

Story Plot 1

This story begins with an unfortunate lack of elegance and grace. Heavy rain beat viciously against a secluded bridge, somewhere within the forests of Camelot. Though it's stone construction was worn with age, it stood mightily against the storm; providing a humble shelter for two wet, and trembling travellers. The seasons were entering Waning Messis, temperatures were growing frigid and this storm would rend the last of the browned leaves from their branches.

Lightning struck, piercing through the tangled canopy above; illuminating the muddy road below. Following the dirt road one would find a majestic horse drawn carriage being chased down by a heinous gang of highwaymen. Terrible brutes who simply wanted to help themselves by stealing from the innocent. The carriage was swift but the slick mud caused the cart to slip spraying muck everywhere. The passengers within howled as the cart toppled, the horse whinnied in terror as it was dragged into the dirt.

The cunning thieves wasted little time surrounding the downed wagon and began to shout. "Give us the crowns, they belong to us."

"Come on out and we'll make this quick."

"You're a deadman Glynn and you're ugly too."

In the wagon, Rhion Glynn lay trembling like some kind of scared avian creature, while Sir Lir Sal Varnham swiftly rose to the occasion. He drew his rapier and leapt from the overturned wagon. "You shan't take this man, or our jewels you brigands. Should any of you wish to forfeit your lives, step forwards, those that do not should leave at once." The dashing lizard shouted over the storm, golden eyes flashing brilliantly in the moonlight.

Most of the thieves began to tremble and fled back into the forest, "Not Sir Lir Sal Varnham! We didn't sign up for this!" The ignorant fools who knew not this legendary name remained. They drew their weapons, axes, daggers and swords rushing towards the carriage, but in a deft display of martial prowess Sir Lir Sal Varnham cut them all down with a single perfectly placed strike. He did not kill them, not because he failed but as a show of mercy. "Go on, get out of here and clean up your acts. Don't let this second chance to go waste."

The brigands picked up their trousers, trembling in shame. "Oh we will. Thank you Sir Lir Sal Varnham. Thank you so much for sparing us." The bandits cried before disappearing into the forest, knowing someday they would return to repay this kindness.

"That isn't even remotely close to what happened, you pompous ninny." Rhion exclaimed shooting to his feet.

"Nonsense?! I retold it perfectly, didn't I Jirou." Lir Sal snapped his head toward the young fox.

"It was a little embellished, and very exciting, which is wonderful but we do need to remember our purpose here." Jirou said with a practised kindness.

"It wasn't even raining." Buhle cut in dryly.

"It was definitely raining." Rhion, Lir Sal and Jirou retorted in a unified and equally dry manner.

The four bickered in a small room across from a well manicured nobleman, two equally well dressed woman. Min-jun Nakai was the eldest son of the Nakai clan, a rather wealthy family in Minato. He held a small fan which he snapped closed, the sound was quiet, but firm which immediately silenced the bickering.

"I'll tell it." Buhle the peg-legged orc grunted.

It all started when this old man gave Jirou and I shitty directions. We'd been following the road for hours, until we came across this bridge. It was almost too dark to continue so we decided to camp under it.

We were sleeping pretty soundly when we got woken up by a loud crash. A wagon got toppled no more than twenty feet away. I was pretty groggy so I just went back to sleep, until Jirou started shaking me, "You have to help them. They could be innocents in trouble." He whined, and if you haven't heard a fox whine, you're lucky; if you have you know that there is no possible way anyone could sleep through it. So I got up and stepped out from under the bridge, where I saw three thugs surrounding a cart.

Lir, and Rhion had their heads poking out of the wagon with their hands up. Blood streaming down their swollen faces, sobbing and begging for mercy. "Please don't kill us, I'm too pretty to die. Take him instead." Lir shouted.

"He took your crown, kill him. I had nothing to do with it. I'll help." Rhion screamed.

I clapped one on the back of the head hard enough to send them for a spin. They went down and started sniffing, which got the attention of the other two. When they turned to look at me Rhion and Lir jumped them. Kicked them both in their testicles, which got them sobbing and rolling about.

"That just won't do, for starters that lacked any flair whatsoever. Secondly I most certainly did nothing so dishonourable as attacking someone while their back was turned." Lir protested sternly with a huff. "I was simply defending myself from those brigands."

"I shamefully must agree Buhle, that was entirely uninteresting and inaccurate." Rhion said wagging his finger disapprovingly.

Jirou grabbed his companions pulling them in close and firmly whispered, "They're right, that was boring and gross, but Lir you're being too unbelievable. Remember what we're here for."

"What do you suggest then, these are your people."

"Tairikian nobility respect honour, dignity, and grace we need to show him that we have these qualities and prove that we can get this job done."

"Then I should continue with the tale." Lir Sal insisted.

“They also respect honesty.”

“Oh.” Lir frowned and sat back.

“Just follow my lead and remember, no ships means no quest, no quest means no money, no money means jail so be convincing!”

“I don’t see why we need to explain any of this.”

Buhle muttered leaning back to a lopsided kneeling position.

Jirou bowed low. “My deepest apologies Lord Nakai, we have been travelling for many months and have forgotten our manners. I think it would be best if we properly introduce ourselves individually. My name is Jirou Lau and these are my companions, Buhle...”

With another snap Min-jun snapped open the fan, the sound cutting off Jirou’s introduction. “Yes individually suits me well. Airi please escort three of these gentleman to the waiting room.”

“Yes Lord Nakai.” A fox attendant with white powdered fur and red makeup stood gracefully and stepped gingerly towards the four. “If you would kindly follow me to the waiting room.” She said daintily gesturing towards the sliding door, but there was an icy force hidden behind the gentle exterior.

Buhle, Rhion and Lir Sal began to rise, knowing full well that Jirou had the best chance at a strong introduction. However Buhle stumbled slightly as he attempted to rise, the recent loss of his right leg was clearly impacting his every motion. Lir and Rhion attempted to help him stand, but Buhle swatted their hands away while grinding his tusks. The slip was noticed quickly by Min-jun who swept in like a vulture.

“Please sit, I’m certain your companions are willing to volunteer the short trip to the waiting room in your stead.”

“I can walk just fine.” Buhle retorted, orcs were prone to inferiority complexes, Buhle was no exception. He knew when he was being pegged as the weak link and hated it. The orc stood up, steadying himself to look down on the cat who watched from behind his elaborate fan.

“As you can see my lord he’s quite alright. Perhaps I could continue my own introduction.” Jirou fumbled for an excuse to allow Buhle to leave, but it was too late.

“I must insist, Jirou Lau of the Lau clan, bastard son of Long Lau and the Silver Jewel of Kohan. I am quite familiar with you and your family already. Now, please, Mr. Buhle have a seat.”

They had no retort or way to back out now. Jirou stood sheepishly as Buhle uncomfortably knelt down again. Jirou gave one last look at Buhle before rising with Rhion and Lir. Airi gestured calmly towards the door after opening it, and the three walked sullenly out into the hall of the grand manor. The sound of the sliding door shutting behind them was as unpleasant and final as the whistle of a guillotine blade.

Lord Nakai snapped his fan shut again, placing it gently in front of himself, before sitting back up straight. The attendant to his left took this as a sign, stood silently

and walked to a small sliding door. It opened to a closet with a set of tool and small pots. Buhle watched her with some curiosity for only a moment before Lord Nakai cleared his throat. “Allow me to commence the introductions. I am Lord Min-jun Nakai, eldest son of Sung-jin Nakai lord of Minato.”

“Honour... dignity... grace...” Buhle repeated to himself under his breath, before straightening his shoulders. “I’m Buhle Ogenekaro, er, son of Ogenekaro. I’ve come to ask... request your aid on my companion’s quest.”

“It’s my pleasure to welcome you to my home, however before we begin talk about requests I’d like to know more about who is requesting my aid. Start from wherever you’d like, I just want to know your story and how you came to know your companions.” Lord Nakai said whimsically.

Min-jun’s attendant carefully poured two small cups of tea, one for Min-jun and one for Buhle.

My name is Buhle, I was born in a small village outside of the Walled City. I spent my childhood studying to work as a smith with my father, but lost part of my hand to a scorpion before my thirtieth alignment. Spent a few cycles studying Watakida, but didn’t have the heart for it.

When my thirtieth alignment came I hadn’t accomplished anything with myself, so I ran away from home. Picked up some mercenary jobs to eat, slept outside a lot, and stowed away on a ship. I got older and better at the mercenary thing, found out I didn’t mind the nomadic life all that much. There isn’t much else to say about all of that.

It was about to be my seventieth alignment when I was in Kohan finishing some work. Kohan’s a nice place, lots of plants, fresh water and rice. I’d gotten paid and had been on the road for a long time, so I went to find some company. The folk I’d been travelling with said “While you’re in Kohan you gotta go see the Silver Jewel.” I was feeling pretty good, pockets were feeling heavy as my balls so I decided to go.

The place was crowded, more crowded than I’d seen a place, people were kind and gave me a seat to myself anyways. Then this lady came on the stage, she was like a ghost or something. Silver fur, red makeup, covered in silks. Whole room went quiet when she started singing, she must’ve been some kinda witch. I’d never seen a room with that many folk go dead quiet like that.

Anyways, this lady came up to me after that, real beautiful too, all done up in a kimono and makeup. So she starts chatting with me, really just won’t stop talking. Takes my drink order eventually and when she comes back she starts sitting real close to me. I knew the game so I slip her a few crowns and she takes me up to this real fancy room, way fancier than any bedroom I’d stayed in before.

So she takes me over to the bed and I start taking off my pants, when she just starts doing it for me. I laid down and she got some oil and started rubbing me down. Let me tell you, after weeks on the road sleeping on rocks, and under trees, that massage was the best feeling I've ever had. Eventually I start getting tired of the coy routine and just grab the top of her head and push her down real slow. She didn't seem to mind skipping a few steps and just got to work. I'd never been with a fox before but her tongue was incredible. She shoved that thing into my foreskin, start nibbling and sucking and I was hard in seconds.

I didn't want to get off, it felt that good, I just wanted to enjoy it for hours. So I start rubbing her ears and she starts whining all cute like, when all of a sudden some people start banging on the door. Really trying to break the thing down.

