I know! I know!" she gasped, clutching her body. The rashes were spreading, and she scratched at them. Her tailbone continued to jut out behind her, and her ears twisted, extending unnaturally. But neither could pay much attention to her unnatural expansions.

Both of them needed to consummate their relationship again.

To mate.

To breed.

Stepan immediately began pulling at her clothing, overcome with ravenous lust for his girlfriend once more, this time magically induced. He needn't have bothered: with a great cry of utter ecstasy, her coverings shredded, ripping apart to reveal her newly maternal form and altered body parts. She had red patches on her skin, and there was something off about her feet, but he didn't care. He needed to be in her, as much as she needed it as well.

"Lean back!" he shouted, and she did so, pressing back further against the rock she lay against. She spread her thighs automatically, feeling like a common whore in heat, yet uncaring in that moment.

"H-hurry up then! Before the others - oohhh - come back!"

He pulled down his trousers, exposing his cock. Her womanhood was already exposed to him. Her pubic hair was gone, vanished since their copulations last night, but once more he gave it no thought at all. He needed to mate this woman. He needed to *fuck* her. It was a good thing she'd gotten bigger, because it allowed him to position himself to kneel against her, clutch her big belly, and thrust his cock into her.

"Yesssssss," she moaned. "Keep g-going! I - ugh! - need it! I have to have it! This body needs to be bred!"

The runic symbol glowed even brighter as he thrust again and again. Soon the two were moaning in pleasure, Josefina in part agony. She was shamed as much as she was pleased: she knew she shouldn't be doing this, but her new magical instincts were too strong, and she could feel Stepan's own lusts through their bond igniting her own to ever greater heights. They fed upon their shared arousal. And despite how her slit had expanded, it still gripped his cock possessively, milking it for all the seed to come.

“I’m going to - I’m nearly there!”

“Ohhhh! Ahhh! Yesss! DO IT!”

He came. By all the Gods, he came. An onrush of semen flooded her for a second time in less than a day, perhaps in even more prodigious quantities. It was as if their bond made him produce greater amounts, and it pleased her, for that’s what her body needed. His racing seed entered her womb, and she could swear her body actually *felt* it.

“Mmhmmm, oohhhh, ahhhh . . .”

She clutched her belly, breathing heavily as finally the runic symbol finished glowing and disappeared. Her stomach expanded a couple more inches, the skin almost *creaking*. And then it was done. She was fulfilled.

“What have we d-done?” she groaned.

Stepan looked to her with guilt. “I’m so sorry, Josefina. My dear. I didn’t mean to, there was some kind of magic!”

“I know. Oh Gods, this is so shameful. I’m even bigger. What’s happened to me!”

Stepan pulled back, his cock sliding from her. Curiously, not even a small trace of his issue leaked out from her wet womanhood. It was as if her body had swallowed it all up, storing it for us. But his attention quickly went elsewhere, and he was unable to break the news to Josefina at first.

“What? What is it!?”

“Josefina. I don’t know how to say this, but you appear to be growing red scales. And long ears. And, well, a *tail*. Almost, um, a dragon’s tail, in fact.”

Josefina was struck silent. She had no idea how to process that at all.

She coped by fainting.

New Dragon

She dreamed of dragons in flight, once more. But her flight was short. Slow. Her belly was too full. Gravid. It did not rain eggs anymore. No, she was the one who carried the eggs.

She was their breeder. Their broodmother.

Her stomach clenched, and she swooped down towards land, where a lair awaited her entrance. It was time to lay. This was her role.

Forever.

Shadows shifted, talking to one another. From Josefina's waking, confused perspective, she could only make out the words, and was unable to realise just yet that they were talking about her.

"It can't be. Are you sure about the translation?" Stepan asked.

"Look at her, Stepan!" Ursula replied. She looked up at him, hands on hips in an intimidating fashion, despite her short stature. "Are you telling me that I'm wrong? She's got a godsdamned tail!"

"Not a big one!" he said, a little panicked.

The professor cut in. "But one all the same. Not to mention her feet have developed claws. And those red patches look to be growing scales. And her hair . . ."

"What about her hair?"

"It's going red, you lout," Ursula said. "Trust a man not to notice how a lady cares for her roots. Look."

Josefina groaned as her hair was adjusted, a small hand running across her scalp.

"See? Red roots. Her hair is literally turning *red*."

"I guess her ears do look strange. I thought, maybe something elven? Dragon's don't have ears, after all."

"But they do have crests, Stepan," the professor said. "This could be the start of one. My, this is fascinating. A real dragon, of a sort!"

