

Howdy All. I can't program and I'm not British.

Morte24 has edited this for me. Tomon and Beleriond also gave me his feedback at this point, though not as in depth as he normally would have due to the time constraints when I originally posted this on my patreon page. Still, I don't think we made any direct lore mistakes. Changes, yes, mistakes no, LOL. Anyway, I hope you enjoy.

Death's Avenger Chapter 2: Friendships, Bloodletting and Travelling Often Go Together

Harry tried not to stare, he really did. But as the Frostsabers continued to explain how the Frostmaul giants had come to dominate the mountains of Winterspring, he just couldn't concentrate. To Harry, the tale was a simple equation: the Frostmaul giants were composed of frost and stone, and the Frostsabers were flesh and blood. As powerful and as strong as their jaws might be, and Harry could tell their physical abilities had been enhanced Azeroth's ambient magic just like their intelligence, he doubted that they would have it an easier time of biting the Frostmaul giants than Quetzal did. And Harry's serpentine friend had his paralysis venom to aid him, which allowed him to paralyze his prey even with shallow bites. The Frostsabers didn't even have that.

Worse, was Tyrande's presence. Harry had been around Lunara and other nymphs for several months before this, but that bit of exposure wasn't helping right now. Tyrande was drop dead gorgeous, her light purple skin almost luminescent in the moonlight, like a lavender flower made into skin. The silver strands in the deep blue of her hair grabbed his attention, almost lighting up the blue of her hair. Her eyes were like twin stars, and her body...

Quetzal's tail smacked into Harry the side, lightly for the massive snake. "§Stop staring. I know you mammals do things differently, but surely staring so much must be off-putting to two-legged women, especially since you look like you're going to start drooling at any moment.§"

Harry shook his head, then looked away, grateful that Tyrande at least hadn't seen to notice his moment of teenage stupidity. "§You're right my cold-blooded friend. Hormones, they are from the bloody devil, I tell you.§" he whispered. With that, Harry turned and pulling out his trunk, began to work on a series of wards to help defend the Frostsabers valley from their enemies.

In point of fact, Tyrande had noticed his looking, but since he had not, in point of fact, been drooling, or attempting to flirt with her, she wasn't going to mention it. Indeed for the most part he had kept his eyes on her face, only looking at her arms for some reason occasionally, never letting his eyes wander to more sexual areas. She was even amused by his comment, as she could remember when she was young thousands of years ago and had seen young Kaldorei acting much the same way throughout the millennia since. *Hormones are indeed of the bloody devil, whatever the devil might be.*

And yet, for all his complaints about them, he is handling himself quite well. Tyrande had been told all her life she was a rare beauty. Even though every Kaldorei knew she and Malfurion were an item, she still turned heads today, though honestly she didn't know why people made such a fuss. Harry had been practically polite with his staring, and his control was very good for a seeming-sixteen year old. *Although perhaps his people age physically or mentally faster than mine?* Harry certainly seemed older, looking out at the world through eyes which had seen far too much combat, the eyes Tyrande saw in other veterans of the War of the Ancients.

Yet what beautiful eyes they are. Like emeralds, or like the greenest leaves on a summer day. Yet, I wonder what caused that strange lightning bolt scar on his forehead?

Still, despite Harry not being a Kaldorei – or even a cursed Vrykul as Tyrande had first assumed - his use of Arcana concerned her, and the sheer number of spells that he used. *Although, I might be willing to overlook everything for free access to that's translation spell* she mused with an internal chuckle. *That would be a major help, for both herself, and my people in general.*

Tyrande internally shook her head. *Do not leap to conclusions. His Arcana seems different than my people's and regardless, I should judge him by his actions. And continue to listen to the Frostsaber's tales about the Frostmaul giants. Silly woman, information is power after all.* Eventually, the Frostsabers had finished telling her story, as well as what they knew about the movements of the Frostmaul giants, and Tyrande turned to look at Harry, wondering what he thought about it all.

When she voice this question, Harry shrugged. "I attempted the translation spell on them, the one I just used on you, Milady..."

"Tyrande, or Miss if you feel you must give me a title. Milady sounds too much like a noble title, and I am not here acting as leader of my people or as a priestess of Elune, which would be the only real title I would lay claim to," Tyrande interrupted. She was well aware that formality and decorum had a purpose, but in this time and place, she did not wish to deal with them. *I am on sabbatical, blast it.* "Further, if Cenarius planned this meeting, it would behoove us to get to know one another. Being overly formal would get in the way of that."

"I... alright Miss, but give me time please. I'm not used to being so informal so quickly, er, especially with women" Harry answered, somewhat embarrassed, although he had to smile in agreement at her words. "Anyway, I tried to talk the first group of Frostmaul giants Quetzal and I ran into. It didn't work. The translation spell hit them, but the Frostmaul giants don't seem to have enough native intelligence in order to really have anything like a language."

"That is interesting, and very strange. I have seen the Vrykul of Northrend and their diseased brethren, who I thought at first you might be. While they are immensely aggressive, they are not without their own type of intelligence and language. Worse, these Frostmaul giants seem more magical construct than living creature."

“Yep, literal ice and stone, there’s scant little even of their remains to tell us they were truly alive in the first place,” Harry agreed, then went on more hesitantly. “Erm, do you have a problem with taking the campaign to them, Miss? Only, if the Frostmaul giants are spreading as they seem through these mountains their numbers have to be pruned back, if not more. That could be a bloody business.”

Tyrande sighed. “While I am wondering why you seem to be overusing the word ‘bloody’, I must admit I would normally disdain any such thoughts of making war upon an entire race. And yet, I have never had any dealings with the Frostmaul giants for this. And what you are saying and from what the Frostsabers are saying, they are inimical to all other life. It... it is possible that they might be a creature of the Old Gods, which somehow survived the fall. That would make it my duty as a priestess of Elune to look into at the very least.”

Harry scowled at that, shaking his head and Tyrande smiled internally, having thought she would get that reaction to anyone who would call Cenarius Shan’do. “I’ve learned about the Old Gods from Cenarius. What he told me about them was not pleasant listening. Especially what he said about Andrassil, and how the druids were forced to cut the world tree down.”

“Aye, they were, and that is all that we Kaldorei can do with those Tainted by the Old Gods touch. There is no way to free someone of an Old One’s influence once his hooks are in a being.” Tyrande then paused, frowning at Harry in unspoken question.

Seeing that, Harry chuckled, shaking his head. “No. If you want something attacked, stunned or an area awarded against threats, like I’m working on now,” he held up the stone tablet he was working on, showing the runic array he was working on. “I can do all that. But cleansing something...”

Frowning in thought, Harry looked down at his work and correcting a mark on the stone, adding a tiny line to a rune. “I did it off the cuff, once. But...” He looked up at Tyrande closely and asked, “I suppose you would have been told about a incidents with the satyrs? About...” he paused, then looked a little lost. “Heck, I don’t even know how long ago it was. Spending time with Cenarius is strange in that way.”

Tyrande nodded. “Mortals can find it so, I’ve been told. Although I am surprised that your serpent friend wasn’t able to keep track of things.”

Quetzal blinked at her, then shook his head slowly. “§What care snakes of the passing of days? We think in terms of seasons. In that term, it has been nearly five seasons since the Master of the Forest met Harry and I.§”

“Is a year a long time among your race?” Tyrande asked, thinking that Harry’s face looked almost bemused and shocked in the moonlight. “But yes, in answer to your question, I did hear of satyr’s preying on distant settlements. It was very worrisome at the time. As is the fact many seemed to have switched allegiances to the the Old Gods.”

“A year is a okay amount of time, not really long for my people,” Harry mused, smiling faintly as he considered he’d only been training for a year with Cenarius. *Makes me less annoyed at my lack of progress with Nature Magic at least.* “Anyway, during that incident, I attempted to free a few of the Cenarius’ people who had been captured of the Taint that being forced to drink Satyr blood had given them. It wasn’t easy. The taint within them almost fought back. I was able to eventually combine spells to clear the Taint from four of them.”

Tyrande’s eyes widened at that, but Harry hastened on, while the Frostsabers all around them were all listening in some confusion, having no understanding of the terms the two were using. “But it put me on my rear, and if we assume that these Frostmaul giants were born with that kind of taint, it will be stronger. And their bodies are way larger than the nymphs and keepers I freed. I don’t think I have the strength to do it. Not with my current bag of tricks.”

At that, Tyrande nodded, thinking hard. She was pleased that Harry was willing to acknowledge the fact that he wasn’t all-powerful, something few magic users in her life had been able to do. But, that just left them with violence as the only solution. When she said so, Harry nodded. Then Tyrande frowned. “Wait, what do you mean you combined your spells?”

“I basically had to use a spell that creates a... call it an aura of goodness I guess? Where I come from there were these creatures that fed off the souls of the individual. When they attacked, they brought with them an aura that suppressed any good and happy emotions. This spell creates those good emotions, uses those to power an attack spell of sorts. I coupled that with a spell that allowed me to invade minds...”

“What!!” Tyrande had previously been able to ignore the fact that Harry was a magic user thanks to his actions and his acquaintance with Cenarius. But the very idea of entering someone’s mind? That was horrendous.

Harry took Tyrande’s anger in stride just nodding his head. “I know, I don’t like it either. But where I come from there are spells that allow one to invade another individual’s minds. I sued it this time to send the aura of goodness from the other spell into the minds and then the bodies of the Tainted victims. It worked but was very hard.” Harry looked at the Kaldorei high priestess then shrugged, and decided to get this over with, somewhat like pulling off a scab. “There is even a spell that will allow the user to completely crush the minds of the individual it uses it on. Only people with strong willpower can toss it off.”

Tyrande stared at him, then breathed in, slowly controlling her initial rush of fear and disgust. “Very Well. I am grateful that you are being so upfront about these spells of yours. And yet, that does not to make me feel any better about anyone having access to that kind of spell in the first place.”

“For what it’s worth, I agree, and I’m utterly pants at that spell. You have to have this desire, this need, to dominate other people, and I don’t have that.” Harry shrugged wanly. “I am in fact the exact opposite.”

Tyrande cocked her head thinking about it, then said slowly, "You have a propensity to rebel."

"More to go my own way than actively rebel, but yes. I didn't grow up with it more's the pity, acting out more often would've made my life a lot easier, especially if I started to ask questions about what was going on around me, but I didn't. Yet now, I am very much antiauthoritarian in many ways."

Tyrande slowly nodded again, then her lips quirked slightly. "I would wager, that being around Cenarius has been a trial then."

"Not really. He isn't all that authoritative." Harry looked at Tyrande anxiously, understanding that had been a trap to see if he did indeed know Cenarius. "I know Kaldorei have problems with Arcane users, and I can tell my earlier words are still bothering you. Er..."