They start shouting on the other side of the door "Jirou! Jirou! Get out here this instant." The they break the door down. It's not a surprise when you have paper doors.

These two goons come in, screaming and try and grab this girl. I wasn't really thinking straight so I just decked one of them across the jaw. The other reached for a sword but I clapped him too. We got into a bit of a brawl, I got a little banged up, but sent the two of them running.

"You gotta get out of here, those were my father's guards, if they find out what you did they'll kill you." *Jirou* was real panicked at this point, and I wasn't really paying attention at that point and just wanted to finish getting what I paid for. *Jirou* opens up the window and tells me to climb out and leave town.

I still wasn't entirely clear on the situation so I grabbed *Jirou*, lifted him over my shoulder. I still thought this was some lady in danger, but I at least learned one of those things wasn't true because I could feel his prick through his kimono. The pervert was completely stiff from watching all that. Still on an adrenaline high I didn't really think anymore on it and left through the window with him.

We drop down into an alley and *Jirou's* babbling in my ear because he's gotten me caught up in a big old mess. A couple more goons come out shouting too and it was just a lot of noise, so I start running. Eventually I got us away by slipping through a rice paddy. It was freezing cold and we were both soaked.

Finally with a chance to breath, the first thing I said to him was "You're a boy?"

He was pissed. Not even those goons who'd been chasing us had looked so mad. I should've just handed him right over. So he's all angry and upset, yelling about all sorts of stuff that he wasn't explaining well. It took a solid hour for him to calm down, which was good because it gave me time to get us a little fire going before we froze to death.

Once he'd calmed down he started telling me properly what was going on. He was *Jirou Lau*, a man, the

illegitimate son of Long Lau and the Silver Jewel. Those goons were his father's guards who had come to bring him home. The Lau family had some influence in Kohan, and *Jirou* was here to study. By assaulting them and running with *Jirou* they would probably assume I'd kidnapped him.

"Just tell them what happened and clear things up, if you're his kid he should listen to you." I suggested ignorantly.

"They won't listen and neither would my father even if he was here. He lives in Yoho-ka which is over a month away by foot. I'm just a mistake to him, one he wants kept far away until he can marry me off for political gain."

"That seems rough."

"You should leave while you can, I'll try to talk them down so they don't follow you." He curled up and started sulking.

"Alright." I agreed, I didn't mind travelling but doing so with a target on my back wasn't my idea of a good time. So I started walking. "I'll be going now."

Jirou just sat there sulking by the fire.

I walked a bit more, but there was just nagging emptiness I was feeling. "I'm really going."

Selfish brat didn't say anything, that's when I remember why I felt so light. So I walked back over, grabbed him by the scruff and threw him over my shoulder. He started struggling. "What are you doing?"

"Kidnapping you. I'm gonna be charged with it anyways, besides I paid you for services, and you haven't delivered yet. If I have to leave town you're just going to have to come with me until you complete those services."

"If you want me to blow you I'll just do it now."

I stamped out the fire and started walking. "I'm not in the mood anymore." Which I can admit now was not true.

"Then I'll just give you your money back!"

"I don't want it, I have service I'll need completed someday, until then you're in my debt Lord Lau."

He didn't argue anymore, and I walked us back to a road before putting him down. "That road goes back to town." I pointed down the road and started walking the opposite direction.

Jirou sighed and just stood there for a while. Eventually he ran up to me and we started walking together. "As a member of the Lau family it would be shameful of me to leave a debt unpaid."

Jirou and I started travelling together ever since. We left *Tairiku* shortly after and headed for Camelot. That's where we met the other two.

Silence fell as *Buhle* finished his story. *Min-jun* quietly sipped his tea while listening to the tale. The gentle clink of the tea cup as he placed it down cut through the silence. Waving a hand, he spoke "Airi please send in Mr. Rhion next."

At some point during the tale *Airi* had silently slipped back into the room where she waited by the door like a

ghost. With a nod she exited and returned shortly with Rhion Glynn in tow.

“Thank you Airi. Welcome back Mr. Glynn. Please have a seat.”

Rhion anxiously sat next to Buhle who began to rise, but once again Lord Nakai waved him down. “Please don’t trouble yourself Mr. Buhle, you’re welcome to stay.” Buhle sat back down abruptly frowning, he still wasn’t sure if he’d done well or not. Nakai’s expression and demeanour were inscrutable.

“Thank you for your hospitality Lord Nakai. It’s an honour and privilege to meet with you today. My name is Rhion Glynn, a foremost monstrologist of Camelot.”

“It’s an honour to be in the presence of someone of such esteem. I am Lord Min-jun Nakai, eldest son of Sung-jin Nakai lord of Minato. I am pleased to make your acquaintance Mr. Glynn. I was quite fond of your friend Lau’s suggestion. I’d like to know about you Mr. Glynn, what is a monstrologist’s duties and how did you come to know your companions?”

It was the second week of Waxing Messis when I was graced with the opportunity to begin my career as the foremost expert in monstrology. I was studying at the local tavern, perusing an old book that had belonged to my grandfather when a silly little man entered. He said he was Lir Sal Varnham and he’d been hired by King Uther Pendragon to map the world. He was willing to pay handsomely upon completion of the project and needed a fit team to aid him in the endeavour. I being a man of wit and intelligence knew better than to take a job that had no guarantee of payment. However, the task of exploring the world would provide me ample opportunity to research demons and the monsters of the world.

Lir Sal gained little interest, and not wanting to shame myself in front of the rest of the tavern I waited until he departed before approaching. “I would be most interested in accompanying you on part of your journey, and I’d happily my own way and even fund some of this trip personally.” With that simple offer I had him eating out of my hands. He readily agree and we decided we’d set forth within the week.

I had a small inheritance from my grandfather which I used to fund our expedition. Using some of these funds Lir Sal and I hired the aid of a knight, Sir Gregory, his squire Romilly and an ass named Erik. They would guide us to Mt. Draig where Lir Sal could begin by mapping the Pendragon Mountain range. It was nearing Messis when we finally ventured into the range which gave us exceptional weather for travel.

When our journey started we knew we would need to ascend the Ten Thousand Stairs, a roughly built staircase through the mountains, the wound up the crag into the higher mountains. Unfortunately the mountains are filled with sharp drops and ravines which make travelling with carts nearly impossible. At Sir Gregory’s suggestion we

travelled with our loyal donkey Erik, and Sir Gregory’s devilboar named Mabel.

Let me tell you, if you haven’t seen a devilboar in person they are a sight and smell to behold. Near as big a tun fermentation barrel and smells of manure and unwashed linen. They’ve got tusks like longswords and unpleasant teeth like a human. In spite of appearances they’re quite docile when not provoked.

With our two fine steeds and ours guides we headed up the Ten Thousand Stairs. As we ascended we stopped for several breaks as Lir Sal kept getting tired, though I’m not so proud as to not admit that I was also quite exhausted by the journey.

For the purposes of his map, Lir Sal was keeping track of how many steps we’d traversed, it was near the five thousandth that we reached Draig Pass. A bridge that passes over a large ravine, nearly a fifty foot drop to the bottom. The Silver Thread River flows through the ravine and flows into the rive Camlann and eventually into Lake Le Fay, but I’m getting off track. The point is, while we were taking a break to eat, Romilly, Sir Gregory’s love squire informed us she’d attempted to count the steps before, and she’d only counted a little over eight thousand stairs, not ten thousand. This was a huge relief as I was quite exhausted by this point.

“We should reach the end of the stairs well before we have to make camp. Things get a little flatter after the stairs.” Sir Gregory said in an effort to encourage us. However he neglected to mention that beyond that was forest and owlbear and dragongoat country.

“That is most fortunate, I don’t know if my thighs can take much more.” Lir Sal whined.

“Don’t worry Mr. Varnham once we reach the top of the stairs it’ll get a bit easier for half a day.” Romilly said also attempting to be encouraging to that tart.

“What happens after half a day’s travel?” I asked, feeling somewhat concerned at the prospect of more climbing.

“That’s where we reach the base of Mt. Draig. Things aren’t quite as sheer but we’ll be on a steady incline until we reach Merlin’s tower.” Sir Gregory said through a mouthful of dried bear jerky. “Things are more maintained around there, so we’ll get a few hours of smooth travel before we get to more cliffs.”

“Not getting cold feet are ya.” Romilly jested.

“Romilly manners.” Sir Gregory scolded her, spraying bits of jerky from his mouth.

“Not in the slightest, I used to run laps through the streets of Camlann while you were still suckling your mother’s teet. Nothing will get in my way.”

“Glad to hear it.” Sir Gregory said swallowing loudly. “It’s time we get moving.”

“Already? But I haven’t even finished eating.” Lir Sal said shocked and dismayed.

“You’ll have to eat on the way, if we don’t keep moving we’ll be setting up camp in the dark. Believe me,

you'd rather go hungry than have an owlbear come up behind you while you're pitching a tent."

The journey continued uneventfully for the rest of the day. We crossed Draig Pass and reached the top of the Ten Thousand Stairs, which turned out to be eight thousand four hundred and twenty seven stairs, by Lir Sal's count. We continued on for a while, and as promised the mountains did become slightly less steep which made the rest of the day slightly more bearable.

"Is there a point to this?" Buhle interrupted with a yawn.

"I'm getting there!"

As I was saying, we set up camp near a small thicket with some fresh blueberry bushes. We had two tent, Lir Sal and I shared one while Romilly and Sir Gregory shared the other. Mabel and Erik stayed outside. We each took turns on watch, which was something I was not accustomed to, I need a full eight hours rest and here I was only going to get six hours a night if I was lucky, for possibly three weeks of travel.

Last watch for the night was my responsibility, mercifully, but what Romilly woke me up for my watch, I was dreadfully tired, but remained vigilant. I was sitting by the fire keeping an eye out when I heard a rustling in the bushes. Mabel and Erik stirred and seemed distressed, so I grabbed my rapier. That's when a very large dragongoat came out of the forest, let me just say that in spite of their size they are quite hard to spot in the dense foliage when it's dark.