The second utterance of the word 'dragon' made Josefina wake completely. She bolted up, or at least tried to. Her belly was too big. She groaned, and the three others of the expedition moved to calm her.

"Slowly, Josefina, slowly!"

She did so. She was partly on her side, and when she pressed her rear against the large mattress that had been placed beneath her, she nearly jolted again. There was something fleshy and very real sticking out from her backbone. It wasn't huge, perhaps just thirty or forty centimetres or so. But it was real.

"Oh Gods," she whined. "Oh Gods! I'm huge! And I'm red! And - oh dear! - my feet!"

Her feet had indeed altered. She could literally only see them past her big belly because she had lifted them in trying to move again. They were hard and scaled, and much bigger. Her toe nails had become yellow, extended like miniature talons. Just as strangely, her two smallest toes had fused together, and another was growing out the back of her ankle. Like a reptile's foot.

"No! NO! Stepan! Ursula! Izabela! Help me! You've - you've got to help me!"

Stepan rubbed her stomach, which was oddly calming. "Shhh, Josefina, wait. Just listen. Breathe, okay? Breathe, my dear."

She did so, basking in the bond between them. It did indeed calm her.

“We’re going to explain a few things to you,” Izabla said, taking the lead. “It’s going to be hard to hear, but you’ll just have to trust us. We discovered hidden writings in that passage you found, and were able to transcribe much of what Stepan learned of that runic symbol that keeps appearing on your stomach.” She paused a moment to remove her glasses, give them a quick clean, and place them back on. It was obviously a delaying gesture.

“Please,” Josefina panted. She realised she was just covered over by a large sheet, one that looked suspiciously similar to the spare used for their horses’ tent. Otherwise, her body was fairly naked. “What’s h-happening to me?”

The professor grasped the bridge of her nose for a moment. Ursula looked agitated, but there was also a strange frustration emanating from her. She almost looked annoyed at Josefina. Stepan, at least, was full of concern, holding her enlarged hand. She must have been 2.5 metres tall by that point, perhaps even taller.

“There’s no other way to say this,” the professor said. “Josefina. My lady. Princess. We have good reason to believe that - somehow, impossibly - you’re becoming a dragon. Or dragoness, to be specific.”

Josefina gaped. She looked to Ursula, who nodded glumly, a little irritated. Stepan nodded as well. “Y-you’re lying!” she said.

“I can assure you I am not. Stepan, show her.”

“I’m sorry about this, Josefina, but it’s the best way to show you,” he said. He cast his hands into the air and began to weave them, incanting a spell. She recognised it: it was one she could never do, no matter how many times she tried. It was a summoning spell for a mirror effect, one that could reveal beneath one’s clothing without any other seeing it. Often used by women to check their undergarments. Or sometimes shared with another, to tease them without anyone else being able to fully tell. Sure enough, a large one warbled into existence ethereally, not exactly physical, but certainly blocking out the view of the desert in front of her.

“My hair,” she said. “My feet. My feet! No, this is all wrong!”

The others waited in silence while she viewed her changes easily in the mirror, especially the areas her belly blocked. There was no covering sheet in this reflection, and her nakedness was shamefully displayed. It made the signs all the more obvious and impossible to ignore.

For one, the patches of red skin that were increasingly looking like they were developing scales. They were mostly over her legs, on her flanks, and - as she adjusted herself to see more - on her rear and tailbone. But there were some beneath her belly and on her shoulder blades.

For two, the strangely elongated ears. Like elven ears, just as Stepan had said. Only they had a red tinge to them also.

For three, her feet, which were the most draconic thing about her. They were large, and clawed, and quite terrifying for her. Their shape was all wrong. She flexed her toes, and to her horror the rear one - the one that jutted from the back of her heel - flexed a little too.

And lastly, and perhaps most confronting of all, was the tail. It was stubby, perhaps thirty-five centimetres long, and not yet flexible or controllable, as far as she could tell. Josefina wondered if having some control over it would be better or worse, and decided on the latter - it would make the whole thing feel all too real. The skin was reddened, and had a hard rash to it that was annoyingly sensitive. Small ridges were growing from the top like coarse, dried ripples of skin. She had little doubt that the scales would spread there too.

"It's - I can't deal with this. I'm not meant to be a dragon!"

"I'll say," Ursula remarked, folding her arms. "You pick up an item without thinning, and *you* get this honour?"