Shaking her head slowly, Tyrande raised a hand, stopping Harry from speaking. "I can tell that you have met Cenarius, both from your reply to that trap and more. I can tell further that you feel remorse even for the existence of those spells. Simply swear to me that you will not use them on me or my people, and I will be happy."

"What do you want me to swear by?" Harry asked warily. He'd never liked magical oaths, understanding just how badly they could be abused, but Harry reminded himself that Tyrande wasn't just a random Kaldorei Warriress, she was the highest religious and social figure of the Kaldorei race. Getting her on his side was an extremely important thing.

"Swear by Elune," Tyrande answered promptly. "Swear you are no threat to me and my people. That will be enough. And in time, I will even be able to use that to aid in introducing you to other Kaldorei, if you wish."

Blinking, Harry looked from the priestess up to the moon above them, and then smirked shaking his head wryly. "Heh. I suppose that is appropriate." With that he held his hand to his heart, and, looking earnestly at Tyrande, intoned, "I, Harry Potter, do swear on the light of the moon and the Goddess Elune, that I am not a threat to you and your people through my own actions or magic."

Tyrande looked at Harry as he spoke, and her eyes saw the glow of truth around him. Whatever else occurred, Harry was no danger to the Kaldorei. At least through his own actions. Danger might come to her people because of Harry's existence, but not directly from him. "Elune has heard your words Harry Potter, and declared them truth."

"Well, that's good to know," Harry said, frowning as he hadn't felt anything there. Still, Tyrande seemed much happier than she had been a moment ago, so Harry wouldn't question it. "So what do we do now?"

"While I do have more questions about you, and your past, I do think we should begin to move." Tyrande leaned her head back, closing her luminescent eyes for a moment as if the rays

of the moon were coming from the sun, and she was enjoying their worth. Regardless, she looked up at the sky, which was beginning to lighten and frowned. "I would prefer that we moved at night, is that a problem?"

Harry shook his head. "I have spells that will allow me to see in the dark as well as I can during the day, and my friend is, as you noticed, a serpent."

Chuckling dutifully at the small joke Tyrande got to her feet, saying farewell to Shy-rotam and the other Frostsabers. Although the cub and she had bonded, Tyrande would not bring her along on this mission. It was simply too dangerous, and she would not have the time to look out for her either.

The cub mewled at that, wrestling with Tyrande's foot in an effort to stop her from leaving, but eventually, the tiny cub's father came over and picked her up by the scruff of the neck, carrying her away. "//Your time to hunt will come daughter. But no hunter can find the trails of his or her prey with a young one bounding around their feet.//"

"//Mrmrmm....//" The cub made a noise that was like a verbal pout and snarl combined and Tyrande spent another moment to rub her head before taking her leave.

"So where are we going?" Harry asked. As Tyrande had been 'fighting' with Shy-rotam, he had finished his makeshift ward-stone and had placed the rune stone down in front of the cave. Like the ones Harry had used to defend his tree house before learning Nature Magic, it would keep the cave from being found by anyone who wished harm upon the Frostsabers within.

"We will need to see what tracks these creatures left, then track them to their nearest lair. From there, we can decide whether or not there are indeed enough of them in these mountains to warrant the kind of campaign that our Frostsaber friends seem to indicate is necessary. As much as they do not want to admit it, there could be far fewer Frostmaul giants out there, given how impotent against them the Frostsabers are," Tyrande replied.

Harry blinked at her, then pulled out a stick from the ground, set it lengthwise on his palm, and said, "Points me nearest Frostmaul giants."

"That cannot possibly work, Harry," Tyrande chuckled. "You are making a joke..."

She paused as the spinning stick stopped spinning and pointed in a direction that was through the side of a portion of the tiny valley and up a ways. "They're that way." Harry smirked at her. "Will that be all, Miss?" He asked, as if he was a merchant trying to sell her something. "A warming cloak perhaps, you look a little chilly."

"Actually, I'm quite fine," Tyrande retorted. "My people tend not to notice the weather as much as yours," she taunted back, beginning to understand why Cenarius had enjoyed being around the young human. He was like a flower almost, so vibrant and bursting with energy. Quite unlike her own people, who tended to be more stolid like the great trees they so revered.

“That spell isn’t all-powerful” Harry added, ignoring her jibe. “Initially it was just supposed to point north, acting like a compass. Now, while it’s good for finding specific people, it will be messed up by any active magic in the area. It also wouldn’t point you toward, say a good meal, as that’s too existential, although you can use it to find fresh water. Nor can you use it to find the nearest threat. That’s not specific enough, nor is the idea of a ‘safe place’ or something because it can’t tell what danger you want to be safe from.”

“Could you teach me how to ward myself against it? If you can use it, that means an Arcana user might be able to use it, correct?”

Harry frowned, looking over as Quetzal joined them, slithering out of the trees to look down at the pointing stick in Harry’s hand. “I don’t know enough about Arcana magic to say but I know Cenarius was able to use nature magic to hide from it. I tried to use it to find him and once to try to find Lunara. All it did was point to the nearest darn tree.”

At the look of annoyance on his face, Tyrande snorted. “And let me guess, Lunara was hiding from you for some reason? Something related to her rather... robust sense of humor. I can well remember the tricks she would play on Malfurion when he was studying under Cenarius. He still is not a fan of the color bright orange or seeing bows in a person’s hair.”

“Heh, yep, although I avoided the bow in the hair thing. Thank you I’m going to have nightmares about that now,” Harry replied dryly.

Tyrande chuckled again at that before sighing, becoming somewhat more somber. “I must admit, Harry Potter, your attitude and oath is putting me at ease. Yet the very magic that allows us to speak and how much magic you used in battle continues to bother the part of me that went through the war against the Burning Legion and Azshara and then had to deal with the remaining Arcana users who refused to give up their power despite the dangers.”

Harry nodded thoughtfully, remembering what he had been told of the disaster on Northrend and before that the banishment of the Highborne. “I understand, and that is part of why I was so willing to give you the oath I did. Beyond that, all I ask is that you judge me by my words and actions, not by my magic.”

“That is what I am trying to do. Alas, even I am not entirely free of prejudices as I would like to think. Still, I will do my best Harry Potter, I can promise you that.”

The friendly smile she bestowed on him made Harry grin back, although thankfully by this point Harry had gotten his hormones under control, so it didn’t cause him to break out in a blush. He then looked down to the stick in his hand then the direction it was pointing. “In that case, I think we should be off.”

The stick pointed to one side of the entrance to this hitting little area of trees, but Harry figured that the Frostmaul giants certainly wouldn’t be able to get around as easily as he and Quetzal, or even Tyrande could. So there had to be some kind of path leading to wherever the

nearest Frostmaul giants were, which he assumed as Tyrande had, would lead to a village or central town of some kind.

At first, Harry rode alone on Quetzal's back, while Tyrande marsh along beside them, keeping up with the fast-moving snake's speed well enough. "How is it that a snake is so active during winter?"

"§A heating spell,§" Quetzal replied. "§Perhaps the greatest magical creation known to humanity.§"

"Humanity? Is that what you're species calls itself?"

Harry nodded, then looked over at her. "You know, if we're going to play 20 questions, perhaps it would be easier you rode as well?"

"What is 20 questions?"

Harry chuckled, and told her about the game, and after a few more moments, Tyrande agreed that it probably would be easier if she joined Harry on Quetzal's back. "Can he really carry us both so easily?"

"We'll have to get off Quetzal when we come to cliff, but other than that, he should be able to handle our weight with ease."

As Tyrande climbed aboard Quetzal, Harry glanced up at the one moon visible at the moment. It was a crescent shape at the moment, larger and closer than the moon back on Earth, and far whiter too. *No wonder it is called the White Lady. Although I still think Blue Child is far too silly sounding for the name of a moon.* "I've been told of Elune, Cenarius' mother, but seeing her like this, without clouds or trees to get in the way, makes you really think that there could be truly something godly about it. Mystical anyway."

Tyrande followed Harry's eyes, then smiled faintly. "Would you like to know about the faith of the Elune?"

Harry nodded slowly. "Yes, I think I would. I've heard about her as an individual, but you are the first actual worshiper of the Elune I have met."

"Very well, I will explain." Tyrande's lips quirked. "But this will count as your first question to me. Is that acceptable?"

Harry laughed and nodded, and Tyrande began to explain about Elune, the worship of her, and why she was the patron goddess of the night elves. Indeed, nights like this, when half of the moon was unseen, and the other half starkly luminescent, were seen as the most spiritual nights by her people. Harry asked a few questions of his own during this explanation, and always worded them as a statement rather than a question.

When she finished, Harry leaned back against Quetzal's head, which he had been using as a backrest as the snake moved along, its head and upper body held off the ground. "That was interesting, thank you."

"I suppose it is only fair to ask you in turn about your religion? Who do you pray to?"

Harry barked a laugh. "I don't pray to anyone, Miss. I was an orphan, sort of, long story. But my relatives thought of themselves as following the predominant religion from where I came from, but they certainly didn't practice what they pretended to believe in. My own people, Arcana users like myself, believe in a kind of ancestor worship coupled with hero worship. I never really espoused that belief either."

"But from what you're saying, the belief in Elune is, while in some ways more formal is also much more personal. But perhaps that's not quite the right word. There is a more direct connection between your goddess and you, and your people then there has ever been in my world. A lot of people believe in God without any evidence, whereas you know your God exists." Harry then smiled. "And now for my question..."

"§I think it is time to put questions to one side and prepare yourselves,§" Quetzal said, frowning and hissing the words out in amusement. He pointed forward. "§I just saw something large moving out there somewhere. Just on the edge of my heat vision.§" Despite seemingly being made of stone and frost, there was something within the Frostmaul giants that created enough heat for Quetzal to sense in the dark.

Harry nodded, and gestured with his hand, about to touch Tyrande to use a spell to hide her. Then he paused, looking at her for permission. "Er... I am going to cast a spell on you. It will hide you by basically covering you with a chameleon covering. Don't be alarmed, and don't move too fast, or else the spell will begin to fail."

Cocking an eyebrow, Tyrande nodded. "This should be interesting. Let us see."

With that Harry touched Tyrande briefly on the forehead, and Tyrande shivered as if she had been splashed with cold water. Looking down at herself, Tyrande watched the spell as it began to cover her body. Then afterwards she could see her body again, but now it seemed as if it was covered by some kind of film, which apparently would hide her from sight. In contrast, Harry's face was still visible to her, but the rest of his body was simply not there. It was almost eerie, to be frank. Then his face was covered with the same kind of spell that he had just used on Tyrande, but she could still see his features through it. "That is terrifying," she admitted.

"It's part of my preferred method of combat," Harry answered, shrugging his shoulders, though Tyrande could not make that out thanks to his invisibility cloak. "I prefer to at least start any fight I can from ambush. Makes it all easier. I had enough of standing up and facing my opponents in open combat when I was younger."

