

The wooden walls of a well-kept inn room flutters with the soft light of a bedside lantern. The dimly lit lodging is pleasantly warm, despite the cool, mountain winds blowing outside the window. Two figures speak intimately, in the comfortable duskiness.

“You don’t actually plan to fight those bandits do you, Aldis?” Enna inquires, her ass sitting firmly on the relatively small wooden bed. The flesh of her huge brown cheeks overshooting the downy mattress’s bounds by a considerable margin, excess squishing firmly against the frames’ sides.

The length of her curvaceous, toned legs, each as long as a human man, find themselves stretching languidly into the lap of her lover, Aldis. The man sits back in an armchair at the foot of the bed, idly massaging his mount of a wife’s bare feet as he continues the conversation.

“If it’s even actually bandits.” A slight pause, as he dug his thumb into the arch of a lithe, elven foot, eliciting a small moan, “Mr. Innkeeper didn’t sound so sure.”

“You think he’s lying?” A lift, and cross of the legs to reorient.

“I think he’s wrong, at most.” Aldis corrects, his fingers not missing a beat as their target of foot changes. “If it was just bandits you’d think the local militia would have done something. Ascain isn’t so peaceful by happenstance.”

“Hmm... Do you think they have little farmer boys patrolling every mountain pass?” Enna chuckles, laying back into the wall, a pillow propped comfortably behind her flowing, white cascade of hair. Seeing the woman’s legs stretch out as they were, glowing in the low, lantern light, really drew the eye toward the comparative daintiness of her disproportional upper body. Each thigh, sturdy and powerful, easily dwarfing her entire torso. “If war is really breaking out in the south, the cantons have probably called all of the actually experienced militiamen closer to the border.”

“You may be right...” Aldis groans, running an idle hand up and down one of the large calves weighing him down. “We’re not familiar with the local politics, not nowadays at least... Who knows what’s going on.”

“If it’s just a small band of thugs, it’s no issue.” Muscular legs bulging for emphasis “But even I’m wary at the thought of some rogue mercenaries, or anyone else with actual experience.”

“I can’t disagree with you there.” Aldis sighs, “We’ve all handled worse before, but I’d rather not force Niles into a situation like that, yet.”

“You sounded like you were ready to turn the little man into a killer downstairs,” Enna smirks, running the sole of a foot along Aldis’s cheek, “Your usual play at confidence?”

A small, almost tired smile answered back, letting the woman’s toes tousle idly in his messy hair, “I’m not planning to talk the boy down. I remember when I set out from home with stars in my eyes too.”

“As far as I can see, those tired eyes are still plenty filled with stars.” Enna laughs, sighing back into her wall-pillow.

A moment of comfortable silence fills the room. A natural stopping point in the couple’s conversation

makes way to the simple, relaxed air of each other's physical company. Days of nonstop travel rewarded, as usual, with a night of simple comfort.

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The next day, and the sun hangs high in the sky. Already well on their way into the mountains, the group had finished preparing in the chill of the Ascaian morning. Small packs hung from Enna's hips, ever the party's trusty beast of burden, while the rest of the party traveled relatively weightlessly.

"I have to admit, we've never run into much banditry in the Ascaian passes..." Enna ponders aloud, the party having well left the warmth and comfort of the roadside inn, the valley already shrinking behind them as they climb into the rolling hills.

"According to the Innkeep, it's deserters. This current bunch anyway." Aldis answers, unsure himself. "Don't know if it's the climate, or something else about Ascaian, but even years back we never had a violent run-in with anyone. Wasn't any wars going on though."

"Deserters may be a bit less open to talking, Aldis..." Enna sighs. The traveled woman instinctively taking note of the road's increasingly unsure footing, and inconsistent width. She was a naturally sure-footed woman, like most Sasavi. Carrying goods and people atop her hips demanded a higher level of situational awareness than most others.

"I'm not planning to come to blows, either way." the man states confidently, as the party makes their way up the winding road. "Bandits are cowards more often than not. A little push from Enna or Sula, or one of Nat's barrages," a dramatic wiggle of his fingers emulating his meaning, "and they'll listen to whatever we have to say."