"Honour!?" Josefina cried, tears forming in her eyes. She looked down at her short friend as she managed to get to her feet. She clutched the sheet to her body, gestured for Stepan to dismiss the mirror, which he did. "I'm a freak! This isn't an honour!"

"You're literally turning into a dragon! An actual dragon, one who is probably pregnant with eggs right now if you hadn't figured it out. But you see this as a curse, don't you? Because you think it'll make you stand out!"

"Because I don't want this!" she cried.

"Then maybe don't touch artefacts! I've dreamed my whole life of finding something like this, and so has the professor!"

At that point Izabela gestured for calm. "Okay, everyone settle. We may yet be able to, uh, transfer this. We certainly can't dissipate it."

"Why not?" Josefina asked, holding her belly. She loomed above them all by half a metre or more. She was still grappling with Ursula's earlier statement: she could be *pregnant? With EGGS!?*

The professor frowned. "Josefina, I know you're scared. But we need to be realistic about this. Inadvertently, you have stumbled upon the greatest find . . . ever. Ever. In history. At least since the actual age of dragons, which was untold thousands of years ago. The transcriptions in the ruins described the orb as a final measure. A way to return the dragons to the world should they perish by transforming a 'servant', one who would become a great dragoness and be invested with the essence of their most fertile broodmares. And using the, uh, 'spark' of a fellow mate, she would birth the dragons back into the world, welcoming a new golden age for the world."

Josefina trembled. "But, what has that got to do with me? I don't want to be a broodmother! Everyone will look at me! Everyone will know!"

"And we will do our best to change you back, I promise. But we can't give this up. It's too important. For everyone. For everyone *in the world*."

Josefina gulped, rubbing her belly. She wanted to shrink into herself and die, because she knew Izabela's words were the truth.

"We better be able to transfer it," Ursula said. "But in the meantime, I'll do my best to help you, Josie. I'm just - it'll take me time to get used to it. I'll put my best dragon knowledge forward to help you."

"As will I," Stepan said.

Josefina could only nod weakly.

Over the next three days, Josefina's boyfriend and best friend lived up to their words. Stepan did his best to soothe her, especially when the great bouts of hunger came on. Much to their shared embarrassment, it was discovered by Izabela that the magic of the orb apparently was designed to create a 'dragon bond' between the broodmother-to-be and an appropriate 'seeder' of the new race. Stepan wasn't sure he was 'appropriate' in that way, but nevertheless their bond was real. When she was hungry, he could sense it. When she was despondent, he could tell light jokes from his faraway home town to cheer her. When her clothing was uncomfortable, he could talk to Ursula about getting her better improvised garments from their spare supplies. But most of all, when she was horny, well . . .

"I c-can't help myself!" Josefina moaned as she got on all fours, her enormous belly nearly touching the ground. She looked to be perhaps eight months pregnant, and she certainly felt it. There was a hardness to her womb, as if she were definitely carrying eggs. She pulled up the back 'flap' of her 'tent-dress' to allow Stepan access to her. He was overcome with arousal himself, and quickly thrust into her. They had privacy while the other two were away, and both needed to fuck one another, to seed the future dragoness once more.

"I don't want to b-birth eggs, but I need you to p-put more in me!" she moaned. "It's all so w-wrong, Stepan. So unfitting! I just w-wanted to be left alone, now I'll be f-famous everywhere. Oh G-God! Keep going!"

As usual, he finally came inside her, even more than the first few times. Taking her from behind was new, but with her growing size, it was certainly the easier and most convenient way.

“Yesssss, ohhhhh Stepan! I c-can’t fight it! I swear I’m not that type of r-royal! My f-father would think that I’m - ahhh, but it f-feels sooooo good!”

Her voice became a sweet song of sultry pleasure as he pounded her from behind. He gripped her growing tail, which was increasingly covered in those not-quite scales, giving it a slight red colouration. It only made Josefina’s pleasure all the greater. As with all their obsessive couplings, their bond caused their mutual attraction and pleasure to heighten the others, forming a feedback loop of bliss that eventually saw him ramming his cock into her wet opening one last time before cumming wildly.

“Unngghh!” Stepan groaned, as his tight balls unleashed torrents of his seed into his lover. She in turn squeezed him for every drop, until finally her womb seemed to almost *hum* with satisfaction.

“Ohhhhh, I c-couldn’t fight it, Stepan. This curse, this ‘blessing,’ it’s making me so voracious. It’s so awful! I mean, it *fee/s* wonderful, but it’s terrible. I’m going to keep changing, and it terrifies me.”