Tyrande nodded, as that made sense to her. While a human might have sneered at the idea of ambushes as dishonorable Harry was pleased to see that she didn't have that response. Perhaps as a Kaldorei that simply makes sense.

The two of them moved forwards around the bend in the path finding the way in front of them suddenly sloping upwards and around several more bends in the bare stone of the mountain. With Quetzal following they spread out, putting some distance between them on the path, which had widened the moment they came around the bend and beginning to head upwards. About five minutes after Harry had used magic to hide them, they spotted what Quetzal had seen. The path turned there once more to reveal several large stairs seemingly hacked out of the mountain leading up to an open area. Several Frostmaul giants there moving around, their movements just barely visible from the path below.

Luckily, the Frostmaul giants didn't seem to be on watch or anything, just milling about in the massive area, which Harry felt was about the size of a Quidditch field. Along the interior wall of the area was a series of large caverns which looked as if they had been carved out of the stone by equally large, very strong hands.

Harry estimated there were nine Frostmaul giants standing around the openings to the caverns, shouting and growling at one another. It was hard to make them out given how they all looked generally alike, and were somewhat bunched up. But they didn't seem to be doing anything that Harry could see. They were just standing around. *Almost like the worst guards you could ever imagine*, he thought, then whispered out his assessment. "There could be something important in those caves, something that can tell us more about these creatures."

Tyrande nodded agreement, frowning slightly. "How good is your camouflage spell?"

"Invisibility, please," Harry replied, affecting an annoyed air for a moment, before sending her a smirk, causing Tyrande to wrinkle her brow at him.

Are all humans so... facially emotive? Among the Kaldorei, showing emotions like that, especially shifting from serious to teasing and such, would have been shown in their tone of voice and their ears, rather than in their face. *It's fascinating, but his emotions shift so quickly that it is somewhat off-putting. In an amusing way to be sure, but one I doubt many of my people would be able to get used to quickly.* With Kaldorei, especially with combat so possible, any emotions would have been pushed down or disregarded beyond the desire for battle.

"At least in my case," Harry went on, unaware of Tyrande's rambling thoughts. "The one I used on you is a Disillusion spell, it makes is an illusion of what you are standing in front of and can be negated if you move too quickly or pass over loose stones. My cloak hides me from anyone attempting to find me in order to do me harm, and I can cover our tracks in the snow with another spell. Why?"

"Would it not be better to know what we are facing entirely, rather than just assume the nine guards are the majority?" Tyrande replied dryly.

She seemed to have a sort of dry sarcastic wit, Harry reflected. Not that he minded. He did think that Quetzal did sarcasm better though and said so.

“Ouch,” Tyrande muttered, then she chuckled. “Nonetheless, my point remains. We need to know what we are facing, how should we go about it?”

“Well I think I’ll just sneak past them then,” Harry shrugged, the movement once more unseen. “You two wait here, and I will report on what I find.”

“I don’t like the idea of you going in there alone,” Tyrande began, but then sighed. “However, if you think that my own invisibility won’t stand up to moving through them, then I suppose we are left without a choice.”

She moved herself over slowly backwards, then with a rope and grapnel from her pouch, she moved herself slowly up a nearby promontory. There, she noticed that climbing had seemingly been too much for Harry’s spell. *Still, I might not be a Sentinel, but that doesn’t mean I cannot move unseen without magical aid.*

Knowing that fast movement drew the eye, Tyrande slowly pulled off of her bow and quiver, setting the quiver down in front of her. Still moving slowly, she placed one arrow on her bow, pulling it back to her ear, where Tyrande held it motionless. *I am rather grateful that I have kept up my training these past thousand years, or else I would be quite sore right now,* Tyrande thought ruefully.

Having left the others behind, Harry had moved forward as quickly as he could, trusting to his cloak and the spell hiding his footprints. Slinking in between the Giants was hard given their size and how they were constantly moving, stamping around and roaring at one another. At one point he had even had to duck and roll straight between two gesticulating giants, entering the first of the caves.

It was a very short trip. In fact, the cave only went about perhaps a dozen paces before enlarging into what looked like a cavern, which connected to the other two entrances. Harry had thought that perhaps this would be a kind of home for the Giants, and it did look sort of like that, except for one thing. Or several things really, Harry reflected as he looked around.

One, beyond a single ditch and a series of beds, there was nothing homely about this area. No paintings on the wall, no interesting designs even. Nothing to show that the Frostmaul giants had anything like an artistic bone in their bodies. Nothing like the pictures he had seen in history books about Neanderthals or Cro-Magnons. Indeed, there wasn’t even any kind of firepit, although there were several animal corpses laid out in a heap in the middle of the area.

Nor were there any children or women around. *Unless their males and females look exactly alike? A gender neutral race?* Harry thought, before shrugging. Beyond that, there were another twelve giants inside, Most of them sleeping on massive slabs carved out from the side of the huge area, with one of them tossing fitfully from side to side.

The exception to this was the largest of the Frostmaul giants in the cave and this Frostmaul giant lay next of the pile of animal corpses in the center of the cave. He, it, Harry wasn't certain, was, at least half again the weight of the others. All of that weight was in his shoulders and stomach, rather than in height, and for just a moment, Harry wondered if perhaps that meant he – the giant still had a beard - was a female. *Weren't dwarves supposed to be the ones whose females had beards?*

A loud crack resounded then, and Harry nearly tripped, staring at the overweight giant in shock. As Harry watched, the Frostmaul giant split. It was that simple. One moment, it was a single large giant with a massive potbelly and huge shoulders, and the next moment, it was two giants, each only slightly shorter than normal.

They growled and roared at one another, then began to fight as they rolled to their feet. This went on for a few moments, but eventually, the fight subsided as the other Frostmaul giants, woken up by this activity, roared in amusement at them. The two now shorter giants growled back, before grabbing at some of the stone below them and chomping it into bits, then they made a meal out of some animal that must've had the misfortune of running into their fellows. Stone and meat went down together, without even a fire to warm the meet up, let alone actually cook it.

All right, that wasn't what I expected but... Harry's thoughts paused suddenly, his eyes arrested. At the foot of one of the two Frostmaul giants who had been created via division from the first, there was a small luminous black kind of stone, almost hidden under the carcasses of the various dead animals. *That looks almost like the kind of corrupted stone that I saw before with the satyrs. Looks like Tyrande was right. But I don't know if I would call them corrupted by the stone. More created by the Taint itself.*

Regardless, Harry had enough information. There were now fourteen more Frostmaul giants inside the caves, coupled with the nine outside. *And if that black stone is part of how these Frostmaul giants are created, then perhaps destroying this place will halt their creation.*

With that in mind, Harry returned to Tyrande, noting her and Quetzal's new position, although with difficulty. *Good grief, I don't think Kaldorei need my help to be invisible,* Harry thought ruefully, only able to make out her figure with difficulty and only because it was now approaching dawn, providing him with more light to see than even his night vision spell.

In contrast to the poised, ready Kaldorei, Quetzal seemed relaxed. He leaned his head against the rock right beside her. Moving in that direction was tough, but soon, Harry was perched beside Tyrande, scratching his friend's head behind the eyes, which the snake seemed to like.

"And what have you discovered?" she asked in a whisper, looking up at him.

Harry explained what he had seen, and Tyrande scowled angrily. "I see. This stone you have described is very disturbing. Especially if it is somehow involved in the creation of the

Frostmaul giants, surely another sign of the Old God imprisoned below. Regardless, it is time to stop investigating, and start attacking.”

This group of Frostmaul giants were not only examples of the breed, but the closest to where the Frostsabers had been. She looked up at the sky, frowning slightly as she saw the sun rising over the horizon. “I could’ve wished we could have attacked during the night. I can more easily call upon the power of Elune when the moon is out. Yet I will have enough tricks under my sleeve regardless.”

Harry shrugged, noting that Tyrande was practically vibrating in place with the eagerness to be about it. “We could wait, but I really don’t see a point to it.”

“With your abilities added to my own, nor do I. How are we going to go about this however?”

Harry shrugged. “Prepare an ambush, wipe them out. Pretty simple frankly. Although I wish we could use the tactic of just bringing that cave down on top of them. But the way they were eating stone as well as meat, I’d wager they could probably just chew their way out.”

“Truly, it would be like trying trying to trap the mouse in a cake,” Tyrande murmured another faint smile on her face. “Yet how then are we going to trap them?”

A few moments of discussion later and Tyrande was waiting once more as Harry moved around the area, dropping several runes he had created behind.

Most of the runes he knew wouldn’t really work on the Frostmaul giants, because they were, well, made of frost and stone, but entrapping or paralyzing runes would probably work just as well as they would on anyone else. For himself, fire had worked on them if the heat was hot enough, and Reducto spells as well. Harry put the runes around the edge of the open ground in front of the cavern and then some more in front of where Tyrande was situated before moving back to the base of the stone steps.

With the trap actually created, he now baited it.

Using a conjuration spell, he created several hundred giant rabbits, each the size of a normal Frostsaber. He did so right in the center of the Frostmaul giant giants who were outside the cave.

They took one look at them, then as a single creature bellowed, raising their massive clubs and bringing them down as they roared in delight. Instantly the Frostmaul giants inside began to boil out, several to a tunnel, showing why they had three entrances instead of one. They all began to attack the bunnies, roaring in rage and delight mixed.

Instantly Tyrande began her attack, thinking, *I do hope that Harry’s conjuration spell isn’t pulling those poor creatures from somewhere else. Such a waste of animal life would be rather sad.* Her arrows, blessed by Elune to penetrate anything they hit, took a giant in the eye.

The giant stumbled, then collapsed, but this wasn't noticed by his companions, so delighted were they with the carnage they were causing. She was able to get off five more shots, downing two more giants and wounding another, although even blessed, her arrows were having difficulty penetrating the Frostmaul giant's skin.

But by that point, the Frostmaul giants had noticed the dead comrades in their midst and turned, roaring in rage and fury as they charged toward where Tyrande was on her perch. The giants tried to climb up the edge of the rocky promontory, only to run into the wards Harry had set up. The first few giants froze, their hands tearing into the stone even as they ran into the paralysis wards. Two more giants climbed over their frozen fellows. But Quetzal smacked them off, the giants being forced to use their hands and feet to climb up the mountain face meant that they couldn't protect themselves from the snake's tail.

As the giants began to turn their attention to Tyrande, Harry attacked from behind. "Reducto," He murmured, the cutting spell, which he was now overpowering thanks to having run into the magical resistance of the Frostmaul giants before, lashed out into the mass of the Frostmaul giants. His spell cut into several giants, maiming several but killing none. His next Reducto though downed almost as many as the first had injured permanently. At that point the giants seemed torn, debating on which enemy to attack, but since Harry was still under his Invisibility cloak, the spells seemed to come from nowhere, despite the fact he was standing out in the open.