"You're always so confident..." Nat sighs, "While I'm well glad to educate strangers on the delightful dangers of magic, I'm not really sure how I feel about you referring to me as if I were some manner of ballistae..."

Natalia was currently the only member of the party not walking on her own feet. Her long legs hanging loosely over the side of Enna's wide hip, the busty mage looking comparatively tiny sitting atop the Sasavi woman sidesaddle. They had all easily agreed that allowing her to ride the party's elf was a good plan, ensuring the mage's stamina and safety would be paramount, if a fight did end up breaking out.

"I've never met a woman I'd more confidently refer to as a 'Ballistae' if I'm being honest." Aldis looks back at the mage over his shoulder, flush still evident on her face as she sits lazily atop Enna's massive ass, "Anyway, one collection of immolated eyebrows later, and most down-on-their-luck highwaymen tend to happily move on with their lives."

The party continues further into the mountains, a growing chill in the wind as they lose sight of the valley below amongst the gray, rocky crags. A cold fog rolls in, down from the still frigid peaks. The light clattering of metal fills the sudden, windless quiet. While it wasn't much, the party was more openly armed than they'd usually bother to be. Their heavy steps feeling louder than they really were in the pass's conspicuous silence.

Niles mind wanders with his eyes, the boy remaining silent most of the trip, as he walks wedged firmly in between the three veteran travelers he found himself with. He considered if they were enclosing him on purpose for his own safety, and looking around at them, he could feel he understood why.

Aldis, now wearing a light layer of chainmail under his already well-padded gambeson, was fitted to be somewhat light on his feet. His “lovely steed” looks much the same, the large elf still carrying the unarmored and unbothered Natalia.

Enna’s torso is attired similarly to Aldis, padded Highwool filling her poofy sleeves, and a thin layer of metal quietly jangled down over her nearly exposed crotch. The rest of her lower body, meanwhile, was completely bare. Save for her recently acquired leather longboots, ones missing the actual “shoe” part of the boot, curiously enough.

A long, southern blade adorned both lovers’ hips, hanging loosely in their sheathes. Sasavi blades, long and curved, undoubtedly much like the voluptuous smith that crafted them.

Sula obviously felt no need to wear anything protective. Her usual battle attire was the same as her casual affair, an intricately weaved two-piece set of unusual leather and fabric trying its best to cover the bulging mass of her important bits. Every inch of her perfectly toned muscularity on display, ruddy skin etched with intricate blue markings that glimmered slightly in the daylight sun.

A large polearm rests over Sula broad shoulder. An odd mix of Northern steel, a complex head made for both stabbing and chopping, and adornments from her own Far-Southern homeland. Markings most Drasidians had never seen and small bits of beautifully carved jewelry that drew the eyes. An intentional meld of distraction and minor ceremony.

Niles eyes continue to dart between the party, soaking in them in, before glancing down at himself. An unassuming tunic draped over his torso, covered only by a small, padded vest. His father’s old sword, chipped, weathered, and much too large for his build, hung from his waist. Comparing himself to the others he suddenly felt woefully unequipped.

Before he could ponder such for long, Sula raises her arm, drawing the party to a stop

“The air’s cold. Far too cold.” She states plainly, beckoning Aldis a step further.

Aldis follows the warrior woman’s lead, meeting her place on the path he quickly felt the air freeze against his chest. “You’re right, that IS cold...” He exhaled calmly, breath suddenly visible. “Too cold for this time of year at the least.”

“How high up are we?” Niles asks, wondering briefly if he had been that lost in his own thoughts. “Feels like we’re up in the clouds with all this fog...”

“We’ve walked a fair bit but we shouldn’t be particularly high, compared to the valley.” Enna answers, the fat of her ass and thighs wobbling as she shivered slightly, the cold wind seeming to actively creep down along the path, enveloping the party.

Natalia hops down from her shivering seat quickly, humming to herself as she closes her eyes in concentration. Following whispered words and motions of her hand, a light glow emits from her palms as some manner of pulse follows, tingling briefly at the edge of perception.