Always he comforted her, but always neither were able to resist the other. Her legs slowly morphed over those coming days, even as Ursula and Izabela researched and studied every inch of the underground ruins, and even as Stepan pushed his magic to the limits trying to find a way back. Josefina herself was actually being studious for the first time in her life - she had no desire to become a pregnant broodqueen of a dragon, after all - and spent long hours reading and attempting her own weak magic. But even if there was a spell to undo the effects of the orb, she didn’t know it, and certainly didn’t possess the magic for it.

And so the poor, shy young noblewoman was forced to experience more hungers, voracious and unstoppable, causing her to consume ever more of their dwindling supplies. With no small amount of terror, she even found herself licking her lips at the sight of the horses tied up on the hill, despite their importance to the caravan they’d need to get back. Not to mention they had names!

And yet, she was unable to prevent herself from feasting. She had always under eaten before the orb, hence her perpetual thinness, but now she only bloated up. And it was no longer just her gravid stomach, but her thighs and upper arms. Her hips appeared to be widening, and her tail thickening, lengthening. Most of the changes were in her legs, which looked to be slowly adopting the digitigrade configuration of a classical dragon skeleton structure, but her hands were somewhat developing small dragon claws, much to her embarrassment.

“It’s all too much, Ursula,” she whined. “I’d do anything to be human again. If you really want this, I’d give it to you!”

Ursula stroked her friend’s back, lowered her hand to the woman’s altered thigh. By that point, Josefina was approaching three metres, and showing no sign of stopping. She

didn't like to stand though, because it only made her quite literally 'stand' out. Instead she was hunched over her ballooning stomach, crying again as her friend comforted her.

"I wish that too, Josie," she said. "You have no idea how much. To be a dragon! To actually birth the glorious race into existence! I'd give anything for it - but I am sorry for how I came across before. It's just - it's such a beautiful, wondrous thing. And to know *you* get to experience it first hand, whereas I have studied this, dreamed of this my whole life, and yet can only watch it. Feel it."

She ran her hand over Josefina's belly, and it made both of them tingle. There wasn't the bond that existed between Stepan and Josefina, but Ursula couldn't deny her growing attraction not only for Josefina's changing form, but also what she represented. A real life dragon was coming into existence before her. And for all her jealousy, her fascination continued to be piqued.

"You're growing horns," she remarked. She grabbed her handy stepladder and used it to reach Josefina's head. Even her increasing size made her loins tingle. She'd loved dragons, but now that she could associate a human with them, well, she was beginning to feel another kind of attraction to them.

"What? No!" Josefina felt at her head, and sure enough a small pair of horns were growing through her crimson-coloured hair. They weren't particularly long yet, merely a few inches, but they would no doubt get a *lot* longer. Dragons were known for their prized, magical horns after all. "Don't I get to keep anything? Oh, Ursula, people are going to look at me! They're going to *know* me, and make paintings and magical impressions of me. It's just - so awful!"

"There, there," Ursula said, kissing the transforming woman's forehead. "It'll be okay. We'll find a way to transfer it. Hopefully to me. By the Gods, I hope to be the one to lay dragon eggs, you have no idea!"

Josefina groaned, clutching her belly. "NGNhh . . ."

"Another change?" Ursula asked excitedly.

But Josefina just shook her head. "N-no. Not exactly. It's so embarrassing, by the Black Mountain, but I feel the need again. Please, you must get Stepan. I'll go crazy if I don't have him."

Ursula frowned. "Stepan is in the ruins, dismantling some of the final incantations in the rooms to see if they're of use. I won't be able to retrieve him."

"Noooo . . ."

"But perhaps I could be of help?"

Josefina raised her eyebrows. "You could? How?"

Ursula laughed. "Oh, my dear friend, you are so naive. Why do you think I never took a boyfriend, hmm? And why was I so close with Posie last year? You lie back, and I'll do my best to simulate Stepan, okay?"

Josefina nodded, awkward as ever. "Oh - okay. Are you s-sure you know what you're doing?"

But Ursula just made her lean back farther, and to spread her increasingly draconic legs. "That's right, spread them. Don't worry, it may be redder, but it's not anything I haven't seen before."

She drew close, licking her lips at the seeping slit that was Josefina's magically-altered womanhood. It was nearly twice as large as it had been, but recognisably womanly. And yet, for the dragon-obsessed woman, she found it arousing as the bathhouses of Lyanesium. It was a revelation.