"Bombarda!" Harry went on, sending explosive spells into the mass of giants, while Tyrande kept up her attack at range.

Soon the last of the giants was down, and Harry, still invisible moved forward, making certain all of the Frostmaul giants were dead. Tyrande scaled down from her former position, with Quetzal moving after her. "Well, that was relatively easy," Harry quipped.

"These creatures aren't intelligent enough to require any grand battle plan, and they seem extremely susceptible to simple ruses and confusion. I have to wonder if they would even have noticed my depredations if they could have continued slaying your conjured creatures. By the way, those beasts are not taken from somewhere else, are they?" She actually glared at Harry as she said that.

"Heh, didn't think of you as someone who would like bunnies, I thought you were a cat woman," Harry teased, but when Tyrande's ears flicked down and her eyes narrowed he went on hurriedly. "Er, no. That would be a summoning spell that would bring a living animal to me. A summoning spell has to be specific, and I honestly only know how to summon snakes and mice."

At that, Tyrande's look became somewhat more wary than angry. "Why mice?"

"Something to feed the snakes for their help of course," Harry replied, as if it was the most logical thing in the world. "You can't eat conjured food, you know."

Tyrande kept glaring for a moment then laughed, shaking her head, her ears standing upright once more. "Truly, you are a droll fellow, Harry Potter. You remind me very much of a young Malfurion, before he found his calling or I mine. I have always felt a decent sense of humor is necessary in this life." Her eyes narrowed then. "I just hope that your sense of humor does not include practical jokes. Or those mice. If it does I will stick my double-bladed swords into places you will not like, am I clear?"

Chuckling Harry held up his hand, glad that the woman was willing to joke with him, despite the wariness he could still see in her eyes when he used magic. *Yet it's my magic that makes her uneasy, not the fact I'm a different race. Well, my magic and the fact we don't actually know one another very well, Harry thought ruefully. Still she seems open to being friends at least. Although, dropping her boyfriend's name... was I accidentally looking where I shouldn't again? Something to be aware of.* "Duly noted, Miss."

Tyrande then turned her head towards the caverns. "But now, show me this black stone."

Grimacing, Harry nodded, and after asking Quetzal to stay outside on guard he turned to lead the way towards the nearest cavern entrance. The snake grumbled a bit, "Oh yes, now that the transportation and fighting is done, why don't we just leave the snake out in the cold. Nevermind that it's utterly unusual for a snake to be around in wintertime, let alone out and about all this snow. Oh woe is me..."

Turning, Harry cast a warming charm on the snake again, and heard his hissing turn into one of pleasure. "Better?"

"§Oh yes, that's the stuffs,§" the snake murmured, for all the world like a druggie that had just gotten a hit.

Harry frowned a little at that, whispering to Tyrande, "Is it possible for a snake to get addicted to feeling like he's in the sun all the time?"

While Quetzal hissed out, "§And what's wrong with that!?!§" Tyrande shrugged although she was smiling at the interaction, and the fact that she could still understand the snake.

Oh yes, just his ability to translate things is going to turn out to be a major boon for my people, if I can get them to accept him. "I do not know, though I confess to not having much to do with snakes or any kind of reptiles over my lifetime. I have always, as you put it, been a cat person, although it has been nearly 1000 years since I last bonded with a single animal. My duties as high priestess have allowed me much time for such things."

"I've heard about the Sentinels and their bonded animals. How does that work actually?"

That talk took them to the entrance to the cavern, as Tyrande explained the process through which a Sentinel. With the use of water from the cup of Elune could come to almost share the thoughts of her chosen animal. The two would then act as one, with the Sentinel able to direct and ride the animal in question, who would also be able to convey his or her own thoughts to the Sentinel. "But only in emotions and images, not words like your translation spell allowed with the Frostsabers. It will be fascinating to discover if other mounts have the ability to communicate so well," she enthused.

"They should, given the intelligence of the Frostsabers. But I understand most of them are cats too, and as I've always thought of myself as more of a dog person. So will it be hate on sight if I ever meet one of your Sentinels?" Harry teased, although there was some seriousness below that. Harry was indeed worried he would be either attacked on sight as a stranger or as an Arcana user by other Kaldorei.

"You will not be attacked out of the blue, never fear. The Nature Magic I sense about you would preclude that. And once the two of us get to know one another, I will further vouch for you to my people," Tyrande soothed, somewhat amused by his joke about being a dog person. She couldn't see it, honestly.

Yet as they entered the cavern proper, Tyrande's attitude turned serious. She frowned, looking around, and shaking her head, holding up a hand to stop Harry's current joke. "I feel a subtle, almost cloying sense of decay perhaps, in the air. It is hard to put into words."

Harry just nodded. Although he didn't feel it as Tyrande did, he too knew the black stone was unnatural.

Moving forward, Harry banished the remains of the animals the Frostmaul giants had been eating, showing her the stone underneath. With the carcasses out of the way the black stone was larger than he had expected, almost bulging out from the ground of the cavern in a low dome-like shape about the same size as his outstretched arm, although shaped more like a long ovoid. And as Harry looked at it, within its depths Harry could see a faint throbbing almost, like a pulse from the stone itself. "Is it... alive?"

"No," Tyrande said coldly, her lips peeled back slightly in a small scowl. "Although that does not mean that it is any less foul!" She moved around it for a time, frowning, then looking over at Harry. "I do not suppose that you could create something for me to write with, some kind of parchment and ink?"

"I have parchment in my trunk, and a pen too," Harry replied, tapping the small square box hanging from his neck.

A second later, she watched as he once more enlarged the trunk, rifling around inside it. Tyrande had seen this before when Harry had prepared to make the 'runic arrays' that he had put down to help guard the Frostsabers' cave, but she hadn't watched closely, having been

busy playing with Shy-rotam. Now once more Harry's magic interested her. It is so much more utilitarian than most any magic I have seen before. Fascinating.

Tyrande's fascination increased alongside her confusion when Harry handed over a pen, Tyrande looked at it in confusion, then at Harry's gesture pushed down at the top, and watched as a bit came out of the bottom. She looked at it in wonder, turning it this way and that, seeing the liquid move ever so slightly inside. "Amazing! And what is this material?"

"Plastic, but don't ask me how it's made, I don't think I could explain, since I don't know myself." When Tyrande looked at Harry in confusion, he shrugged. "Could you explain everything to me about how to make boots or jewelry?"

"Beyond making it shiny, and making them fit the person, no," Tyrande conceded before sighing take his paper that Harry had handed her and drawing a description of the rock along with her own impressions of it.

"What are you doing?"

"Just because I am on sabbatical does not mean that my duty to my people stops entirely. I must send a message to the Council to make certain that they are on the lookout for stones like this. Especially if there is any connection between it and the satyrs and their own activities. But do not worry, I will not say anything about you or your abilities."

While wondering how she was going to send the message, Harry just nodded, staring at the stone himself in thought. "... I'm going to try something. It might not work, but it shouldn't hurt."

Tyrande looked up from her note-writing in confusion but watched as Harry held out his hand. Using the memories of his happy time in the forest, with Cenarius, Quetzal and Lunara, Harry whispered out the words for his spell. "Expecto Patronum."

From his outstretched blasted out a giant, silvery phoenix causing Harry to start surprise. This was the first time he'd used the Patronus spell unmodified since his rebirth, and a part of him realized he shouldn't have been surprised it had changed forms, but he had been. And besides being a different form, this new shape seemed both somehow more Harry's in some fashion. His father's Animagus form had seemed a connection to his past family, which he had longed for when he first learned the spell. The phoenix though, that connected to his life now.

Harry could also tell the Patronus was more powerful. The feeling of goodness, of fierce protectiveness and joy blasted out from the magical construct, filling the cave to a degree Harry had never felt before.

Tyrande gasped in delight, staring at the thing. It is as if Elune's light was given form, Although that wasn't the case. As inviting and protective as Elune was, never had calling upon her power brought along this feeling of such joy. Goodness, yes, but not joy and happiness in that act alone.

The Patronus flew twice around the cavern, then to Harry's surprise, ignored him to alight down next to Tyrande staring at her in curiosity. *Huh, it's rather more curious and alive acting than most Patronus I've seen. Is it because of Azeroth's ambient magic?*

Tentatively, Tyrande reached out a hand, and began to stroke its plumage, astonished to almost feel the sensation of real feathers under her fingers. "This is amazing! What kind of spell is this, Harry Potter?"

"Do you remember me saying that I had a spell which could scare off those soul eaters back in... where I had lived previously? This is it," Harry gestured, and ordered the Patronus to attack the black rock. "Now, if I had ordered my Patronus to attack a Dementor, the Dementor would have been destroyed, let's see what happens here."

Unfortunately, as the Phoenix turned in the direction of the stone, it already began to lose its corporeal form. Harry grimaced, and reached out a hand, closing his eyes and concentrating, pushing more of his magic into the spell, further empowering it. With that, the creature of light flashed towards the stone, landing on top of it.

But a bare instant later it was almost instantly dispelled in a pop of air and blazing light, so loud it hurt Tyrande's ears.

Harry gasped as the blowback from having his spell broken like that hit him, along with the normal tiredness from holding such a power-intensive spell. He stumbled, but Tyrande caught his arm, glaring at the stone. She could see gouges that had been almost burned out of the stone by the phoenix's talons. These gouges were currently glowing almost with black energy, like bleeding wounds. *Or was the stone at one point a liquid? Is it more like ice instead of stone, or is it somehow volcanic in nature?*

Whatever the case, and she made a point to remember to put that concept down, Harry's attempt to destroy it had not worked.

As she helped the young human over to the cavern entrance and leaned him against the wall there, Tyrande mused aloud, "But I think you are on the right track, a **cleansing** is what is needed here, not an attempt to destroy it. Destroying it, unless we could do away with it entirely, would simply leave it in smaller bits, its nature would not change.

Tyrande cocked her head staring at the stone and frowning in thought, one finger going up to an ear and gently moving along the underside of it in what Harry recognized as a thinking

gesture. "Silver," she said aloud, "silver and Elune's blessing. Do you think you could conjure true silver into being?"

Harry nodded. "I can transfigure something into silver or conjure it, but it won't last very long. Hard metals, especially rare ones, like that are tougher than say changing one stone to another or chancing something into iron or steel. I'm not certain that conjured silver will do for what you want."

"At the moment, I'm not even certain that what I want will work," Tyrande admitted. "However, looking at that stone, I am more positive than ever that it is a foul, unnatural thing, and should be destroyed." She looked back towards the entrance to the cavern, then back to the stone "I only hope that there are not too many similar sites."

"In relation to the size of these mountain ranges, there probably won't be, but even one is bad," Harry agreed. He stood up, pushing away from the wall of the cavern, then looking at Tyrande. "I think I might be able to destroy that stone through continued use of the Patronus charm, but I don't know, and even if it worked, it might put me on my rear for several days. If I could figure out a way to use Nature Magic to power the darn spell maybe it would be better," he grumbled, smacking his hand against the side of the stone. "But I don't know how."