I was fascinated by this, because I had only read stories about the dragongoats and hadn't ever gotten see one in the wild, alive before. They're immense beasts. The front of it's body was like a bear, very thick with large clawed paws. It had a thick neck which ended in a head that looked like a cross between a goat and wolf, but it had enormous horns, far larger than one might expect it's head to support. The back of it's body was smaller, and ends in goat like hooves.

Then I got out my notebook and began to sketch and write my observations, at least until it approached me. You see when they eat, the skin on their face peels back and their jaws and teeth extend forward. Similar to a wolf bearing it's fangs. It did that, and in the chaos of that occurring I found myself separated from the party.

At the base of a narrow ravine I was...

"You skipped the only interesting part of this whole story." Buhle interjected again.

"Buhle, please, I must insist you not interrupt anymore." Rhion said firmly.

"You've been rambling on for fifteen minutes and the only action there's been you skip over."

"Fine."

I saw the great big teeth protrude from it's face like a beast from the depths and I got frightened. So frightened that I just ran, ran deep into the woods and may have even wet myself slightly. It was only later, through continue observation of these creatures at a later date that I determined I was likely in very little danger. They have sharp teeth because they are omnivorous, but they subsist primarily on shrubbery like berry bushes, insects and carrion. Their large paws are used primarily for climbing and digging up bushes and insects.

Then I ran, I don't even think it actually followed me but I didn't care, I just ran. Then I got lost, because I slipped on some fallen branched and fell into a thankfully shallow ravine. However, it was not so shallow as to not harm me, I twisted my ankle severely and couldn't walk any further.

"Is that sufficient Buhle?" The shame in his voice was clear.

"Not really."

"Thank you for your continued support."

A small snort of a laugh cut through the chamber, though the source was unclear.

I waited there for several hours, I was getting very cold and very hungry so I start to crawl, but the ravine was too steep to make it back up. I was certain this would be my end so I began to write my last will and testament into my journal.

When I'd finished I laid down and prayed for a miracle, when from further up the ravine I heard several voices, so I called for help. The voices were unfamiliar to me, but I thought I was good as dead if I didn't at least try. I could tell they heard me because they stopped speaking for a moment and soon several heads looked down on me from above. Apparently a group of kobolds had been gathering berries and mushrooms.

They began speaking in a language I wasn't familiar with, but they lowered several ropes to me and few climbed down. Gratefully I thanked them, though I don't think they understood. In a few moment they had a sling tied around me, and they hoisted me out of the ravine. This was all wonderful news, until they started using the ropes to further tie me up. I protested but this didn't go over well as they started poking me with spears and knives.

Together they all carried me to their lair, which was modest and poorly furnished cave. They had hay beds, and most notably a cage which they promptly stuffed me inside. Now this is where things get a little strange, you see these kobolds weren't the only ones living in this cave. It was also occupied by a gargoyle. Gargoyles are fascinating demonic spirits that can turn creatures to stone, like many demonic spirits they're fully intelligent. This one had built up a small cult of kobolds to worship them.

I'm not ashamed to admit that he was rather handsome as far as demons go. Chiselled chest muscles, a devilishly handsome grin and I could tell from his limited clothing that he was quite endowed. This is an important detail because as it turns out, it was mating season for these kobolds. The mushrooms they'd gathered were in fact powerful aphrodisiacs.

After what felt like several nervous hours stuck in that cage, their mating began. Kobolds tend to not bond with on particular individual, at least not for the purposes of procreation, they're a very love the one you're with type of people, even if that one you're with is actually twenty ones. There was not a hole unfilled in that pile, just writhing scales and moan.

Meanwhile, the attractive gargoyle I mentioned earlier was watching this from the side of the cave. Every once in a while I saw him glance in my direction and I knew what would be coming. While I'm not against the act of love making with anonymous partners simply for the thrill and pleasure of it, I do draw the line at kidnapping.

As the kobolds started reaching their limits and leaving the, for lack of a more elegant term, fuck pile, I could see the timer ticking. I had to leave if I didn't want to become this demon's wench for who knows how long. For all I knew he'd use me and eat me after, and I am into that sort of fetishism.

When only a few kobolds were left and the cave was coated in a thin layer of goblin semen, the gargoyle approached. He'd removed his loincloth revealing what I can only imagine was at least an eight inch length of demonic meat, and a set of impressively large testicles. Gargoyles aren't much taller than a human, so seeing such endowment was impressive, not that it doesn't happen, but I was simple impressed from a monstrological standpoint.

It was then when all the kobolds were tired and I was to be next that Lir Sal, my dear friend arrived to save me. You see this was before I knew what a scoundrel he was, so at the time I was exceptionally grateful to see him. I had expect Sir Gregory and Romilly to burst in behind him and save the day. However, this wasn't the case as they'd had to split up in order to cover more ground searching for me. Given the current situation, Lir Sal couldn't go for help, lest he leave me to be whims of this demon.

My memory of the exact phrases spoken gets fuzzy I am not fluent in enochian, but as I discovered, Lir Sal at least knew enough to hold a conversation. He spoke with the demon back and forth for some time before they came to some sort of an agreement.

The reptilian stepped up to this demon, got on his hands and knees; then began to very eagerly rub his scaly hands all over the gargoyle's length. He very quickly began to use his mouth, wrapping his lips hungrily around the ridged demonic phallus. His throat got quite the work out, and rather quickly to. The demon wasted no time in

grabbed the back of Lir Sal's head and began thrusting. Only gagged once though, I commend him on that.

Like I'd said earlier, those were powerful mushrooms, and several of the kobolds were getting a second wind. One got bold enough to go for Lir Sal's backside, but the gargoyle said something in a vicious tone that I can only imagine was profane. The poor guy backed off, got on his own knees before tugging off Lir Sal's trousers. He had a thin ass, but the kobold didn't seem to care as it buried his tongue between those lizardfolk cheeks. Lir Sal gasped loudly, which apparently felt incredible to the demon who groan as well.

This debaucherous act continued for quite sometime, but eventually the demon needed more. Satisfied with the kobold's preparation of his prize he shoed the little goblin away. As the demon removed his length from Lir Sal's throat he cupped my companions chin, forcing him to look up, and spit right into his mouth.

Lir Sal didn't even bat an eye, just smirked and sucked on that demon dick for a few more seconds, until it was glistening with saliva. The gargoyle then flipped Lir on his back and with almost no warning penetrated his reptilian rear. Lir Sal shouted in surprise and discomfort, saliva isn't a substitute for good oil, but times were desperate. His cries were soon silenced when the kobold returned, and slid his own length into Lir's mouth.

Those two railed Lir for at least fifteen solid minutes, barely taking a break before they howled and coated my companion in their seed. Those hot fluids ran down his chin, to his neck and from his gaping hole down his cheeks and tail.

Exhausted, Lir was hoisted up by the kobolds and promptly thrown into the cage with me. We spent several hours there bickering until the kobolds had all fallen asleep, along with that treacherous gargoyle. This is when I learned the Lir Sal also had a talent for picking locks, as he swiftly opened our cage using a set of lock picks he'd kept hidden. I used his cum soaked body for support and we quietly retreated from the cave.

It took us an hour of wandering about in the dark before we found Romilly and Erik thanks to their torchlight. We all had a good laugh, and with a make shift splint we continued the journey the next morning. I'll never forget that, because it was when I learned the importance of keeping a watch at night, otherwise your prisoners might just walk away. Also avoid mushrooms, those things worked as a temporary aphrodisiac because they increased the blood flow and stimulates romantic feelings, but they cause you to crash a few hours later.

"That was quite enlightening Mr. Glynn. Airi, fetch the next one. More tea if you could, Chie." Lord Nakai ordered in a soft but commanding tone.

The attendants nodded and set about their tasks efficiently and quietly. Silence took over the room, leaving Rhion and Buhle uncomfortable as they waited for

their companions to return. They were at least thankful they hadn't been turned away yet, that had to mean something.

Eventually Airi returned with Lir Sal, she gracefully offered him a seat while Chie elegantly served tea.

"Mr. Varnham, I've heard... much about your exploits. I am Lord Min-jun Nakai, eldest son of Sung-jin Nakai lord of Minato." Min-jun repeated his introduction mechanically, which worried Buhle and Rhion. If Min-jun lost interest they would surely be thrown out, fortunately Lir Sal was a master of embellishment, if anyone could regain the lord's attention it was him.

"I'm honoured to know you've heard of me, all good thing I hope. Thank you for meet with us Lord Nakai." Lir Sal said with a small bow, which he used to send a sideways glare, that Rhion pretended not to see.

"I've enjoyed hearing of your companion's exploits. I'd like to know your exploits with your companions, tell me of your strengths Mr. Varnham, if you would be kind enough to indulge me."

"It would be my greatest pleasure Lord Nakai. Allow me to delight your ears with a tale from past, I've already regaled you with how I met these fellows but perhaps you would like to hear of how I slayed the Beast of Bullmar?"

"Slayed and laid are different you twat." Rhion muttered.

"The problem was dealt with, what difference does how make, this is my story time not yours."

Lord Nakai raised a hand silencing the bickering, but not clearing the dirty looks from Rhion and Lir's faces. "Please continue Mr. Varnham, I look forward to hearing of your great accomplishment."

It was early Waxing Ver when the dashing Lir Sal Varnham and his companions had set forth to return to Camlann, when they happened upon the village of Bullmar. Bullmar is small roadside lumber town, about a days travel from the Lake Le Fay. A cozy little retreat for the weary travellers. Though Bullmar lacks any proper inns, it had a small tavern and the people were very hospitable.

The party quickly headed for the tavern as the rumbling of their stomachs, and the smell of fresh food drew them inside. It, like the rest of Bullmar, was a quaint building of stone foundation and wooden construction with a roaring fireplace for drying off after the early Ver rains. There were several haggard looking farmers inside who all turned abruptly and reached for their pitchforks and torches, but a lovely lady curly golden hair raised a hand calming the crowd.

"Welcome to the Hogs Head, I'm..."

"The Hogs Head was Harbourtown."

"It was the Little Duckling in Bullmar." Rhion correcting. "I remember because after that I made a joke

about all the villagers following Agatha's commands like little ducklings."

"It doesn't matter. It's my story!"