“There’s definitely some manner of magic at play here...” Natalia finally answers, the others’ attention firmly locked on her. She shudders briefly before continuing. “It may appear as an unusual mountain chill, but it’s... wrong. The air’s mana is most certainly being tampered with further ahead.”

As if on cue, Sula and Aldis continue their pace. With Enna following just a step behind. Niles stood watching their confident strides for a long moment, before Natalia’s soft hand gave him a light push on the back, urging him forward with her.

“I hope it’s not these alleged bandits, Aldis...” Enna sighs, beginning to wobble her way toward the front of the group.

The mentioned man grimaces, looking back at Enna. “Don’t jinx it. When was the last time we ran into a bandit wizard?”

A brief picture of a deranged, dirty hedge mage flashed amongst the couple’s thoughts. Memories of the man’s rants of ‘rat magic’ still etched in their minds. Along with the smell.

“Last year I think, the rat guy-” Enna began to answer before Aldis’s pitiful expression causes her to pause.

“It may simply be a small elemental phenomena. I wouldn’t worry about a run in with any... experimental mages.” Natalia interrupts from behind, a slight blush to her unbothered smile. “It’s not overly common, but there are a good amount of recorded sightings of localized snowstorms due to unusual shifts of natural mana-”

“I’m going to assume that means you can handle it, Nat?” Enna interjected, meeting the mage’s eyes over her shoulder. A smug shake of her hips as if to inspire the Rudanian woman along despite the interruption.

“I should be able to fix the issue if needs be, yes.” Nat laughs to herself, unable to separate her eyes from the Sasavi’s wobbling ass, “Though with how cold it already is, the process may be unpleasant to sit through...”

The elf tapped a finger to her chin in a moment of thought. “Well, we should be prepared for that, I think.” Glancing to her side, Enna shoots her partner a brief look, nodding behind her with a coy smile.

Aldis reciprocates the expression without a word, effortlessly throwing himself up onto the elven woman’s massive ass. Feet lock into the leather stirrups dangling from Enna’s tight belt, the seat of his pants adjusting comfortably against the padded ass of his elven mount.

The path continues further and further up, fog growing heavier, cold dirt giving way to a frosty snow.

“Snow this far down the pass?” Aldis sighs from atop his Enna-shaped perch, as his lover trots along beneath him.

“You aren’t the one walking through it you dolt!” Enna laughs, her bare toes scrunching against the deepening snow seemingly unbothered. “You should be thankful your favorite Sasavi makes such a comfortable beast of burden, hmm?”

“Most horses would definitely have trouble in our current predicament I’d say...” Natalia interjects, a simple warmth spell visibly radiating around her and Niles.

“Oh, certainly!” A laugh punctuates Aldis’s confirmation, “In all our years together, Enna has proven more exemplary than any other steed I’ve happened to ride.”

“I’m right here you know... Don’t speak as if I’m not present.” Enna huffed with a proud look on her face, betraying her faux offense. Her long ears wiggled happily at her lover’s compliment. “I’m obviously a superior mount to some common animal.”

The snow grows deeper now, reaching up to the party’s shins. A harsh wind and flurry of snow cut off the party’s banter as they continue on, focused more on the task at hand. Before a sudden shout cuts through the howling cold.

“MOVE!” Sula shouts, shifting her weight to the side, dodging a sudden lunge of blue from the swirling white. Her hands firmly grip the haft of her halberd as she turns to face the sudden assailant.

Enna too, effortlessly repositions herself next to Natalia, avoiding the hostile movement as her and her rider both draw their blades.

“I-is it the bandits?” Niles asks, awkwardly pulling out his blade as he sidles up to the mage’s side. “I can barely see a thing, how are they-”

“No. Our foe definitely is not human...” Natalia answers, quickly channeling her mana into her staff.

Within the next moment, another lunge, and another, and another. The shimmering scales of something, incandescent silver and blue, meet the end of the adventurer’s blades as its weight continues its arc back into the fog. There were multiple, a deluge of barely visible scales, striking at the party unseen.

“Well, looks like I was right, huh? Definitely not bandits.” Aldis comments, defending his mounted lover’s flank. Enna laughs to herself, a lightning quick kick sending one of their assailants flying.