"After less than a year with Cenarius even being able to feel Nature Magic is amazing, Harry. Do not denigrate your achievements. Malfurion took nearly a century before he could do the same to any extent," Tyrande soothed, a faint smile on her face as she remember that time, when she, Illidan, and Malfurion were young. *Things were much simpler then, before they began to fight for my hand, before I found my calling as a priestess, and before Azshara's fall from grace.*

With a shake of her head, Tyrande turned her attention to more practical matters. "First, I think that we need to open this cavern. Do you think you could carve out a large enough hole in the ceiling? Without bringing the whole thing down," she added hastily. "That would rather defeat the purpose."

Harry frowned staring up at the ceiling. "Maybe a slow melting spell, or a drilling spell of some kind? The whole not wanting to bring the whole cavern down does limit my choices. But yes I can do that, I think. Just will take a bit of research and trial and error."

"What can I do to help?" Tyrande asked earnestly.

Harry's stomach grumbled, and he shrugged. "Prepare a campfire and some food?"

"I had forgotten for a time how young you are," Tyrande laughed, shaking her head. "The young are always hungry, I suppose, regardless of race."

Harry rolled his eyes but didn't reply. It was true, after all. His body was young and the whole idea about teenagers being walking stomachs had some firm basis in fact.

By the time Harry had figured out what kind of spell he wanted to use and had begun the work on creating a tunnel up through the ceiling of the cavern to let in daylight, Tyrande had returned, and had begun to cook over the fire. She had found some fresh herbs somehow, and had trapped a hare, which was cooking over the fire as Harry came out of the cavern. But that wasn't as surprising as the fact that a giant owl almost as large as Harry was sitting on a rocky perch nearby, as Tyrande put the finishing touches on a message, and tied it to his foot.

The giant bird turned staring at Harry, fluffing up its wings, and looking at him as Harry slumped down next to the fire. "All done. Controlling that spell was a little more difficult than I had thought though." Harry had decided to use the Gouging Spell, which he had initially learned in Herbology of all things, . But continually using it through the bedrock of the mountain had been tiring. "But where did the bird come from?"

"I called for him," Tyrande said simply, watching as the bird continued to stare at Harry, then made a happy sounding hoot, as Harry moved over and began to stroke its plumage. A bird like this would normally not even be pleased to be in the presence of most Kaldorei, let alone a human, a being from someplace beyond the forest. But the touch of Nature Magic within Harry was such that enjoyed his presence. "It will take my message back to the council."

"And will they then send help up here?" Harry asked, suddenly wary. He knew that the majority of Kaldorei would not be nearly as accepting of him and his magic as Tyrande was, regardless of his connection to Cenarius. He might get a pass from the druids who looked to Cenarius as their ultimate teacher, but not from the rest of their society.

"No. That would be pointless and would interrupt my time away from my guardians and fellow leaders, which I am not willing to do. I merely told them to be on the lookout for more black stone is all." Tyrande looked at Harry, understanding his worry, but not addressing it. It was true after all, her people would not be happy to see someone using Arcana-type magic as openly as Harry did. And few among them would understand that it came from an entirely different type of school than that which had been previously used by the Highborne.

Instead Tyrande deliberately changed the subject, asking "Are you strong enough to start to try conjuring silver?"

Harry thought about it, then asked, "Why silver? Where I come from it has a certain defensive property against one or two types of so-called dark creatures, but..."

"Here it is the metal most easily blessed by Elune. Once that is accomplished, the silver has some holy properties. With that directly touching the black stone, and with the moon above, I believe that I can call upon Elune to erase the taint of that stone."

Harry's eyes widened at that, and he suddenly nodded, looking eager. This would be an entirely different kind of magic, one that he had never seen before, not even from Cenarius and his family. Though they revered Elune, none of them called upon her for their power. "I'll start experimenting. I don't know which method of transmutation will work best, but I can find out," he said earnestly. "But that means that we will have to stay here until nightfall, right?"

Tyrande nodded, and sniffing the air, moved over to the fire, removing the skinned hare from its bed of fresh herbs. "This is ready". The two of them ate in silence, both of them lost in their own thoughts, but strangely it wasn't an uncomfortable silence for either of them.

After having a piece of the hare, the owl took off, winging through the air with a long hoot trailing behind it. Quetzal, after demanding another heating spell from Harry, curled up around him, warming Harry in turn, as he began to take several flat stones out of his trunk along with an etching kit, working on a series of protective wards to put up during the night. Then Harry began to experiment, conjuring into being a small silver pin, and then transfiguring a piece of stone from nearby of similar size.

It turned out that transfigured silver lasted longer, although both lasted far longer than Harry had expected. In his old world, transfiguring anything to silver or metal never lasted very long. And conjuration lasted for even less time. That was alchemy territory. But here, the rules seemed a bit more elastic. The transfigured item lasted for about three hours.

By the time Tyrande came back from hunting once more he had repeated the experiment and had just created a large silver ingot around the side of his forearm as she appeared, racing up the steps like the wind. The Kaldorei woman carried two birds, which made Harry wince. He had stopped eating birds during his time with Cenarius, and even now he decided that he would rather go hungry instead.

For the rest of the day, as Harry worked on his ward stones, Tyrande watched the silver, occasionally reaching out to touch it, closing her eyes and trying to commune with Elune. During the day that was much tougher than at night, but she still got the impression that Elune approved, and that what Tyrande wanted was indeed possible with transfigured silver.

When the moon rose once more that night Tyrande smiled up at it, her hands outstretched to either side of her as she began once again to commune with her goddess as she murmured the words to a prayer. The connection now came quickly and Tyrande's smile widened slightly before she concentrated on her task.

In front of her, the latest bit of conjured silver lay, the same size as his third experiment, conjured out of the same lump of stone and from nearby Harry watched intently. He could almost feel some kind of power, a new kind of magical energy moving within Tyrande. For a moment it was almost like he was sensing Nature Magic again for the first time, but on an entirely different frequency perhaps. It was very interesting, but that faint sense was all he could feel from it.

Tyrande touched the silver. For several moments, Harry and Quetzal both watched, as she simply held the silver in her hands in order to catch the light of the moon above. Then the ingot began to glow with its own internal light for a second, gleaming like a shard of the moon had come down and taken solid form in between Tyrande's hands. She stood up, nodded to Harry, and said simply, "Come, it is time to deal with this aberration to the natural order of the world."

Harry nodded wordlessly, deciding that speaking further would somehow break the mystical moment that had come upon them at the moment. *Is this what muggles think when they see magic, that they are seeing something unfathomable?*

The two of them moved into the cavern, where Tyrande set the silver down, and asked Harry if he could magic it up onto the black stone. She did so through gestures, as if Tyrande too felt that speaking at the moment would somehow ruin the mystical energies around them. Nodding, Harry gestured with his fingers, casting a Leviosa spell on the silver, and then gesturing it forward, until it clinked gently down on top of the black stone.

Above, the silver light of the moon shone through the hole that Harry had created, bathing both the cavern and the silver in its light. Once more, the silver, which had dimmed during the brief walk through the short tunnel, seemed to glow, and Tyrande stepped forward, her hands outstretched in prayer, her eyes closed at the moment as she mouthed the words of a prayer again, asking the goddess for aid in cleansing this place.

The beam of moonlight from above seems to grow brighter, and Tyrande and the ingot of silver both shimmered in reflected glory, while the black stone underneath began to smoke and sizzle, foul smoke erupting from where it touched the silver.

The gleaming from the silver quickly became so bright that Harry had to close his eyes, and he could still see through his eyelids that the glow was getting brighter and brighter that seem ethereal glow, coming from the silver itself. Behind him, Quetzal, who had followed them in, ducking his head and closing his eyes tightly, twisting around and exiting the cave quickly. "§I don't think you need to be here for this,§" the snake hissed. "§And something tells me that something is about to go boom.§"

Harry's instincts were also telling him the same thing, but instead of running, he moved towards Tyrande, arriving just as the reflected light within her went out. She stumbled back but Harry grabbed her arm, and asked lightly, "So, is this when we run?"

Wordlessly, Tyrande nodded her head, too tired to speak, and Harry propelled her towards the nearest entrance to the cavern. The two of them had barely gotten outside when there was a tremendous crackling 'boom' behind them, and a rumble of displaced stone.

As he turned around at the entrance Harry saw that the cavern hadn't been destroyed, but the black stone certainly had been. Thanks to the light of the moon above he could stare

straight into cavern now and could see that the black stone was completely gone. In its place was a kind of splash of silver and black marks spread out across the stone of the cavern.

Beside him, Tyrande straightened up, also turning to stare, her breath coming in gasps. "Ask, and Elune provides." That was as far as Tyrande got before she collapsed, the spellwork having utterly drained her.

And why wouldn't it? Communing with her goddess, she had been informed that she was correct, the black stone was from the Old God Yogg-Saron. It was in fact the foul being's own blood, the blood seeped into the stone of his prison and then eventually forming in tiny veins through the stone up to the surface. The prison was still strong, the creature could not break free, but as Tyrande had told Harry, it could certainly still influence events.

Luckily, once destroyed, the stone would not be able to reform for a long while even as the Kaldorei thought of such things. It took thousands of years for even a tiny droplet of his black ichor to reach the surface, and far longer for it to build up to the point of being able to create such abominations as the Frostmaul giants. These droplets of black stone had been here since before the Sundering.

Not that this particularly mattered at the moment, as Tyrande collapsed into unconsciousness, stumbling to the side and down to the ground like a marionette with her strings cut.

Harry caught her, but in so doing, he had forgotten one important factor. Tyrande was quite a bit taller than his currently teenage body. Catching her like this, his arms around her waist, had pressed the Tyrande's chest directly into Harry's face, filling his nose with her smell, a kind of lavender and flowery scent of some kind, which, coupled with the feel of her soft skin against his face was enough to cause a bright blush to cross his features.

Nearby, Quetzal hissed in amusement. "§I thought that touching a mammal in the mammary glands was supposed to be some kind of sexual thing. Is that not the case, Harry? Not that I can see the appeal myself.§"

Turning his head very slightly, which caused Tyrande's breasts to bounce lightly against his head, Harry glared as well as he could through his current blush at his reptilian companion. "We will never speak of this ever, am I Understood? Not even Tyrande will know of this moment. Or do you want to taste the scent of skunk whenever you eat **anything** for the rest of your natural life?"

"§I'll be good,§" Quetzal replied hastily, although he was still hissing to himself in amusement, his tongue flicking in and out. He was greatly amused by his friend's embarrassment right now.