"Welcome to the Little Duckling, my name's Agatha." She had a thick and charming rural accent. "Please make yourselves comfortable, you'll have to excuse the hostility round here, we don't see travellers all too often."

She said they don't receive travellers often, but this is a town along a major road through Camelot, so they certainly do see travellers frequently. Sensing this deception I attempted to gain further information out of young Agatha. "We're all very grateful for your hospitality Ms. Agatha."

"Oh, just Agatha's fine."

"Agatha, have you any rooms available for a few tired travellers?"

"'fraid not, we don't see enough travellers to keep any sort of inn open. If you don't mind the poor conditions, the barn is available or I can set you up in my home for a few crowns a night. You folks planning on staying long."

"Just passing through, I believe we'll likely leave in the morning."

"Ever'one 'round here seems to follow ya orders just like they're yer little ducklings." Rhion said foolishly, like a complete buffoon.

"I do not sound like that!" Rhion scoffed indignantly.

Agatha kindly humoured poor Glynn who was exhausted and must've appeared quite simple to her. "My apologies for that honey, things have been a little tense since the beast arrived."

"The beast, that sounds dreadful. What is this beast?" I asked, knowing adventure when I hear it.

"Well it all started at the end of Waning Frost, little over a month ago. Folks started seeing a pair of eyes, watching them from the forest. Most of us laughed it off at first, people seeing torches or something other foolish thing. It got weirder as time went on, things started going missing, people would here banging and rattling on their doors and windows at night, when no one else was around."

"This seems like just some prank by a mischievous spirit, nothing more." I suggested.

"That's what we thought for a while, it was just a weird ghost story been told for a few weeks, but then things started getting more violent. Folks started finding scratch on their doors, like something trying to get in. We all started getting real scared." Agatha continued in a hushed tone so the rest of the patrons wouldn't overhear our conversation.

"Then these woman show up, adventurers like you lot. Two of them though, some kinda sorceresses saying they've been hunting down beasts like this. So they go off in search of it, they're gone nearly a day, but they came

back, it was terrible. They were both bleeding terribly and looked like they'd barely made it out alive."

"They both said it was a demonic spirit, that had grown too powerful for them. The safest thing for us to do was leave it offerings of food and alcohol once a week, and that we shouldn't go into the northern forest."

"Perhaps we can d-deal with this beast, to h-help these people. I-I don't feel good about them b-being extorted like this." Jirou stammered nervously.

"Well said, Jirou. I couldn't agree more. Tomorrow morning we'll go and deal with your beast problem Agatha." Lir Sal said with sharp determination and valour.

"Oh, you will?" Agatha said delighted, a radiant smile curling across her face. "We'd be forever in your debt if you would."

Lir Sal beamed, his smile dazzling the room, "Worry not sweet Agatha, by tomorrow evening your troubles will be over."

"Good grief." Buhle yawned.

Lir Sal and his companions then head to Agatha's house where she was a most gracious hostess. The travellers had a wonderful night of rest in her cozy coffin of a home. They paid Agatha handsomely for the accommodations and were all most grateful for the chance to all get a full eight hours of sleep.

That morning Agatha prepared a beautiful spread of scrambled eggs, dried ham and wild tea. The party all unanimously enjoyed the wonderful meal, having not had fresh food after a week on the road. Their hostess didn't remain long, as she had to return to the tavern promptly to prepare for lunch. This left Lir Sal and his companions to prepare to venture forth in search of adventure.

The party left Agatha's house feeling hopeful and invigorated from the quaint lodgings, warm eggs and ham. The town was already moving quite eagerly in spite of the early hour and Lir Sal and his trope were no different. They hurried through town heading north where they were greeted by a make shift barrier of logs and several pits filled with sharpened sticks. It was clear the villagers were quite wary of the beast.

"Buhle if you could clear a path for us." Lir Sal requested, to which Buhle heroically agreed. In a few moments he'd clear a path for us through barricade and into the forest. The forest here wasn't particularly dense, but was filled with young trees that had been planted in preparation for further logging endeavours. Beyond these trees however, we reached a dense proper forest as well as a river, about a mile away from the village.

It was here that Lir Sal Varnham noticed a particularly peculiar odor which wasn't entirely unpleasant but wasn't entirely pleasant either. It smelt of cheap alcohol and unwashed genitals, a smell he was quite familiar with from his time regaling drunken tavern goers with his exploits.

"Gods, it smells a troll dipped his balls into a barrel of cheap ale and piss." Buhle said in an uncouth manor, pinching his nose closed.

"...well it did."

The rest of the party swiftly followed suit as the stench from this filthy began to grow unbearable. Lir knew they must be getting close to something important. It was clear that this must be where the villager's offering of alcohol were being taken. Searching the area thoroughly, the party found a what appeared to be a small encampment, made of leafs.

"T-that's strange Mr. Varnham, w-what are these l-leafs doing here? It's o-only Waxing Ver t-there shouldn't be leafs l-like this growing yet, they l-look fresh." Jirou stammered nervously.

"Very astute Jiji. This could only be the work of a spirit or magic of some sort. We should be vigilant during our investigation." Lir Sal Varnham said encouragingly, giving Jirou a pat on the head.

The group rushed into action, quickly searching the campsite for signs of what or who might've been behind this. The remains of bottles, barrels and other oddities were strewn about in a haphazard mess. It was immediately clear this was the work of a creature with low intelligence and a sinister motive, not some intelligent beast.

"What could have been behind this, monstrologist?" Lir Sal asked, seeking the advice of his faithful attendant.

"Well, I don't rightly know Mr. Varnham. It really could be anything, spriggans, pixies, or maybe an alcoholic sorcerer. I just don't have enough information, I'm truly sorry." Rhion replied disappointingly.

"Fear not, I will find us the information we need." Lir Sal pondered, taking in the scene before coming up with a brilliant plan to capture the beast. "We shall set an ambush, we take the stolen good back to the village and when the beast returns we shall ambush him."

"O-oh but Mr. Varnham w-what if it comes and kills us. Y-you heard what happened to those two ladies." Jirou shuttered at the thought.

Lir wrapped his arms firmly around the boy, "Fear not. I have studied the blade for years, taking this beast will prove no challenge for I." Lir Sal boasted triumphantly. "No quickly, we must return to the village before nightfall." At his command the party quickly gathered the offerings and returned to the village with everything that could be salvaged. It wasn't much as most of the offerings appeared to be food and alcohol which had likely been consumed, however a few bottle remained in tact.

That night the party laid the ambush, each at key location in preparation to strike the beast as soon as it entered the village. They stashed the procured offerings in the centre of the village and waited. Some hours passed but when the moon was full a young boy appeared,

couldn't have been older than five or six years of age. He was singing a haunting tune, but was cut off by a horrible cry of something large running through the woods.

Buhle, gentle giant that he is couldn't stand by and watch the boy be injured so he leapt out of hiding, to take the boy away. Jirou, jealous for Buhle's affection leapt out as well, but it was too late. It was a clever ploy. There wasn't one beast but two as the boy suddenly turned it's head a full circle with a snap. The back of his hair parted revealing an empty and vacant face on the back of its head.

Jirou screamed, chaos ensued. Buhle and Jirou began to struggle and fight with this horrible apparition of death. Rhion cowered in his hide spot. Lir Sal prepared for the inevitable battle ahead. Then the beast appeared, leaping over the barricade was a long limb canine like beast, with jaws wide it snarled.

Lir resolved to slay the beast and protect the villagers, ambushed the creature, drawing his sword which shimmered in the moon light like a divine blade of judgment. He plunged the blade forward, but hesitated. A glimmer of sadness behind the beast's eyes, they stood frozen for an endlessly stretching moment. Could there be something there, or was it simply the stench of alcohol that captured their senses. It's impossible to say, but what can be said is that Lir spared the creature that day.

In a large hand the beast scooped up the belongings and rushed back into the woods. As it vanished so did the strange spirit boy, as if it was never their to begin with.

Rhion finally appeared from his hiding place, having changed his pants once again. "Well gosh Mr. Varnham you just let him get away. What happened?"

Lir placed a hand on the ignorant human's shoulder and shook his head. "You see Rhion, I can't kill something that isn't evil. There was sadness in that creature's eyes, it knew fear."

"W-well we can't j-just let it terrorize these p-people can we?" Jirou asked, clinging to Buhle's side like a jealous puppy.

"You're right young Jiji. I, Lir Sal Varnham must vanquish this beast. I shall go and speak with it, perhaps, if there is a god in this world, we can reason with this poor creature." Lir Sal said shedding a single hopeful tear. He sheathed his sword and walked solemnly into the woods, following the beast's path.

The journey was quite and sombre, Lir found the terrible path of destruction quickly dissipated as the beast must have shapeshifted back to it's true form. When Lir Sal finally arrived the creature's camp he found a handsome human man with dashing long hair, wearing tattered clothes, sobbing quietly to himself. The dashing lizardfolk ceased the opportunity to comfort the poor shapeshifter, approaching quietly, he removed his belt allowing his weapons to fall to the forest floor. He placed a hand on the cheek of the ruggedly handsome man. The beast stopped his cries and look at Lir Sal's deep beautiful

eyes and they stayed there for a moment, gazing at each other in a blissful moment of solitude. The world seemed to fall away and there was only the two of them.

Before they knew it they were embracing, lips dancing each other in beautiful ballet. Lir Sal's finely tailored suit fell to the forest floor, it didn't matter if it got dirty. There was only the two of them to care, and neither did. The beast's loincloth quickly followed. The brilliant reptilian exposed himself to the beast, sprawling out across the forest floor.

The beast grew in size, his handsome face twisted and grew into a snarling snout of a wolf, his arms grew longer, hairier with sharp claws stretching from his fingertips. The beast's manhood grew long as well, a deep crimson tint that made Lir Sal's heart flutter. The werewolf's balls grew as well, so plump, needing to be emptied into Lir Sal's waiting flesh. The beast lifted Lir Sal's legs, claws scratching tantalizingly against his sensitive inner thighs.

Lir Sal fumbled, desperately for his clothes, opening the hidden pocket he pulled out his most important emergency provision. A flask of oil, he uncorked it with his mouth, drench his slit and rear in the slick sweet smelling substance.