Sula effortlessly holds back any attempted assault from her end, barely giving an inch to the fog-covered beasts.

As the seconds flow on, the fog heightens to a storm of snow, the air growing deathly frigid.

“To me!” Natalia shouts through the screaming hail, voice cutting like magical blades.

Sula and Enna back up to the mage’s circle of warmth with practiced speed, Niles view quickly being eclipsed by the Sasavi’s massive, brown ass.

Aldis and Enna slice at a creature’s form, as Sula locks her haft within the barely-visible, blue jaws of another, before Natalia finally finishes channeling her spell.

With the piercing sound of wood impacting stone, and the snap of her fingers, the snowstorm clears. A violent vortex of warm wind alters the scene in an instant, radiating out from the mage’s own body. Warm winds surge past Niles weakly, yet only so, before their strength magnifies.

Aldis grips Enna's waist tightly, as the two larger women show off their exceptional physiques. The fat of Enna's lower body jiggles wildly in that burst of wind, but more pressing to Niles eyes was the sheer tightness of her bulging leg muscles, their power on full display as she stood her ground. Sula was much the same, every inch of her chorded legs strained in that moment to remain planted through Natalia's storm.

The fog lifted to reveal a large clearing, covered in snow. Large, translucent crystals grew from the mountain's stone walls, obstructing most of the rather wide pass. Dead trees blew wildly in the deathly, unnatural wind at the edge of the party's newly provided vision.

Their once unseen enemies were not spared by Natalia's forceful magic, being flung violently away from the group as intended. As the shimmering white and blue scales shine in the newly revealed sun, crawling and shambling over each other in a slithering pile, the party quickly realizes their precarious situation.

"Ah yes." Aldis sighs as he takes stock of their surroundings.

"Wyrms..." Enna joins him with a sigh of her own, eyes darting around to the numerous lizards recovering from their momentary shock.

Wyrms. Frost Wyrms. Four-limbed, flightless draconids standing higher than a human man. The large gecko-like creature's icy scales are cold to the touch, with a frigid bite that brings with it an almost instantaneous frostbite. Incredibly dangerous, but usually placid animals. But something was different.

"22... 30..." Sula counts each and every Wurm crawling out of the distant fog, retaking her defensive position slightly further from Natalia, "There's far too many here for just us to handle..."

"If we took them out one at a time, yeah." Aldis states readjusting himself on his lover's backside, said lover moving her own position in preparation, "Nat, you know what to do, right?"

"So cute..." The mage blushed, watching the frosty salamanders crawl over each other to catch their bearings, unfazed even as the others cut down more than a few still cognizant enough to lunge their way. "I've never seen a frost wurm up close."

"Nat!" Enna yelled, shaking her from her thoughts. The mage refocused on the mounted pair, following their pointed fingers toward an odd glow, just beyond the clearing. The wyrms were seemingly guarding it, the ones not attacking stand between it and the party.

"Oh! Of course!" She smirked, lobbing a simple bolt of flame through the lingering fog, as Enna darted forward after it, Aldis jumping off on cue to back up Sula.

The flame cut through the frost, impacting something with an inhuman screech, as the Elf darted between snapping lizards with graceful speed, meeting the same target as the flames with the full force of her massive legs.

A loud boom rings out, as the fog lifted. Enna faded into view, her kick having shattered the skull of an absurdly large Wurm. The beast, fetid and frozen, unable to even move, as it's frosty, blue blood poured out onto the rocks.

Enna's eyes dart over the length of the dead beast, noting it's body pierced and maimed by odd crystalline formations. Realizing quickly there was something far more unnatural than a non-hibernating pack of wyrms at play.

Almost to answer her thoughts, the pained screams of the other lizards rang out in her ears, crystals erupting from their bodies as a magical frost poured from their newly opened wounds.

"They're coming again." Sula states, standing side by side with Aldis as the wyrms' screams mark a wave of movement from the reinvigorated salamanders. Lunging and gnawing at the two fighters as they hold their ground.