With Quetzal carrying Tyrande, the two of them cleaned up their campsite, moving it back down the trail a bit. Harry had a thought of retreating entirely to where they had met the Frostsabers but decided that might take them in the wrong direction from the next target, and so made camp a little ways down from where the steps had begun. This also served as a more defensible position, just in case the other Frostmaul giants became aware of the destruction of their fellows somehow. After what he had just seen, Harry was not going to assume that anything was impossible.

They stayed there for two days, with Quetzal and Harry doing some hunting, and between them they sacred a giant bear out of hibernation. It had seemingly been able to avoid the Frostmaul giants somehow but in attacking Quetzal showed that had been luck rather than basic intelligence or instincts.

On the second night of their stay at the steps, Tyrande revived as the moon once more rose into the sky. The first words out of her mouth were, "Did it work?"

Laughing, Harry said that it had, and told her about what he had discovered when he reentered the cavern.

"Good," Tyrande said with a sigh, then, she blushed very lightly, her lavender skin noticeably darkening around her face, as her stomach roared in hunger. "I don't suppose we have some food?"

"Would bear stew do?"

Evidently it did, because in the next few moments, Tyrande had three helpings of it. After her hunger had been sated, Tyrande said thoughtfully, "That is what we will have to with all such places I'm afraid. While I was communing with Elune, she gave me some information about that black stone, which she called saronite." With that, she relayed what her goddess had told her of the blood of Yogg-Saron.

Harry frowned, wondering if there was a way to stop the saronite from rising to the surface like that. *But if it just pools underneath, would it then start corrupting the land and the mountains? I just don't know enough about how that would go frankly. Nor Harry thought ruefully do I have any idea of how to stop it from happening in the first place.* Instead of giving voice to those thoughts, he asked, "And will it put you out next time like it did here?"

"Perhaps. Being the conduit for my goddess's power is draining normally. Being the conduit as she does battle with the blood of an Old God, a creation of pure corruption? That was worse." Tyrande shrugged. "Still, it must be done to do away with the Frostmaul giants at the very least. I can only hope that such patches of foulness have not begun to appear in the forest."

"Then I suppose that we should get going," Harry said, standing up and moving around the camp cleaning up, knowing Tyrande preferred to travel at night. "That is unless you want to rest some more."

Tyrande shook her head, then with a smile gestured to Quetzal, who had been watching their discussion from nearby. "I can rest as we go."

"§Oh yes, that's me, just the beast of burden to you two legs,§" Quetzal muttered, but he was too full of bear meat to put the proper amount of sarcasm into his voice.

With a plan in place, and a chosen method of attack, the various battles against the Frostmaul giants became rather straightforward. Find them, place Tyrande nearby, defend Tyrande with wards, conjure bunnies, attack from behind. Rinse, repeat. Fighting truly stupid enemies was a treasure that neither Tyrande nor Harry had much experience with, but they were greatly enjoying it now. Although of course, as Harry had been concerned about, dealing with the saronite still took time.

Nor did that time decrease as Tyrande continued to act as a conduit for Elune's power. Every cleansing would see her unconscious for at least two days, and sometimes as many as four days, reviving as the moon came up.

Time passed quickly as the trio traversed the mountains. Even with Quetzal and Harry's spellwork, it was often slow going, and as they moved through the mountains, finding food also became somewhat troublesome, taking time out from their travelling.

And then there was the weather to deal with, which was often very nasty. Even Kaldorei and Harry with his magic spells could not see well in a blizzard.

But despite that, the ease of the actual battles allowed them to concentrate more on getting to know one another. Although they did abandon the twenty questions format. Looking back on it later, Harry felt that there were a few moments that meant the most to him, and though he didn't know it, Tyrande too, as they moved from acquaintances to traveling companions and fellow warriors, to actual friends.

The first occurred five weeks and three similar ambushes later. It began with Harry and Quetzal trading barbs and gibes. Quetzal had just insulted Harry's physical youth and had hinted at the moment with Tyrande after that first ambush, and Harry had quickly silenced the snake. This infuriated Quetzal, and he quickly shimmied, tossing Harry off his body and Tyrande too. Tyrande was able to use her Kaldorei reflexes to grab at a passing tree, which had grown out of a small crack in the mountain. Harry however was smacked into the snow, where Quetzal's tail thwacked him down deeper into it before lifting away.

Gasping, Harry pushed himself with difficulty out of the snow, the snow having been the kind of white puffy snow that had barely anything to push out of. He glared angrily at his

companion, while Tyrande pulled herself up and onto it as she watched proceedings. "What did you do that for!?"

Quetzal glared at him, flipping his tongue towards his mouth, and opening his maw wide, obviously angrily, although the sound was still silenced.

Grumbling, Harry canceled the silence spell on his companion, but then used a modified Accio spell, like the one he had used to grab multiple fish, to grab up a giant amount of snow, packing it into a large snowball and then tossing it at the snack. "I think you need to cool off!"

"§You warm-blooded bastard! This means war!§" Quetzal gasped as the large snow smashed into his face. He then retaliated, using his tail to smash some snow back towards Harry like a wave.

As Tyrande watched, shaking her head in amusement, the two of them began a snow fight. "Given your age, I suppose I should not be surprised that you have moments of childishness like this," she said aloud, only to squawk as a snowball hit her, levitated up from behind and flung with unerring accuracy into the side of Tyrande's face.

She glared down at Harry, who grinned up at her. "After the life I've led, I think I deserve to have some moments of childishness," he quipped.

Tyrande's eye narrowed. "I know you are older than you looked. But by how much?"

Harry shrugged, not answering but Tyrande sensed a moment of seriousness. Yet after a few moments, she shook her head. Then she reached over to a crook in the tree which had accumulated some snow of its own and began to create her own snowball. "And this is supposed to be my sabbatical after all. Acting like a child for an hour should be alright."

With that, she flung the snowball down with unerring accuracy right into Harry's face. Harry would tell her what he wanted when he was ready. Until then, Tyrande would not pry. Harry recognized this, and even as he fell backward sent her a wider smile than normal.

The two of them also had several discussions about past battles now that Harry being much older than he looked was out in the open, if not the method behind his rebirth. And both of them discovered that they had similar codes in a way, a mixture of honor, pragmatism and kindness. Harry in turn learned about the histories of her people from Tyrande's view, the view of a person who had been involved with many of the greatest, most momentous moments in that history.

One evening, they had fallen back to the copse of trees where they had first met the Frostsabers. There they found that several other smaller families of Frostsabers had joined the king and queen's clan there. The king had sent out lone hunters in search of their fellows, and

as Harry and Tyrande had begun to prune back the numbers of Frostmaul giants, this task had begun to bear fruit.

Tyrande spent much of the night playing around with Shy-rotam, which Harry had thought ridiculously cute, seeing the last bits of her decorum and self-control disappearing. But he wouldn't say it aloud. After all, she had joined his moment of childishness. So instead he played around with a few of the other cubs, while Quetzal watched in somnolent torpor, having eaten the better part of another bear who had decided it didn't like the giant snake coming into its lair.

Shy-rotam had grown quite a bit in the months since they had been here, and Tyrande had quite a lot of fun roughhousing with the little Frostsaber, enhancing their connection further. Now, with Shy-rotam curled up on her legs, Tyrande sat down with Harry for a meal he had cooked at the fire. Eventually as the day wore on, she opened up about her involvement with the overthrowing of Queen Azshara. That movement, and the reason behind it, was the moment that had truly shaped Kaldorei history. And yet, though it was almost six thousand years in the past, it remained prominent in her thoughts.

"It was necessary, but I never wanted to be our leader. But when Prince Farondis died, someone had to take command of the rebellion. And that was Malfurion and I. Now Malfurion is involved in the battle in the Emerald Dream, keeping Yogg-Saron's darkness at bay there, while I lead our people. Now I cannot turn away from it. Especially now perhaps, when in this time of peace, factions and divisions are arising within my people. That cannot be allowed to go so far as to damage our unity."

"Then I suppose we have something in common, although you couldn't pay me to become a leader," Harry said with a chuckle, that was almost but not quite bitter. Tyrande looked at him in question, and he shrugged his shoulders. "Neither of us have it within us to turn away when we see something that needs doing, particularly when it comes to defending other people."

Tyrande smiled at that, and then allowed her expression to turn sardonic as she once more showed her own sense of humor by looking around them then back to Harry. "You don't say..."

Another moment on Tyrande's side came several months after that discussion. They had decided to push on during the day due to a heavy snowstorm having fallen the past few nights, slowing their progress significantly.

In the light of day, Tyrande looked at Harry thoughtfully, causing him to ask her what was wrong. "I don't have something on my face, do I?"

"In a way you do. Hairs," she supplied with a chuckle. "You seem to be growing a beard. And at such a young age for your people too. At least what I assume is a young age, perhaps your people mature faster than mine in that manner as well as in others."

"Sixteen going on seventeen? That's pretty young for us yes," Harry answered dryly. "Not that that ever... well never mind." Harry raised a hand, and touched his face, feeling the hairs there. "That's interesting, I don't remember growing hair like this was when I was this age before. Still, I don't think it is all that unusual."

While he hadn't shared the full details about his new lease on life, Tyrande understood that this was indeed a second life for Harry in some fashion, though she didn't know how it had come about. That was somewhat worrisome, but again, Harry's general attitude, and the fact that he was a student of Cenarius kept it from bothering Tyrande too much.

"Truly? Growing a beard so young was not unusual among your people?"

"I wouldn't call it a beard," Harry chuckled, "more peach fuzz than anything else."

"And yet, even that is more than most of the men of my race would be able to do at anything less than two hundred years old. Indeed even afterwards our males take decades to grow much of anything. I know many a Kaldorei youth who would love to be able to grow a beard so quickly. My mate Malfurion, spent more than a two decades growing his beard."

Harry shook his head with a laugh. "That speaks of far more dedication to a beard than I could ever have, in fact, I'm thinking about shaving this bit off."

That caused Tyrande to blink in surprise. "Everything? Why ever would you do so?"

"Because it itches something fierce," Harry said with a laugh, causing Tyrande to laugh aloud as well, shaking her head with a chuckle at her friend's words, then pausing suddenly as she realized that she had thought of Harry as a friend despite the fact that the two of them had not even spent a year getting to know one another yet. *And yet, perhaps it is not so unusual as it might seem at first.* She thought, allowing her smile to widened, at which Harry's did the same.

There were lots of little moments like that. When he created the bath for them, two separate ones, separated by the vast bulk of Quetzal, who reveled in the heat coming off of the bath. Harry didn't peek, despite the frank appreciation Tyrande could see in his eyes occasionally when he looked at her. Indeed, beyond looking at her as if she was a woman, which few of her own people would allow themselves to do, Harry was always the perfect gentlemen, despite the teasing she inflicted on him occasionally for his physical age.