"Hold still," she said over the woman's belly, where Josefina could no longer see her. "And don't crush me with those thighs." She grinned, then whispered to herself: "at least, not yet, you sexy dragon girl. I can't believe I'm doing this. If I can't be a dragoness myself, maybe I can *enjoy* one."

She lowered her face to Josefina's womanhood, and began to lick.

"Oohh! Oh, that f-feels most e-excellent!" Josefina cried. She trembled, clutching her belly. Her shoulders tingled a little, and her tail was a continual nuisance she wanted to be rid of. But Ursula's ministrations made her forget all about it. Even about the horns. She began to mumble and breathe rapidly at the sensations the woman produced. Ursula teased her lower lips with her hands, inserted four of her fingers into the transforming woman's enlarged opening. It was slick with juices, as if preparing to lay eggs, and that was enough for Ursula to lower one hand to her own wet crotch and begin rubbing it.

"Mmhhh," she moaned, sucking away at the throbbing clit of her friend. Josefina responded with a high cry, spreading her scaled legs yet wider apart to allow Ursula entrance. Soon the woman's tongue was upon her most sensitive parts, and the two were moaning together - though Ursula kept her own voice as quiet as she could.

"Y-you're doing it, Ursie! You're doing it! By the Gods, thank you! Thank you, thank you! I needed this, I needed - UUGGGGGHHHH!!!"

The orgasms rolled through her, and then Ursula produced her own as well. Josefina wobbled her stomach as another rocked through her core, only to be hit by another series of changes. Somehow, Ursula had sated her body in just the right way, and it was triggering more transformations.

"Gods, here it coooooomes!"

Her horns extended further from her scalp, spiralling out like screws. She clutched her head, even as her legs became red all over, and the bones clicked, altering configuration

fully. She yelped briefly as they became fully digitigrade, and the prominent red scales finally became to make themselves known across her feet, calves, and even sections of her thighs. Her talons extended, feet becoming larger, her rear toe becoming large in its own right, capable of forming a new kind of 'first' as it curled inwards.

"My-my HIPS!!"

Ursula stood back, wiping her mouth, amazed and still aroused. The sight she was witnessing was magnificent, and she was filled with a mix of jealousy and awe, and utter delight as well, as her friend's hips expanded outwards. The bone shuddered audibly as she developed a true set of babymakers, and it was only exaggerated by her height growth, which continued unabated. Josefina cried out, her cheeks blushing red in shame as her clothes exploded off of her, leaving her naked.

"SO. MUCH. GROOOOWWWIIIIINNNNGGG!!!"

Her body shuddered, expanding all over again, even larger than before. Ursula felt a strange ripple of magic within her, but it was not a bond. She cast a small incantation as her friend's shape continued to increase, then grinned maniacally at the realisation. It wasn't just Stepan's seed that allowed Josefina to grow into her role. No, having a willing participant nearby *urging* her to grow, *excited* to see her change, also sped up the transformation.

"Yes, do it Josefina. Become the dragoness."

She said it near-silently, so that her friend would not hear. After all, Josefina was not anywhere near ready to accept this role. She was more focused on how her tail was sliding outwards, becoming two, then three feet long.

"STILL G-GROWING! S-STOP!"

As if by command, her body did finally halt. Her horns were unmistakably protruding now, and her legs were now almost fully draconic. Her tail was impossible to hide, though not nearly so long as it would eventually become, if all went well.

"Oh dear," she breathed. "Oh dear. That was a big one! Ursula, what will I do!?"

Ursula was unable to answer for a moment, until she saw the Professor and Stepan running up over the hill in the far distance. Evidently, Stepan's bond had activated, sensing the change. Ursula looked over the remains of their food, then to the enormous size of the now-3.6 metre-tall Josefina, who was just beginning to stand awkwardly on her new feet.

"I think," Ursula said, "the only thing we can do is get you back to the capital, Josie. It's the only place we can help you."

Despite her redness, her flushed cheeks, her overly-warm pregnant body, Josefina still managed to go completely pale.

"To Herathon? But - people will see me!"

Ursula chuckled, sorry for her friend, but also excited. “I know, Josie. You’ll be very hard to miss. But it’s our only choice. I’m sure the professor will agree. We won’t have any food left soon, otherwise.

Josefina looked down at her bloated, heavy, enormous body. She was twice the height of her old self, and three times the weight if not more. Her tail twitched, and she gained some semblance of control over it. But walking on her new legs was difficult, unfamiliar. Alien. Her stomach growled, as if wanting the energy to be able to use those new legs.

“Oh Gods, I don’t have a choice, do I?”

To Be Continued . . .