Sula, unfazed by the animals' size effortlessly uses her strength to halt and redirect the creatures momentum, slicing and throwing them aside to protect Natalia and Niles with no issue. Covering her back, Aldis fought rather differently, allowing the lizards own weight to fall into the sharpened curve of his elven blade. He merely dodged aside most strikes, almost dancing around the creatures as he covered Sula's backside, empowering her to focus her brunt forward.

Niles watches on, occasionally slapping away a weakened straggler as Natalia's barrier burned their flesh, amazed at the two's coordination. But not nearly as amazed as what he saw next.

Dashing back to the party with the thunderous force of a cavalry charge, Enna massive width barrels itself through a score of slithering wyrms, kicking and slashing apart anything she could run through, the woman a whirling dance of flesh and steel.

She halted her charge directly behind Aldis, knocking a stray lizard into the arc of Sula's slicing polearm, before grabbing Aldis's hand and tossing him over her shoulder. The man seated himself atop his companion's hips, their matching blades covering the other's blind spots, the two fighting as one, for that brief moment, before the man kicked himself free of the elven woman's ass, intercepting the lunge of jumping wyrm, moments before it could collide with Natalia's form.

"How're you two holding up?" He looks back with a smile, sweat dripping from his brow as the two women continue fighting beyond him. "Looks like there were much more than 30 of these bastards huh?" A sidestep and a swift pull of Niles arm punctuated his statement, as one of the lizards lunged through Natalia's aura, missing the three and singeing it's frozen skin before it collapses behind them.

"Tired..." Natalia sighs, still channeling her mana, her breathing somewhat heavy "From what I've read of frost wyrms this behavior is rather unusual, isn't it?"

"From my experience, yeah." Aldis states, helping Niles swat away the strike from an addled lizard or two. "Enna ran right for the head of their flock, usually as soon as that things dead the rest run off for their own safety. Being emboldened by it is just odd."

Natalia seems lost in thought for a moment, before a stray icy shard flew past her eyes. "And are the odd crystals a normal part of their physiology?"

"Definitely a 'No'." Aldis states, picking one free of a freshly slain corpse, before it melts away, tossing it into Natalia's hand.

Quickly examining the odd mineral's physical and magical structure, a flush passes over Natalia's face. "Oh my~ I believe I've learned something new..." She lightly moans to herself, shoving to freezing crystal into one of her many alchemical pouches. "I'll finish this all as soon as I can, Aldis."

A grin answers her, as she begins to chant, staff held firmly between her rubbing thighs, "That's what I like to hear." Aldis looks back toward Niles, giving the boy a firm slap on the back. "Keep up the good work Niles, our favorite ballistae here is in your hands."

A moment of surprise plays across Niles face, before nodding back. "Leave it to me!"

As Aldis rejoins the others, remounting Enna in one smooth, choreographed motion, Niles bunts off any straggling, injured creatures that made their way past the others. The boy holds his own for minutes at a time as Natalia gradually begins to glow with a fiery light, the heat around the mage changing from pleasant, to uncomfortable quickly. Unlike Aldis, he doesn't know what she's planning to do, but he's familiar enough with Natalia by now to know that they just had to hold out until she's ready.

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That brief moment of distraction, lost in his thoughts, was enough to catch him off guard. A wyrm lunged between the front line, Sula's halberd grazing it's hide, just barely short of it, as it sinks it's frigid teeth into Niles' torso. The boy's skin immediately grows pale as he coughs up a cloud of frosty air.

Within the next moment a blur flew before Niles' eyes, the lizard's head was locked firmly between the muscular girth of two massive, Sasavi thighs. A loud SNAP rang out, as the woman's legs pivoted to the side, flexing their beautifully corded muscle oft hidden under layers of fat. The trunks effortlessly break the beast's vertebra without hesitation, its body fell limply from Niles into a pooling mass of it's own frosty blood, as Enna kicked it away quickly. Niles vision fades slightly as she runs up, speaking to him. He barely understands what she's saying in that moment.

"... Vitals... fine..." He makes out as the elven woman checks him over, "...cold to the touch... Don't worry... a little sweat and you'll be... as rain." A caring smile stretches across her face as she holds him, catching him as his legs give way.