Wasting no more time the beast pressed against Lir Sal's slit, he humped forward and back rapidly. Slick oil coated his needy shaft, as Lir's own length began to spill forth growing hard. The vicious frothing continued until Lir was moaning uncontrollable, gasping into the wind, not a care who heard. Then the beast pressed his tip to Lir Sal's waiting hole, a firm thrust and it slipped inside. Lir Sal howled in uncontrollable pleasure, he was certain the villagers could hear him even a mile away. It was a thought that only excited him more.

The beast was a most vicious lover, he rutted Lir Sal without a care. His length plunging the elegant reptilian; they made noises neither knew they could create. It was a beautiful thirty seconds.

Then that terrible beast revealed it's true colours. His face distorted into a most unpleasant orgasm face. Cheeks bulging and belly distending, balls growing somehow larger as the rest of his form shrunk. Penis reverting to a tiny prick that one should be embarrassed to even call a phallus.

The beast grinned sheepishly as his form was revealed. A filthy tanuki spirit.

"Just remembering it makes me so mad." Lir slammed his fist down angrily.

Buhle placed a hand on the lizardfolk's back, in an effort to comfort his infuriated companion.

"My apologies Lord Nakai. I got a little upset. Where was I?"

"A tanuki spirit." Rhion muttered.

"Right"

Deep in the forest, shocked at the deception Lir Sal reached for his clothes and sword but found them taken. Apparently the spirit of that little boy was also a shapeshifter, because he saw the little devil floating fifteen feet away, holding his possessions. The devilish creature then revealed it's shape that of a badger like spirit, Lir would later be informed is called a Mujina. They're awful little pranksters who torment people for fun, and this one was having quite the laugh.

Distracted and unarmed Lir Sal fumbled to gather his things and fight back against these con artists, but they proved too ruthless. When he attempted to reach for one, the other would trip him or prod him in the most unkind ways. Eventually after a rather humiliating display, the spirits fled into the woods.

Fortunately his companions, worried for his safety when he did not promptly return, came looking for Lir Sal Varnham and found him. They provided him with companionship in his time of need and spare set of clothes, and the party found they had never been closer then they were now.

Unfortunately, when they returned they found that not only had their wagon and horse been stolen, but so had their coin purses. Which had contain the majority of their funds for their trip. Without it they would not be able to continue and map the Sunder like that had been tasked with. This was a devastating revelation that nearly broke them. However, the remained steadfast in their resolve and with Lir Sal's guidance they were united.

Lir's shoulders quaked as he recalled the shameful memories. Buhle continued to slap his back stoically in a failed effort to comfort him. A few tears rolled down Lir Sal's face, falling gently to the floor.

"Well, let's not waste anymore time. Airi, bring Jirou would you."

Airi and Chie who had until this point been expressionless throughout the evening had begun to blush at least during a small portion of Lir Sal's tale. At Lord Nakai's command they returned to their rigid and practised demeanour. Airi swiftly exited, the door shutting slightly louder then it had on previously and she returned shortly with Jirou, who looked around the room anxiously.

Jirou, seeing that they hadn't been kicked out yet, forced a nervous smile. "Lord Nakai, I apologize for the earlier confusion, I just things have been going well."

"Quite well, your companions are most... interesting company, but I owe you an apology as well. I never properly introduced myself. I am Lord Min-jun Nakai, eldest son of Sung-jin Nakai lord of Minato." Min-jun repeated, bow slightly.

"It's my honour to be in your presence Lord Nakai. My name is Jirou Lau, as you know I am the son of Long Lau of Yoho-ka." Jirou also bowed, much lower than Lord Nakai.

"I must thank you young Lord Lau for your earlier suggestion, individual introductions have been far more palatable. So often in these meetings I see so many faces and hear so many names but know nothing of the people behind them." Lord Nakai said in a rather excited tone.

"We've brought a gift for you Lord Nakai as a sign of our gratitude for this meeting. Fine Chamelotian tea, a favourite of your father Lord Sung-jin." Jirou produced a small wooden box, wrapped in cord. He slid the box forward and bowed.

"I'm most grateful for this gift young Lord Lau. Chie, please prepare this tea." Lord Nakai said, passing the box to the fox attendant, who nodded and opened the small box. The straw lining carefully cushioned several bags of dark powdered tea.

As Chie began to prepare another pot of tea, Lord Nakai continued. "Now if you would be so kind, I've already heard so much about you from your friends but I know little of you perspective. What can you tell me of your time with your companions?"

"It would be my honour, Lord Nakai." Jirou said, clearing his throat in preparation for his tale.

After an unfortunate encounter in Bullmar, we headed to Camlann. It would be my first time in Camlann and I was determined to see as much as I could. By this time, Rhion and Lir had full integrated themselves into Buhle and I's life. The two had even offered us a job helping them explore the Sundering. Buhle was used to the nomadic, mercenary life style, so this offer suited him well. I on the other hand was new to travel and the nomadic life had been a hard adjustment. It's not that I didn't find the idea exciting or interesting, but after well over a month on the road my feet were blistered and sore.

Being in Camlann was a blessing, especially after losing our cart and belongings. Rhion assured us we'd have a place to stay with his grandfather and would be able to secure funds for the rest of our journey. Compensation would take several days however, which I was grateful for. The more time it took, the more time we would have to rest in the city.

Camlann itself is a dense city packed with tall buildings and narrow streets. I found the architecture in Camelot as a whole fascinating having spent my entire life in Tairiku, the stark change was extremely interesting. The city itself is built along the Camlann river, which creates a board between Camlann and the Pendragon Mountains. Castle Camelot and the surround Castletown are built across Camlann River in the Pendragon Mountains. There's a huge bridge that connects Castletown to Camlann called Kings Crossing.

With Rhion's guidance we headed towards the market district, then travelled across Merchant's Way to the Glynn family home, where we were introduced to Rhion's grandfather. Wilton Glynn was a hunchbacked old man, well into his gold years, and well and truly fed up with the

rest of world's bullshit. He appeared displeased by Rhion's arrival. The two spoke privately for quite some time, leaving the rest of us anxiously waiting in the front room. His grandfather owned a fairly large house, having worked as a merchant. A profession that I found to be rather odd, but I learned that merchants are well respected for their work in Camelot.

Eventually we were allowed to stay the night, but Rhion would spend the rest of the time at the tavern down the street. I gathered a tense relationship between the two and felt some regret towards my own familial situation. However, in spite of the unpleasant circumstances of our introduction Wilton Glynn was a cordial host and foul mouthed, but humorous conversationalist.

He told us all about the Camlann, in particular interesting places we should see. One in particular that caught my attention was Guinevere's Spire. It was a local library, the only one in Camlann. Castletown and Castle Camelot apparently had a far more extensive one, but entry wouldn't be possible without coin that we didn't have.

The next morning we decided to split up for the day. Rhion had funds to secure and people to speak with. Meanwhile, Lir Sal similarly had to inform several interested parties on the state of his investigations. Both of which were in an effort to reline our pockets for the weeks ahead. Buhle decided to stay with mister Wilton Glynn and help around the house as best he could.

I decided my time would be best spent trying to find out more about our incident in Bullmar. We had been robbed by what we believed to be a Tanuki and his compatriots. While Rhion and Lir Sal might have been capable of securing more funds, finding our stolen goods would be far more effective. So I decided to head to Guinevere's Spire to do some research into our mysterious assailant.

The spire was fortunately very close to the Glynn home. It was built on the rocky cliffs overlooking the River Camlann, and though it appeared precariously built, it was also quite beautiful. The spire was one of the taller buildings in Camlann with few exceptions, it's conical red rooftop stuck out against the sky like a beacon. I remember feeling excited at the prospect of reading some Camelotian literature and hurried to the front door.

The heavy oak door was beautifully carved, and had a beautiful stained glass depiction of a woman set in the front. When I attempted to open the door I was disappointed to find it securely shut. So I peered through the window, but the colour and frosting of the glass made it impossible to see clearly inside. I could see that there was at least the light of a candle or torch flickering beyond, so I knocked loudly.

I could hear the clicking of locks being opened from inside, shortly after this the door opened revealing a handsome older gentleman. He was a dogfolk, with long fur tied in several small braids down the back of his head

and neck. There was a faint smell of tea on his breath, and he had the gaze of a seasoned and strong willed man. I couldn't help my heart from fluttering as the tall older man looked down on me.

"You whore." Lir smirked.

"You're certainly one to talk." Jirou snapped back.

"I meant that as a compliment." Lir pouted slightly, but when silent again, allowing Jirou to continue.

As I was saying, he looked down on me with strong eyes that made my knees feel weak. His voice was gravelly as he spoke. "Can I help you?"

"Maybe, I was hoping to view some books. This is Guinevere's Spire, correct?" I asked, suddenly nervous that I'd somehow gone to the wrong place.

He looked me up and down, I was, admittedly dishevelled and my clothing was in disarray from the weeks of travel. "You're not a member." He stated as if it were obvious.

"No? I was told the Spire was for the public."

"Aye, but the Spire is closed on the first of each month. Members only. You'll have to come back tomorrow." He spoke plainly.

"I see, how would one become a member?"

"I can think of one way." He said slipping a finger into the waistband of my trousers. I may be paraphrasing this part slightly, but you need not be bored to death hearing our full conversation.

He pulled me inside forcefully, his dominant hands gripping my waist and neck. I knew my way around men like this, and with a sway of my hips allowed him to take the lead. At least, I let him think he was taking the lead. I followed him, tail sway, to the front desk which faced the door. His firm hands pushed me hard against the wood, forcing me to lay down across it.

Though he was older, he was still spry and strong. His hands deftly removed my belt, pulling my pants down in a swift motion. They scattered with a rustle, landing in a pile beside us. He dove at my neck bite hard, I arched my back in response, pressing myself into his heavy chest. I moaned loud, drawing the attention of the build's other inhabitants. My legs wrapped around his round waist.