Another moment was when Tyrande told Harry more about her lover, and when Harry in turn told Tyrande about his past associations. Ginny and the two of them breaking up in

order to defend Ginny's family. Hermione, and how he had refused to become involved with her for fear of what might have happened. Tyrande had completely understood that decision and talked about how she and Malfurion had been leery of becoming involved for fear of one or the other being seen as a target for their enemies.

"We did get together, but by that point neither of us had any family left to threaten, save Illidan, and he was far more dangerous in a fight than either of us. I completely understand why you and Hermione made that decision. In a perfect world I have no doubt you and she would be happy together, friends make for the best lovers. But this is not a perfect world, Harry Potter, no matter where you came from that truth is eternal. And you are the type to run to the sounds of battle. Anyone with you must be willing and able to do the same."

"I understand that. But understanding doesn't make it any easier to live with though," Harry retorted somewhat tartly.

"No, nor should it. Life is often bittersweet filled with what ifs and supposes. The trick is to not get tied down by them," Tyrande answered serenely.

The campaign into the mountains lasted nearly eight months and perhaps the most important discussion in terms of Harry's growth going into the future occurred as the campaign began to wind down, the trips between ambushes becoming longer and longer. The Point Me spell was simply that useful, but the weather was against them more often than not, and at times they did have to find ways around certain obstacles. Yet the Frostmaul giants themselves were no real threat to either of them.

They checked back in with the Frostsabers every month, finding more and more Frostsabers congregating in that secret Dell every time. By the time the campaign started to wind down, bands of Frostsabers had been sent down into the hills for food for the growing clan. Normally lone hunters, many had begun to learn to band together as wolves did.

That night, after again playing with Shy-rotam, who now was big enough that Tyrande felt that she would be taking Shy-rotam with her when she left the mountains, Harry explained about what he had been studying with Cenarius, and the problems he was running into with learning Nature Magic. "I don't know why, but I've run into some kind of bottleneck. Cenarius said it is probably because of my Chimera status, and my not understanding my own nature."

Harry shook his head, remembering the last conversation he had with his Shan'do. "He said to get in touch with my various sides, but I don't even know where to begin with the Basilisk. I've tried to meditate on it, thinking it might be like Quetzal, but it hasn't worked. I mean let's face it, the only basilisk I ever met was the one that injected me with its venom to the point that I needed Phoenix tears to stay alive."

"§One snake is most decidedly like another, as I've told you before,§" Quetzal retorted, the words 'idiot' left unsaid but certainly hinted at.

“Oy, I know that idiot, I just through that observing you or a cobra would give me an idea of what the basilisk side of me is like. But then again, even my attempts to get in touch with my phoenix side hasn’t worked. No matter how hard I try to meditate while remembering Fawkes or anything I think is connected to a phoenix hasn’t worked.”

By this point, Harry had shared his status with Tyrande, although he was still silent on where he had come from. Still, Tyrande had gotten enough hints at this point to believe that Harry was a planeswalker, coming from some other world to this one. That should have made Tyrande even more concerned about him, and why he was here. But every time she communed with Elune during the past few months to ask for aid in destroying the saronite deposits, Elune had been very firm. Harry was not here to cause problems, although problems might come from his being here. Rather, Harry was here as an ally, and eventually, perhaps as important an ally as the green or red dragon flight.

Although she was still somewhat bemused by the idea of phoenix tears. An animal’s tears having such amazing healing properties? That was very strange. Basilisk venom at least she could understand, generally speaking. But the two of them combining to change Harry on such a fundamental level? Now as the two friends continued to bicker, Tyrande leaned back, her cub curled up next to them, stroking the young female feline’s head as she thought about Harry’s issues, when an idea came to her.

Gently coughing she drew her friend’s attention and began. “I think part of the problem with your interacting with Nature Magic comes from the fact that you are trying to learn like a Kaldorei. Meditate about connecting to nature, reaching out to the Emerald Dream as a whole before, eventually, deciding on which animal or animals to begin to emulate. Perhaps that is not the way forward for you. Perhaps, you need a new medium. One that will allow you in turn to understand the animals within.”

Then Tyrande laughed. “And of course, you don't have twenty to thirty years to spend in meditation before discovering your own connection to nature.”

“No I don't,” Harry chuckled as well. “I mean I probably could use that time, but I don't know if I would be able to stay on task for that long. But what do you suggest?”

“There are other ways to commune with nature. Through the use of totems, sacred beasts and shamanism rather than directly as Cenarius would teach you.” She coughed delicately, looking away. “Further, while Kaldorei are able to achieve certain mental states through dedication and fasting, you might not be able to do the same without... medicinal aid.”

Harry blinked, then nodded slowly, the movement speeding up as the idea took hold. “Like the Tauren? I ran into one of them during that whole satyr business. But he was so badly drained and weakened by whatever they had done to him that I sent him back to the Furbolg village where he had been staying.” Then his lips quirked. “And ‘medicinal aid’? Do explain that one Tyrande.”

"I understand that the Tauren, who really are the only race my people have had peaceful contact with, ingest certain herbs and herb smoke to aid them in achieving higher mental states as they commune with their totems, at least for the first few times." As Harry looked at her in amusement, Tyrande hastened on. "Most of the Tauren might have left Ashenvale for the south but others moved to the Broken Isles, and it is those who my people still have relations with. They are called the Highmountain Tribe, and their mountain bears the same name."

"That name, I recognize that from Cenarius' history lessons. That's the name of the Tauren leader who brought their tribes together to join with yours during the War of the Ancients, correct? Huln Highmountain."

"Yes. They have long been allies of my people, although distant ones. While the other Tauren tribes left our forests long ago and cut off contact, the Highmountain clan has never done so, and our warriors often journey to one another's lands. I think if you merge their teachings about sacred beasts with the meditation that Cenarius has been teaching you and your own people's mental disciplines, this Occlumency and mental realm business, it could work to get you in touch with your animal sides."

With a laugh, Harry got to his feet. "In that case, let's finish this campaign and then you can introduce me to the Tauren. After all, we are coming up on the end of your year-long sabbatical, aren't we?"

Tyrande actually winced at the reminder but nodded reluctantly. She was somewhat dreading going back to work, although not as high priestess. That, she would never regret in any way. But the mantle of leadership was still not one settled comfortably on her shoulders. "We might run out of time before we can leave for the Broken Isles, but if so, I will write you a letter of introduction to them." *Or perhaps make it a formal diplomatic mission. That seems like a better idea, frankly.*

Moreover, Tyrande knew that she would have to tell her fellow leaders about Harry, and she was not looking forward to it. The fear and loathing of the Arcana ran deep in her people. *Still, I will make them understand. Whatever else he might be, wherever he truly comes from, Harry is not evil, and I think he could be a very strong ally for our people.*

A month and a half later, most of which had been spent traveling to and from through the mountains, Harry's Point Me spell no longer found any Frostmaul giants. When he tried to use it to instead discover the black rock, no matter how he visualized the black rock in his mind when he cast the spell, it didn't work. It would simply point to the nearest stone that was colored black. So while the issue with the saronite might come back, there were no more Frostmaul giants living within these mountains.

With that, Tyrande, after one last visit to the Frostsabers where Shy-Rotam joined them. With the Frostsaber, now more than cub but nowhere near fully grown, gamboling alongside

them, Tyrande led them down into Ashenvale and then to the east to the edge of the forest and the continent of Kalimdor.

It took them about half a day of travel, but both Harry and Tyrande enjoyed once more being among the forest rather than above in the rocky, barren mountains of Wintersong. It was a completely new environment for Shy-Rotam, and the moment they got down into the tree line, the young frostsaber became almost entirely uncontrollable, moving around and sniffing at this and that, her whiskers twitching in delight.

“Ooh, what is that weird creature? What’s this tree called, ooh this flower smells nice, aAGGH, but this smells disgusting!” Shy-Rotam continued to growl out a non-stop stream of words flowing from her mouth as she raced from one thing to another through the shadows of the forest, delighting in every sense and scent.

Watching this, Tyrande was amused, waiting for her young bonded to come back to herself. “Do not go too far, Shy-Rotam,” she cautioned. “For all your ferocity, you are still a very young frostsaber, and you do not know what kind of threats there are in the forest.”

Watching this, Harry also had an amused look on his face as they continued down through the hills deeper into the shadowed forest below. Quetzal, on the other hand, did not look amused. Instead, the Needlespine Shimmerback looked affronted by it all. “You would never see a young snake acting in such a manner. Why cannot the youths of other races be as sedate and calm as we are?”

“Because young snakes, while interesting, are nowhere near as cute?” Tyrande asked, her eyes twinkling even more than their normal white light would allow for as she turned her gaze to the large snake.

Quetzal hissed out a harsh laugh, his tongue flicking out before he flicked it back into his mouth. “What is cute? Can you eat it, or is it some kind of combat ability? Can it make you better at hunting or hiding? If not, it is foolish to care overmuch about it.”

“Ah, but you are thinking too linearly, my fine scaled companion. Cute is important. In an animal, it can help protect one from being hunted by sentient creatures such as my race or the Kaldorei. In a sentient person, it can help in the early stages of the mating ritual.” Harry replied dryly, shaking his head in amusement again. He knew that part of Quetzal’s current annoyance was real, but a majority of it was because the snake enjoyed acting like snakes and other cold-blooded types were superior whenever he got the chance.

In response, Tyrande burst out into peals of laughter, shaking her head, throwing her hair in every direction, while Quetzal simply rolled his eyes. the sight was striking, the sapphire blue of her hair a backdrop to strands of silver that glowed with reflected moonlight, causing Harry to gulp a bit and look away.

Just then, as Quetzal turned his head to address Tyrande, Shy-Rotam pounced on his tail. The aggrieved snake hissed, twisting around his body and bearing its fangs at the frostsaber, but Shy-Rotam was fearless, hopping off of the snake's tail and smirking up at him in a particularly catlike manner. "Sorry, I thought it was a root..." she yowled in amusement.

"You did no such thing, you little..."

"Now, now," Tyrande said, getting between them. "Shy-Rotam, you know not to pounce on allies like that. Unless you're play fighting, and they know to expect it. And Quetzal, you should remember that for all my new familiar is young, she understands you just as well as we understand her thanks to Harry's translation spells and does not know if you are joking or not."

The two animals looked at one another, and Quetzal decided to be magnanimous about this. *I am the older, larger and far more powerful predator here, after all. No need to get my spines up at the foolish gamboling of a curious youngling.* "You are correct. I should learn more control of my tongue when dealing with the young of other races."

"And I'm sorry I pounced on your tail," Shy-Rotam answered quickly, then seemed to think about it. "Next time, I'll warn you I'm going to try first." With that, she was off again, sniffing the wind.

Tyrande laughed as Quetzal looked a little aggrieved before his serpentine features morphed into a lazy smirk. "Well, at least you will never need to question her spirit."

"Yep. And next time Quetzal, just flick Shy-Rotam off. She will get the hint that pouncing on you is not a good idea when she is sent flying. Just make sure to avoid the trees."