She sets the boy down on the ground, up against the party's bags. Stone beneath, raw and uncovered by snow, warm from Natalia's magics. Before flipping around, positioning herself over him.

The last thing Niles sees before his vision goes black, is the sight of those two massive, brown orbs hovering above him, quickly engulfing his weakened form in a flood of soothingly soft flesh.

The Sasavi woman begins to grind and wobble her huge ass all over the boy with practiced fluidity. The reddish brown of her cheeks slowly radiating with a warm, uplifting golden light. Each cheek jiggling lewdly, the loud clapping of her posterior drowning out the clashing of battle as she grinds into him.

Niles body feels warm, a rising contentment encompassing every inch of his soul. He feels his energy slowly returning alongside the golden glow, and that pleasant, soft sensation of ass flesh.

Enna, meanwhile, runs her hands possessively over her own gyrating hips, groping as much of the massive cheeks as she can in reverence. Words of praise accompany her ministrations. Words most sacred to all Sasavi women, words of dutiful worship toward her own ass.



“Oh Goddess, may your healing light shine through the perfection that is my ass,” the elven woman moans softly in prayer. “May the radiance and softness of my delicious cheeks, massive and shapely, mirror even a fraction of your own~”

Niles could hear, for but a moment, the sounds of battle once more. Tearing flesh, breaking bones, and the bass of a large explosion. But only for a moment, as it all faded back away into the warmth of Enna’s cheeks. Into the soothing sounds of ardent admiration for her own, perfect, ass.

“May its heft carry all that may weigh it down... May its shape enrapture all with its beauty... May its softness sooth the souls of the weary... May it-”

And then the words are gone. Niles eyes shoot open with a start, being met with a smug little smile, and a kind touch.

“Oh thank the Goddess, you’re all in one piece.” A content sigh punctuates Enna’s statement, as her hands glide over the tears in Nile’s tunic. The boy quickly realizes he was laid across the Sasavi woman’s large lap, the soft firmness of her thighs causing red to quickly overtake his face. Enna giggles in response to this, “Niles, surely you’re not going to be so coy after my ass just saved your life, hmm?”

The woman’s smug smile only widens, as her eyes narrow to the boy’s radiant red blush. “N-no!” He exclaims, rolling himself free of Enna’s lap and shambling to his feet, “I mean, thank you so much Enna-”

Another giggle cuts him off, “Thank my ass, little swordsman. It’s the only reason your wounds were so minor.” A small wiggle of her hips accentuates her statement, as the Sasavi stands up, twirling around on her heel to put her ass directly in Niles’ view.

Unsure exactly what she wants, Niles awkwardly leans forward and plants a small kiss onto the massive swell of Enna’s ass. A small, happy glow wobbles across her cheeks, accompanying her amusement as she smiles back at him, smugly.

A firm hand meets Niles’ back the next moment, Aldis looking down at the boy with a concern. His rough hand runs over torn fabric, a sigh escaping from him before his usual grin stretches back across his face.

“You did good, Niles.” The older man states, walking toward Enna and hitting her ass with a playful slap. “Luckily our favorite mule’s here to pick you back up, huh?” Enna’s long ears wiggle happily at the strange compliment, even as she lightly hip checks Aldis in the side, a wordless gesture to ‘shut it’.

Niles looks to the side, taking note of the large piles of wyrm corpses lining the pass. The lizards almost appear to be melting in the warm sun, the fog and frost seemingly having dissipated with the creatures’ deaths. Burn marks seared the ground, visible even on raw stone, Natalia’s work no doubt. Said mage, and Sula were rooting through one of the piles for one reason or another, Niles could only guess, though his mind was wandering toward his own ineffectiveness more than anything. Picking up on this, the boy’s sullen face hardly hiding anything, Aldis lets out a loud laugh. Slapping the boy’s back, he smiles warmly, “It’s on us that one of those bastards made it close to Nat in the first

place, and-” He pauses for a moment, hand pointing at the boy’s sword, shimmering blue blood drying on it’s blade, “AND even then you fought them off, with a brand new set of scars too!”