He moved quickly, ferociously tearing his own clothing free to reveal a heavy sheath and balls. His length rapidly spilled from it's hiding place, and kissed at my rear. My hands danced through his thick fur in response, a need to submit to my clear superior. With not a moment wasted, he thrust into me. His tip gently spreading my hole, I can still remember the heat of his breath on my neck. He began to pant, claws digging into the wooden desk and my hips as he filled me.

The other patrons had all heard our cries of pleasure by this point and had turned to watch or turns to avert their gaze. Neither of us cared how many eyes were on us as we tangled our limbs together, lost in the passion of it all.

Our cries reverberated throughout the cylindrical tower, it's stone walls boomed with our combined voices. It was like we were fucking on a stage.

There was an uncomfortable cough from Min-jun, who snapped open his paper fan in an effort to regain his composure. The lord shifted slightly, revealing something large beneath his draped kimono. The sight earned a prideful smile from Jirou who continued.

The several patrons of the library gathered, leaning over banisters to watch our performance. The elder wolf growled into my ear, hips slamming into mine with growing force. I could barely handle his assault on my body, and neither could the desk, which creaked under the strain.

Without warning, he released my neck from his jaws and pulled away from me. I felt a wild emptiness in me as his length pulled itself free. Desperate for me, I shot up, ready to protest, but he swiftly pinned me down with a large hand. His other gripped his thick shaft and began stroking furiously.

In a few moments he showered me with his seed. Thick white ropes shot forward coating my face, and tunic. I squirmed under his forceful grip, relishing the feeling of being marked. He trembled, hands shaking and cock spamming from the intensity of his climax.

I could here the murmur of several other patrons. Their eyes bore into us, only adding to the heat and pleasure of it all. I was panting, writhing with need but too shaken to move. My partner was felt no such exhaustion. He gripped my legs, spurred forward by the gaze of the patrons. He bent me over, nearly folding me in half. My knees touched my ears, exposing my round butt to the ceiling.

I can still remember the feel of his tongue as it dove into my hole. The heat of his breath on my taint made me howl. That tongue danced across my sensitive and beaten entrance, sending sparks of pleasure through my body. I couldn't help but claw at the desk, leaving deep scratches in the pristine wooden surface. He drilled deeper into me, precum oozing from my trembling length.

He pulled away, trailing one final lick between my cheeks and up my taint, before flicking my balls teasingly. I went limp, panting and gasping. I couldn't help but whimper at the loss of his expert tongue. His hands caressed my body tenderly, trailing up and down my legs. I was given a few moments to breath, but my body continued to tremble.

He wasn't done yet, and didn't intend to let me bask in the afterglow of his ministrations for long. Gripping my tunic and waist he pulled me from the desk. The cold stone floor greeted the back of my neck and shoulders, making me shiver.

He leaned over me, grip tightening around my ankles as he hoisted my lower body up. I could feel his immense girth draped over my balls, dwarfing my own. He was far

from done, his wide hips rocked back and forth along my taint. I whimpered from the teasing. He smirked down at me, before dragging a hand across my face, smearing his previous load into my fur. Then he stroked his length, the excess cum glazing his meat. I watched in anticipation as he pressed the tip to my battered and saliva slicked rear. My back arched as he pressed in, his length quickly spreading me again.

He eased in slowly at first, growling in pleasure as my walls enveloped him again. The gentle entrance didn't last long as he began to thrust relentlessly into me again. I saw stars as he knot eagerly kissed my tender entrance with each unabated thrust.

He ground his teeth above me, saliva dripping from his snarling mouth. His round, hairy belly pressed against my shuttering length, pressing into it with each thrust. I could hold back, crying out to the gods above. My length shivered spray me with my own seed. Sweet white ropes coated my face, and chest, while others filled my open, moaning mouth.

The old librarian fucked me ruthlessly, I was still seeing stars, writhing in the afterglow of my own intense orgasm. My mind was fuzzy and I don't remember how long he continued to breed me.

When I was finally beginning to come down from the high of it all, he began to speed up. His thrusts were erratic, and bestial, his only thought was to fill my hole. His knot pressed dangerously against my rear, spreading me more and more with each push. He wanted inside, and no matter how my body protested I wanted it to.

In a final mighty thrust he pressed into me, I resisted for a moment crying out before relinquishing. His powerful hands picked me up, fully impaling me on his length. That snarling, fanged mouth dove at my shoulder and neck, biting powerfully. I couldn't help but cry out in blissful agony as those fang sunk deep. It was primal feeling. His knot swelled locking us together, while his teeth dug into my flesh. Warm dogfolk seed filled me.

I trembled, hips shuttered, my length, still hidden in my sheath trembled as I rubbed against his belly. My eyes rolled back, and I cried out for the entire building to hear. Something pressed deep into the back of my mind, cum spilled out of my limp sheath. I couldn't resist it.

We stood frozen for a long moment, each lost in the blissful glow of our orgasms. Coated in seed, we panted heavily before collapsing. He didn't relinquish my neck, instead continuing to bite and kiss it viciously. I wrapped my arms around his body, my chest heaving as I took shaking breaths.

Silence took the tower, the patrons of the library began to return to their previous activities. We stayed quiet in a tangled embrace for many long minutes. I could feel his warm seed locked inside me, and felt a strange sense of calm. He continued to hold me possessively, teeth buried in my shoulder, saliva soaking into my fur. I didn't mind at all.

Eventually I could feel his length beginning to release it's hold, we pulled free of one another, copious amounts of dogfolk seed spilled from my rear, dripping down my legs and taint. We were both a mess, I in particular was drenched and exhausted. I attempted to stand, but my legs shuttered at the very thought and I collapsed. The cool stone floor send a delightful tingle of please through my beaten rear.

He stood, wiping his face with the back of his arm. Stepping behind the desk he produced a large pipe. He flopped back into a chair, and began to stuff the pipe with dried herbs. I could hear the sound of an incantation, followed by the pungent scent of smoke as the dogfolk librarian inhaled and exhaled deeply.

"I must regrettably refuse your membership application." He started, I was too exhausted to protest or interrupt. "However, your payment was more than sufficient to peruse the library, at least once you clean up this mess." He snapped his fingers.

I crawled around the desk, kneeling between his legs. His length had mostly receded into his sheath, but his seed and saliva still coated it's tip and his pelvis. I was still buzzing in my afterglow and wasn't about to resist the command of such a dominant male.

Without hesitation I pulled the oozing length into my mouth and sucked it clean. He tasted of sweat and bitter seed, which made me tremble in delight. I felt a heavy hand on the back of my head, as he stroked my messy hair affectionately. The encouragement went a long way, as I began to lick his crotch clean. I was thorough in my worship of this man, who's name I still hadn't received. The thought crossed my mind, but only made me more excited by the experience.

I continued to clean him in excess, until he finished smoking. He placed a forceful hand beneath my chin, and lifted me upwards. I followed instinctively, guided by his powerful presence. He then pulled me in, kissing me roughly. His breath tasted ashy and his tongue filled my mouth roughly. I'm certain he could taste himself on my breath. We eventually separated, I could feel my cheek grow hot again as I stared at the bottomless alpha.

"Thank you." I said instinctively, which earned a toothy smirk from the librarian.

"You're welcome, don't forget to clean yourself up." He dragged a finger through my cum soaked fur, then shoved it into my mouth. I closed my eyes and suck it clean. He repeated the process several times, before simply smearing the rest into my fur, leaving it matted and dishevelled. "There's a wash basin around the back." He chuckled and guided me outside. Fortunately it was mostly out of sight.

With trembling hands I washed myself. The water in the basin was cold, which helped clear my head of the lingering high of the intense afterglow.

Buhle pulled at Jirou's collar, leaning in to whisper, "What happened to believable and honest?"

"He was enjoying it. I was only embellishing a little." Jirou whispered back.

"Only a little?" Buhle's words had a bite to them, a little jealousy creeping through.

Before they could continue their hushed conversation, Min-jun's voice cut through. It was trembling, seemingly shaken by the story. "And what happened next Jirou?"

Chie coughed quietly.

"Ah, your Lord Lau. My apologies. What happened next?"

After I had finished cleaning myself, I reentered the spire. Unfortunately they didn't have the necessary materials for me to properly clean my clothing, as such I was given a spare robe. It was slightly too large and slipped from my shoulders frequently. The exposure didn't bother me however, it was nothing the other patrons hadn't already seen.

I returned to the front desk, which was currently being cleaned and reorganized by another member of the library staff. Meanwhile, the elderly wolf watched from a comfortable chair, smoking another pipe. I approached him, shyly straightening the my robes.

"Thank you for allowing me to see the library early. I never properly introduced myself. I'm Jirou." I said, extending a nervous hand, while the other held the soft robes up.

"Lyall." He said gruffly while exhaling smoke. "It was my pleasure." He stretched out a hand, slipping it between the loose robes to caress my side. His hand fell away quickly when it became clear that, though the mind was willing, our bodies were thoroughly exhausted. "Well, the Spire is open to you. I don't know what you were so desperate to learn about, but I hope you find it."

I chuckled and stepped behind the chair. Gently, I draped my arms around his shoulders, allowing my hands to rub his heavy chest. My muzzle brushed against his ear, "Thank you, it's a very large library however. It could take me many days to find what I'm looking for." I whispered.

"Then I suppose it's fortunate that the Spire will be open for a few more days." He smirked.

"That is most fortunate, and will you be working these next few days? I may need additional assistance."

"I will be." He pressed a heavy hand on the top of my head, ruffling my hair awkwardly. "Now leave this old man in peace to smoke. You have things to do, and I'm not as spry as I used to be." He said through a toothy smile before taking another long drag from his pipe.

"Could've fooled me." I chuckled, giving his chest a final rub. As I pulled away, I placed a small kiss on his cheek. "Thank you again, Lyall."

Now that I was entirely exhausted, I was finally given the chance to take in Guinevere's Spire properly. The tower was roughly four floors tall, all connected by

staircases that spiralled along the outer wall. All of the upper floors were lined with bookshelves, each filled with various documents, all meticulously organized by genre and content. The first floor had a small collection of books, as well as desks for seating. Behind the main librarian's desk there was a special row of books, all bound in chains. Though I was curious about the contents of these particular tomes, they weren't my focus for the day. Finally, each floor had a large tome on a pedestal, these tomes contained a catalogue of all the books that could be found on that floor.