“I definitely healed him quick enough to-” Enna starts, smug little grin on her face. Before her lover’s pitiful expression cuts her off, clearly not wanting his attempted motivational speech to be sidelined. A cheeky chuckle finishes the elf’s statement, instead.

“You two were amazing...” Niles answers back, catching the couple somewhat off guard. Their eyes both meet his, noticing a newfound sparkle. That same excitement he’d been dripping when they passed through his tiny Gaustian town. “How did you two do all that... dancing stuff?”

“D-dancing?” Aldis laughs awkwardly, looking over at Enna to see the woman’s ears and hips wiggling happily. Smugly. As her eyes meet his. “I guess it is somewhat like dancing, huh?”

“Aldis has ridden me for many years at this point, so it’s something of a bond...” Enna trails off, considering herself for a moment. Many Sasavi cavalry pairs don’t fight at all like the two of them, tending to remain together as one unit. Before she could continue her reverie, Aldis continues.

“I’m sure he means the actual swordsmanship more than anything, En.” Aldis smiles at the elf, lightly slapping her ass. He turns back toward Niles, an idea sparking in his mind, “How about... we talk about this later, off the mountain. We’d be more than happy to teach you a thing or two.”

Niles was radiating an aura of excitement at this, the boy emboldened by a shiny new goal on his horizon. The sparkling grin stretching his face remained even as Natalia quickly shifted the conversation.

Nat, slight flush, presents one of the smaller crystals that lined the wyrms.

“Pure mana.” She states, bluntly. “Turning any aetherial substance physical like this is... not easy.”

A heat pulses out from Niles’ chest, almost in response to Natalia’s words. One the boy vaguely notices as he begins to twirl his odd ivory pendent between his fingers in brief investigation. It felt different from before, an inward call rather than an outward statement. A momentary hunger that quickly ceased, alongside the lad’s puzzled expression. The dull hue of the bone filling just slightly with light.

“They were not growing from the animals either. Not naturally, I should say.” Sula continues, “Their skin and scales were punctured, almost as if the stones erupted from within.”

“They were definitely far, FAR more aggressive than any wyrm I’ve encountered.” Enna reaffirms, “They acted like no animal I’ve ever seen, on that note...”

“No self-preservation instinct, yes.” Natalia groans out, both horny from their analyses, and tired from the fight. “There’s definitely something intentional about all this. Or at the very least, very troubling.”

“I’d say it’s not our place to worry about it, unfortunately.” Aldis cuts in. “Collect whatever you feel the need to, Natalia, and let’s head back for our coin.”

“And the food, we were promised more food!” Enna adds with a wide smile and a bounce on her heels. The horse of a woman’s stomach grumbling loudly as if on cue.

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“Frost Wyrms? By the gods, this time of year?” The gruff voice of the Innkeeper exclaims, bushy eyebrows raise high on his dwarven features as he refills the cup in front of him.

“We took care of it, so business should start picking back up as soon as word gets out.” Aldis laughs, taking a swig from his just-refilled cup. “Hopefully the place will be as full as tonight on the regular, huh?”

The atmosphere in the inn is far more lively tonight, Aldis’ gaze sweeps over the breadth of customers, the local farmers and villagers making merry with the other members of his own group. A dopey smile stretches the man’s face.

Enna’s chowing down on an entire table’s worth of food, ears wagging happily as she shimmies in her tiny seats.

Natalia is excitedly chatting away with some of the more sober locals. Aldis assumes she’s asking about crop rotations or some other mundane tidbit she’s curious about at the moment, that tell-tale blush of hers evident on her face even from here.

Sula is enjoying a meal herself, curtly answering a bevy of questions from some local hunters. Considering one of them is holding up a wyrm tooth the group brought back, animal slaying is more than likely their topic of conversation.

Niles, however, is trying to hide his embarrassment. A group of local girls insisted on stitching up his torn clothing, and the boy’s clearly not used to so much attention.

Aldis turns away from the warm joy of the tavern, back to counting through the heavy sack of Drasidian coppers. A content smile on his face as he finishes downing another drink.

The warm light of the inn glows long into the cold night, our party enjoying the night of simple fulfillment before they set out on their travels again tomorrow morning.