Though the scale of the library wasn't nearly as great as some, it was well curated and perfectly organized. It took less than an hour for me to find several books related to demonic spirits. I spent the next several days reading through these books, and though a few mentioned tanuki spirits in passing, they didn't contain any information on tracking them. The time wasn't an entire waste however, as Lyall continued to prove to be wonderful company. He told me several stories of his days as an adventurer, exploring Camelot, which only increased my excitement to continue our travels.

Jirou finished his story there, bowing his head slightly. "I hope this was satisfactory to you my Lord." He said with a devilish grin.

"Quite." Min-jun coughed. "I have deeply enjoyed these introductions, and I feel I understand each of you quite well. That is, except for you Buhle. You spoke mostly of young Lord Lau here, but not of your other companions. Perhaps you could elaborate on your relationships with them."

Lir Sal and Rhion turned, cocking their heads in curiosity. Both seemed unsure of Buhle's feelings, a reaction that caused the orc to roll his eyes. "Alright, uh... let me think about it." He frowned and looked between Rhion and Lir for inspiration.

We had all been travelling together for a while by this point. Lir had hired Jirou and I to work as their body guards while they were travelling. At least that's how it started, after the money ran dry things just stuck out of necessity or maybe spite. I really couldn't tell you.

Rhion and Lir came to me asking a bunch of questions about Buru Ibu, and Watakida. Apparently they thought it would help them with their investigation of the Sundering. It was all a bunch of shit I didn't know much about. It was honestly a real pain, but at some point my fool mouth said there were some old Ihubo that might be able to help. I don't know why I mentioned it, because immediately they wanted to head to Buru Ibu and have me guide them everywhere.

They still owed me a good amount of money for my services already, so I agreed hoping I'd get paid. Jirou wanted to go too, but I hadn't really spent much time there since I left. It wasn't really home anymore, and I didn't

really want to go. But they insisted that it was the only way for them to go forward, and if they didn't map the Sundering they wouldn't get their money back, and without that I couldn't be paid. It was a real pain in the ass, but the logic checked out at the time.

We left Camlann in a hurry, after Rhion and Lir Sal had borrowed enough money to continue our trip. The chains of debts was giving me doubts about continuing, but they'd been company, and we were all equally fucked so why not be fucked together. The trip took over half a moon to reach Harbourn town.

A few things happened during the trip, got attacked by a troll and some goblins while passing by Evermoor. That was a good fight, little blighters put up a fighter, troll especially. Once the troll went down those goblins ran off. Oh, right I fucked the troll too, real rough like to teach him a lesson. He was a good lay, better than Jirou or Lir.

Jirou placed a hand on his face, sighing. The quiet mumbling only briefly interrupting Buhle's monologue. Lir was so aghast by the comment he couldn't speak.

I was a bit of a mess after that. Rhion started writing in his diary about the troll, and eventually pulled himself away from it long enough to use some healing magic on me.

We travelled for a while longer before reaching Tintagel, which was around eight days travel away from Harbourn town. It was this pretty big fortress city, near the coast. There aren't a lot of ways to cross to the western coasts apparently. Tintagel is sort of the main way through. It's got a lot of security, which is a real pain in the ass. You could walk around it and avoid it, but there's a lot of miasma and demons in the area, so it's stupid to stray far. The city was built with a lot of purposes, it's a pretty major fortification against invasion; it's also built to protect Merlin's Cave.

This was all important because when we got there the whole damn town was having a fit. Apparently some nasty sea beast had swam up into the cave and had tried to collapse the damned thing. So of course this had prompted attacks from the local demons while the guards were busy trying to deal with the situation at the cave. Like I'd said, Tintagel is a fortress designed to fight these sorts of attacks off, so they were alright for the most part. The real issue were all the civilians who'd gone on acting like it was the second coming of the 100 Years War.

The guards were all pissy about us coming in, questioned us a long time about our purpose here. Lir went running his fool mouth about investigating the Sundering which got the guards real suspicious. Eventually Lir was able to smooth things over again, and explain what we were doing here. By smooth things over, I mean the bastard managed to nick one of the guard's coin purses the bribed him with his own coin. We all had a real laugh about it later on.

We were going to just stay for a night or two to rest before moving on. That changed when Rhion heard about the creature and demon attacks. "We should spend some time here, this could be an invaluable opportunity for my research." He was very insistent.

Lir was exhausted and had been complaining about his feet for nearly a week prior, so he was immediately on board with this plan. Jirou was, as usual, always eager to laze about in town. This left me, to insist the group move on, but I wasn't eager to get back to Buru Ibu. With all of us unanimously wanting to remain in Tintagel we went to find a place to sleep.

We stayed at a place called the Wild Curmudgeon. It was a hole in the wall place, with a bleak reputation, but it was cheap and they didn't ask questions. We tried to ask the owner for some information about the town, but they weren't very receptive. They were a middle aged satyr, kinda pudgy, with horse legs.

"Hung like a horse too." Lir chipped in, to which, Buhle rolled his eyes.

Anyways, his name was Ablie, but he was tight lipped about almost everything else. Fortunately, Lir was feeling persuasive and started talking up the owner. Didn't take 'em long before he was flirting, lot of less than subtle innuendo. Fortunately before they started losing their clothes, the owner gave the rest of us a drink. Sour stuff, that was barely palatable, but it took the edge off and made the rest show more enjoyable.

I watched Lir Sal shamelessly strip himself down, slowly removing his trousers. Then he just drapes himself across the bar right between Rhion and I. Ass sticking out like a cheap wench. I decided to assist by holding up his heavy tail, and got a real good look at his curves. It was a nice ass, round but with some muscle from the recent travelling.

That satyr didn't waste much time before grabbing an urn of grease. He poured that ooze down Lir's ass and taint. The owner seemed enticed as well, because he shoves his face between Lir's cheeks immediately after dumping the urn. Two of them started moaning and growling.

I drank slowly and watch while Rhion shamelessly took notes. Jirou was watching from the side too, but I could see him getting frisky too.

Lir started moaning, until the satyr sneaked in a heavy spank on his ass. The crack echoed through the room and Lir cried out excitedly. That got the satyr going more, so he started spanking Lir repeatedly between devouring his ass. The two of them go pretty caught up in the moment and I was happy to watch it all go down.

It was all a real depraved event; depravity like that draws foxes in like flies with honey. Jirou crept under the table and started fondling my crotch. I could feel his lithe hands kneading at the fabric, his nose burrowing it's way

between my legs. It didn't take him long to starting biting at my sweaty trouser strings. He was an expert and started pulling at them... but I stopped him... I wasn't about to let him pay off his debt just yet.

The goofball pouted, before moving over to Rhion, who was unusually receptive to the advances. The rest gets a little hazy, but at some point Lir turned up the charms and had Albie on his back, dick in the air. Lir was riding him, howling without a care in the world. That satyr was bucking like a wild horse.

He didn't last long with Lir on him. I could tell from how our lizardfolk friend started squirming that the owner was cumming buckets. Seriously flooding his insides with hot cum.

Meanwhile, Rhion was getting close himself, not surprise with Jirou's skills being put to work. Jirou steadily worked Rhion's length, rolling his balls with his hand. I knew from experience all the things Jirou's tongue was certainly doing. I have to admit I was pretty envious of him as that slender fox worked his own magic.

Rhion grunted, gripping Jirou's head as he came, filling the fox's mouth. At the same time, Lir groaned, slamming himself down one last time onto the satyr's length and came. He sent thick white ropes of seed across the owner's chest.

It took a while for them all to come down from their afterglow, but the experience loosened Albie's lips in the end. We took some time to chat up the satyr and found out that while the guards were busying themselves with the outside threats, unrest was causing internal problems. Small riots, looting and petty crimes were on the rise, which meant more mercenary jobs.

Rhion seemed pretty interested in what the satyr knew about Merlin's Cave. Apparently the cave had crystalline growths that had formed around a large moon fragment. That was news to me, and Rhion was fascinated. He made a lot of notes, and seemed to be putting together some sorta theory or another. With this news, Rhion wanted to speak with the guards and investigate the cave.

The rest of our time in Tintagel was spent doing mercenary work, mostly helping protect Albie deal with looters and thugs. He'd earned some bad favour from a local gang. While the guards were busy with the demons outside, Albie was left to fend for themselves. We stepped up and were able to deal with them at least until the guards could subdue the panic in the city.

In the end, the guards refused to speak, or allow us entrance into the cave. Even, less reputable efforts were futile. The increased crime made staying in the fortress risky, so we moved on with little else to show for it. I guess, I was impressed by Rhion and Lir's tenacity even if it didn't amount to much at the time.

Lir and Rhion looked to Buhle, their expressions a mixture of offended and flattered.

Min-jun seemed content and intrigued by the story. He pursed his lips in contemplation. After a moment he snapped his fan open and with commanding voice stated proudly, "I believe I have gained an understanding of you all, and I'd like to learn more if you all will humour me for a little longer."

"We'd be honoured Lord Nakai." Jirou said with a smile.

"Thank you for speaking with us at such length Lord Nakai. We're all very grateful you would dedicate so much time to our endeavours." Rhion chimed in with a bright smile and a bow.

"That settles it then." Min-jun said, raising his cup he drank heartily before setting it down with a gentle clink. "What is it that you all are seeking from me?"

The party look to one another, silently selecting a speaker. The task eventually fell to Jirou. "We have been tasked with mapping the Sundering. As you know the seas are near impassible, but if we were able to map the area it may all trade ships to travel safely. This would be deeply beneficial in strengthening the bonds between Tairiku and Camelot. We need ships capable of safely traversing the dangers of the Sundering, and your ships are the best in Tairiku."

Min-jun contemplated this for some time. "So you would have me risk one of my ships to strangers. Other trade routes would hinder my business not help it." Lord Nakai mused.

"This is a possibility, that's true, but only if these routes were made public. We would be willing to offer you some exclusivity and priority with the information we discover." Jirou countered.

Min-jun smiled. "That is a more intriguing offer, but why should I not hire someone else to do this job for me. You've already been paid to map the Sundering, this limits my exclusivity. Your client's interests may not align with my own."

That was the truth, and Lir Sal couldn't expose his client without repercussions. "While I can't reveal our client freely or open discussion with them, I am certain that they intentions with this information will not interfere with your businesses."

"Assuming I was to believe that, what about your qualifications. I have enjoyed our company, and engaging with you but each of you has shown problematic qualities that make it difficult for me to commit my ships to your care." Min-jun stated harshly. "For instance, it's clear to me that Mister Varnham has clear delusions of grandeur, and troubling low self-esteem brought on by an emotionally crippling childhood."

The room went quiet for a moment, the rest of the party looked towards Lir who was frozen like a frightened deer. "How would you know that?" Rhion asked, cutting through the silence.

"It's a simple matter of deduction, you've all told me much about yourselves and your companions. Mister

Varnham's tale was grand, presenting himself as the hero, hence the delusions of grandeur. However, he also was the only person to tell his tale in the third person, an odd but telling choice. It seems to me he desires to be a grand hero, but harbours deep self doubt and inability to connect with his desired image. This amount of self doubt was probably brought about by a troubling event or period of time. A persons most formative years, the ones that have the most impact on a person, is their childhood. So childhood is the most likely time for such a trait to develop. I apologize if I got any of this wrong." Min-jun explained in a cold and detached tone.

Lir stayed quiet, the rest of his party's eyes locked on him, but not in the way he once desired. They were looks of surprise, concern, and worst of all pity. After a moment of contemplation, he took a breath to compose himself. "Perhaps you're correct, Lord Nakai." Lir said stated.

Lir Sal lived a cliched childhood, he... I was born in the lower district of Camlann during a harsh Frost. my family was poor; my mother was a fortune teller named Adannaya who had immigrated from Pere. My father was a drunk. I learned to speak, and dance from my mother.

I remember going to the harvest festival when I was young. My mother brought me with her while my father was working. We spent the day together in a small, drab tent, where I watched my mother tell the fortunes of knights, and nobles with too much coin. She told stories about their successes, elaborate tales of heroes slaying beasts, rescuing damsels and finding romance. I was enthralled by their lives and futures.

Late in the afternoon, a man came to the tent. He had a heavy cloak, that was tattered from use but was made of refined, expensive materials. My mother welcomed him in gracefully, "Welcome, I am Madam Adannaya."

"Hello." His voice was like gravel. "I want to know my future." He placed five silver pieces on the table using a crooked hand. He had a ring on, I only saw it briefly but it left a strange impression on me. Gold bands twisted together with cut crystals.

"Please take a seat, I shall consult with the spirits, and answer all of your questions." She told him, as she had her other clients. My mother grabbed a worn silk bag, which rattled ominously. She pulled the draw strings open, spilling the contents across the goatskin table cover. There were a dozen bones from various creatures.

"I want to know what I should do with my coin." The man said. "Tell me how to improve my life." He was vary insistent, almost desperate.

"I shall do what I can. The spirits and bones will reveal the paths open to you, but know the choice is in your hands." She said, waving to me. I got up and brought a lit candle to her. My mother used it to light several smaller candles on her table, before handing it back to me. I retreated to my corner of the tent, remaining quiet as I watched her.

My mother gathered the bones into a clay jar. She began to shake the bones vigorously, the rattling sent a chill through the tent. The candles flickered dangerously, and she scattered the bones across a circular impression on the goatskin.

She began her reading, using chalk to connect the bones, forming intricate connections across the goatskin. I've long since forgotten how her divination functioned, but she was using a combination of Perian bone reading, Buru Iban stone reading and Hondonian magic theory.

When she finished producing the elaborate magic circle, the reading began. She told him of grand and lucrative investments, and dangerous pitfalls. He listened intently, asking further questions, which she answered in deep detail.

The rest of the evening continued in a similar fashion, various individuals came to speak with my mother. Eventually when the moons rose we started to pack away the contents of the tent. Mother started to roll up the goatskin cover when I asked. "Can you read my fortune, mother?"

She was quiet for a moment, but unfurled the cover. "Of course, Lir. What is it you would like to ask?"

"What will I be when I grow old?" I asked her excitedly.

"Let us ask the spirits, Lir." She said softly, handing me the bones. Mother lit the candles, and gestured to me. I hurried over and sat next to her.

She handed me a clay pot and the bag of bones. "Place the bones in the pot." She instructed, and I obeyed, carefully placing the old bones into the pot. "Shake the bones until you see the candles flicker, while thinking hard about your future. Then pour the bones on the goatskin, above the circle." Again I obeyed, I thought hard of my future, but it was hard to focus while also watching for the flicker of the candle flames. Eventually I spotted the sharp waver of fire that signalled the appropriate time. I poured the bones across the table. They clattered, scattering across the circle in a wide arrangement.

"Well done, my little serpent." She said, I felt a swell of pride. "Let's take a look." She leaned forward and began to draw circles around the bones, lines connecting them. Then she removed any bones that fell outside of the major circle.

"You have a very bright future ahead of you Lir Sal. I see a wonderful hero, with close friends." She said gently. "I can see many trials for you, that you will overcome and be stronger for it. You will save many lives, and live in a great estate. The name Lir Sal will be known by many, and your achievements will shape the world."

"Really?" I asked, I felt so happy listening to her.

"Just remember my little serpent, this is just one possibility. You choose how to live your life, the future is not set in stone." My mother warned me. "Stay stronger, don't lose heart." Those are the last words I remember her

telling me. We finished cleaning up the tent and returned home.

I don't remember much else of my mother, she disappeared one day and my father never spoke of it to me. I remember for the next year he beat me daily and drank, I don't remember much else from that time. After that, my father couldn't stand the sight of me any longer and threw himself into the river Camlann. His body was found three days later.

I had no one else in my life and spent the next years on the streets. The frosts were harsh and I barely survived several years.

When I was eleven I got hungry, really hungry. Hungrier than I'd ever been, I felt my stomach was going to devour itself. Some of the other street kids worked together to survive. There was one kid named Eoin, he was a little younger than me. We worked together when we couldn't steal enough food on our own. One of us would run a distraction, while the other snagged food from a stall.

I was running a distraction while Eoin stole some bread from the local bakery. We were supposed to meet in an alley off of Wharf Lane. It was our usual meeting ground, but today he didn't meet me. I waited for a long time, at least it felt like a long time, but I was so hungry every second felt like a minute.

I went looking for him, checking his usual spots, when I found him he was eating a bread roll. I was angry, and jumped him. We started fighting and I tried to take the roll from him. He punched me, and I kicked him back. He pushed me and I fell, my head hit a rock. I didn't realize I was bleeding until later, but I still have the scar.

When I got up, he started to run. I chased after him, he slowed down at the end of the street, which gave me time to catch up. My shoulder slammed into him, and he was shoved into the connecting street. At the time, a horse and wagon came around the corner. The horse startled and kicked.

He didn't survive, there was so much blood. I'd like to say it was an accident, that I didn't mean it, but if that horse hadn't done it, I probably would have myself. I was so desperate. I couldn't think of anything else, at least until I saw his body. That was when I knew my mother had lied, I couldn't be the hero she had seen... Since then I've spent my life trying to spread the lie that Lir Sal Varnham was a hero, not a vagabond and street rat.

The room was quiet for a few long moments. Rhion was the first to end the silence. "Well, that's just utterly untrue. You may not be perfect, but you saved me from those kobolds without any concern for your own well being. Had you not stepped in, who knows what they may have done to me."

"Rhion's right, you don't decide if you're a hero, that's for the people you impact to decide." Buhle said gruffly with a toothy frown.

"If it wasn't for you we wouldn't have gotten into Tintagel. Without us there Albie might have been hurt or worse in all of the chaos." Jirou said encouragingly.

Lir remained quiet for an uncomfortable moment. "Well, it's all in the past, there's nothing that can be done about it now."

"Very right, it may have affected you but that doesn't change the fact that you are a capable individual with a good heart." Rhion said firmly.

"Thank you, I'm embarrassed for you all to see me in such a state." Lir said wiping the corner of his eyes.

"Thank you all."

"It seems your companions are quite confident in your character." Min-jun said with a flick of his fan. "I find that encouraging. A person's past may impact them, but mistakes of the past don't define your future. However, I still retain concerns about the rest of you as well."

"So you intend to dredge up bad memories for all of us?" Rhion questioned aggressively.

"That was not my intention, but I must be thorough. As the acting Lord of Minato it is my responsibility to learn who can and cannot be trusted." Min-jun replied.

"If you have any concerns for me, I will gladly hear them Lord Nakai." Jirou volunteered in an effort to deflect from Rhion's irritation.

"I do, young Lord." Min-jun replied. "It seems to me that you are not committed to your investigations of the Sundering. Your lack of commitment to the task at hand appears problematic to me."

"I don't understand." Jirou said, tilting his head perplexed. His fox ears twitched nervously.

"It appears your only attachment to this group is seeking mister Buhle's approval, and you have no commitment or desire to map the Sundering." Min-jun explained. "With all due respect, Mr. Buhle is currently in a poor state, should he retire I don't see you continuing to travel with mister Glynn and mister Varnham. Would you prioritize your debts to Mr. Buhle over the success of this venture?"

This wasn't necessarily untrue, Jirou's main connection was Buhle, the Sundering didn't interest him much. Would he really just abandon Rhion and Lir Sal without Buhle? He honestly didn't know. He couldn't abandon Buhle, nothing could make him do that. "I'm full committed to this journey, Lord Nakai. I owe Buhle a great deal, but that doesn't mean I would abandoned Rhion or Lir Sal." Jirou eventually retorted, but it was partly an effort to convince himself.

"And what does this journey mean for you?" Min-jun pressed.

"I..." Jirou locked up as he thought hard about his time with his companions. He was happy seeing the world, being with Buhle, Rhion and Lir. "I enjoy the adventure. Seeing the world is enough for me."

"I got no intentions of retiring anytime soon, bum leg or not." Buhle spat through gritted teeth. "B'sides, his debt was paid, in full."

"I see, if that's the case I suppose you don't mind elaborating." Min-jun said insistently.

Jirou hesitated, which left an uncomfortable moment of silence.