"That's a great idea, Quetzal said enthusiastically and very mockingly, as he looked around them at all of the trees that blocked their lines of sight in every direction. "How exactly would I avoid the trees again?"

Tyrande laughed, and Harry followed in turn before sobering a little as he heard a rustle in the bushes nearby and Shy-Rotam leaped out towards him, pouncing with a, "I'm going to get you!" coming from her mouth in the form of a rather cute roar.

The frostsaber, now being almost as large as Harry was tall, easily smacked Harry off his feet, landing on top of him with a woof of displaced air. Chuckling even as his ribs protested the treatment, Harry reached up and began to stroke her fur in just the right manner to cause the large frostsaber to purr. "And have you gotten it out of your system yet?"

Shy-Rotam nodded and moved over to Tyrande, rumbling happily as she leaned against her side. "When will we learn to hunt together? I have gone on some small hunts with my clan, but the scents here! There are bigger prey here and many different ones too!"

"We will spend a portion of every day on the hunt, yes," Tyrande answered, smiling and rubbing Shy-Rotam's fur as Harry had a moment ago, looking at Shy-Rotam's large paws,

estimating when Shy-Rotam would be large enough for Tyrande to ride. Another six months, perhaps. *Until then, teaching her how to move silently in the forest will only be a matter of awakening her instincts and putting them into action.*

Harry looked at Tyrande as Quetzal raised his head upward into the foliage of the nearby trees. Scaring several of the little strange monkey squirrel things that Harry had met upon his original arrival in Azeroth, a hiss of purely reptilian amusement accompanying the move. From his back, several needles shot up into the foliage, and one unlucky creature was struck twice, becoming paralyzed as the others scattered in fear at the giant serpent that had suddenly appeared among them.

Since it was too small to bother sharing, Quetzal didn't let the creature drop out of the tree. Instead, gobbling it up in a single bite. However, the giant snake knew he would need to eat eight or nine of them to be full. But one was enough to sate him for a day or so. "I vote for hunting in the morning," Quetzal announced as he joined the conversation, the prey so small it didn't even make a lump in the giant needlespine shimmerback's body. "Boars are always more active in the morning, are too stupid to know when they shouldn't attack someone, and they make excellent eating."

"Knowing boars as well as we got to over the time we were in the forest, I have no doubt that we will be hunting them first," Harry replied dryly, patting his snake companion on his massive side. "For now, though, um, where exactly are we going? These are your forests, and beyond knowing one direction from the other, I have no idea where we're going."

Tyrande laughed again, this time much more quietly than before. After a single glance around, she pointed in a direction out through the forest. "That way. We came down out of the Winterspring mountains at the far eastern edge of the range. So we will want to continue heading straight east for a time towards the coast and the port of Danavia. From there we will take to the Frozen Sea, in order to get to the Broken Isles."

As she led them off, Tyrande's mind wandered for a moment, trusting in her companions to warn her of any danger and honestly not expecting any. Instead, the high priestess of Elune was wondering about Harry, her new friend, and what was to come when he began to interact with her people. *Unfortunately, Danavia's Sentinel commander is one of the most outspoken against the arcane. Harry's introduction to the rest of my society might not be the smoothest. On the other hand, if he can win Nightshade over, he will probably win over most of my officers and people. And if not, meeting her will certainly prepare Harry for the worst.*

Almost as if he was reading her mind, Harry asked, "By the way, are you still concerned about how your people will react to me?"

"So long as they are willing to look past their prejudices, I believe that any of my people who get to know you will realize that you have nothing in common with the former Highborn

Arcanists that we were forced to banish, and certainly nothing to do with the royal court or our enemies. It is getting to that point that might cause issues,” Tyrande answered. “Still, I believe that you have a good chance of winning some acceptance if we can continue to introduce you to smaller groups of my people at a time.”

She shook her head. “And not, for example, the higher-ups of my government or the reactionary elements among the populace. But despite Sentinel Commander Nightshade, Danavia is one of my people’s more open-minded towns. I doubt you will face many issues beyond some staring and perhaps some wariness among the normal populace.”

“I would be willing to use my Invisibility Cloak to simply bypass the town,” Harry offered with a shrug of his shoulders. “That way, you can have a few days to spread tales about me, and then they’ll meet me afterward.”

“No Harry,” Tyrande answered swiftly, shaking her head once from side to side. “Your presence would come out eventually, and any attempt to hide you would make your eventual revelation seem all the worse. Besides, for all that my people are adept at hiding and misdirection in battle, we prefer to not use such guile amongst ourselves. No, it is best to get your introduction to people over with quickly. All I would ask is that you refrain from insulting anyone who insults you and keep your spellwork to both the minimum and nonlethal in nature.”

Harry frowned, thinking on that point. “I don’t like putting those kinds of restrictions on myself, although I’m not really a taunting sort of person, so you needn’t worry on that score. But as for keeping my spells nonlethal, I’m not certain I can promise to do so if someone, or several people, are attacking me with their lethal intent. I can only promise to try.”

“That is all I can ask,” Tyrande smiled, and the two of them fell into a companionable silence once more, watching as Shy-Rotam bound ahead of them, sniffing at something on the ground, then back to them before pausing in front of a new creature she had never seen before. This was a small, bright red and orange frog, about the same size as Shy-Rotam’s paw, its colors making it stand out even more at night. “Ooo, what is that?”

Quetzal looked over at the frog, then, showing his earlier annoyance with her was partly an act, decided to not allow the young cub to do something she would regret later. “That is a poisonous frog. Do not try to eat it. It will make you most egregiously sick if you are lucky.”

Shy-Rotam frowned, staring down at the little frog. “But it’s so colorful, and it’s not running away. It should know where it stands on the food chain.”

“It does,” Quetzal answered dryly, shaking his head from side to side, staring down at the little frog himself. “It stands precisely on the **side** of the food chain because no one in their right mind on said chain would eat it. But if you want to spend several days regurgitating everything you have eaten in the past few weeks, and perhaps with a fever and a nasty shakes to go with it, go right ahead.”

At that, Shy-Rotam backed away, then twisted around abruptly pounced. The frog hopped away quickly, bounding off into the forest, and Shy-Rotam frowned, staring after it. But she didn't go after it, having taken Quetzal's words to heart, merely wanting to impress upon the creature that it still lived due to her largess.

"Let that be a lesson, young Shy-Rotam. Just because something is nice and bright and interesting looking does not mean it is actually palatable," Harry interjected loftily.

"Such wisdom from one so learned in leaping before he looks should be listened to most strenuously. After all, learning from the mistakes of others is the true path to wisdom," Tyrande teased Harry.

"Ha, ha...it's so funny because it's sooo true..." Harry said dejectedly, then his eyes narrowed, and he looked up at the taller Kaldorei woman. "Although I wager you have some stories of your own to share."

"Heh, indeed I do. A tale for a tale then?" She asked in some amusement, thinking about another angle to get her people used to Harry as she mentioned their normal method of sharing bits of their past. *I might want to find a young elf for him.. I think that he has quite a bit to offer the right lady, so long as she is very understanding. Although I'll have to get my people used to him and his very existence before playing matchmaker. And find out why he always looks like he is having trouble deciding whether to grimace or snort in laughter whenever we skirted around the topic of our race's different lifespans... There's something going on there, but I won't pry. Yet.*

The two of them continue to banter back and forth in low voices, continuing to exchange tales as they moved through the forest. Quetzal moved along sedately beside them while Shy-Rotam continually bounding ahead or around them, interested in everything.

But as night gave way to dawn, Harry and Quetzal's prediction proved accurate. As they moved on, a boar did indeed come out of the bushes. The moment its beady eyes locked on them, the boar charged towards them with a bellowing warcry. Boars were simply too stupid and far, far too aggressive to be really influenced by Harry's limited Nature Magic. Indeed, Tyrande knew that even her own race, as part of this forest as any animal could be, often had trouble with them, along with the occasionally idiotic younger predators, although not nearly as often.

Harry flung up a shield, and the animal bounced off it, causing him to stumble to one side, shaking his head, and then pawed the ground, racing forward again.

"Shy-Rotam, attack from behind. Try to leap on its back and go for the area at the back of the neck. There you will find its spine," Tyrande instructed like she was sitting in a training ground and giving out orders to a young group of would-be Sentinels.

“Oh, of course, don’t mind the one who’s actually keeping the beast at bay,” Harry muttered, causing Tyrande to send him a small smile at his sarcastic humor.

Shy-Rotam had frozen at first at the sight of the strange animal. But now the tiger shook herself and instantly started to go around the animal, as it charged Harry again, only to bounce off another shield. Boars were single-minded like that.

Quetzal had also moved forward, and now he glared down at the boar. Unlike many of his reptilian kin, the snake didn’t have a paralyzing or hypnotizing gaze. But the sight of such a massive snake rearing up in front of it was enough to give the boar some pause. It backed away for a second, and Shy-Rotam struck from behind, leaping on top of the other creature.

To Shy-Rotam’s astonishment, her weight didn’t make the large boar fall to its knees. It stumbled but did not collapse, and then the boar was trying to buck her off, its large, pointed tusks rearing back towards her.

But Shy-Rotam was having none of it. Her instincts had now fully come to the fore, and she ducked her head low, her claws digging in deep to keep her on top of the boar. Then her mouth flashed down, fangs gaping. Biting through the bristles wasn’t fun, and one of them got up Shy-Rotam’s nose. But she was still able to find the muscle and bone of the spine and bite down hard.

Pound for pound, a frostsaber’s bite was even more powerful than the bite of a snake like Quetzal. It severed the boar’s spinal column, and the boar collapsed, paralyzed. Then Shy-Rotam tore off a chunk of its back, gulping. “Hmmm, it **is** tasty!”

Harry moved forward, and between him and Tyrande, they skinned off enough of the animal’s hide, setting aside enough of the meat for the two of them. Then Tyrande cut off a haunch for Shy-Rotam, leaving the rest of the beast to Quetzal.

“Why does he get the larger portion?” Shy-Rotam asked quizzically. Just quizzically, though. She wasn’t annoyed, which surprised Harry. But Shy-Rotam had hunted with her clan several times and trusted Harry and Tyrande to not hand over what Shy-Rotam deemed her kill without reason.

“I require one large meal a week, young one. You will never eat as much in a single sitting as I will, but will have to eat more often,” Quetzal answered politely.

Nodding at that, Shy-Rotam dug into her portion with gusto and, to Tyrande’s amusement, with none of the care that most of the tiger familiars she knew of showed. *Hopefully, that too will change in time.*

Taking it as a given that they would rest now since the two animals were eating, Harry and Tyrande decided to set up camp. While not naturally nocturnal as the Kaldorei were, Harry had gotten used to it after the months of traveling with his companion. He’d even created a sleep mask for himself to block out the light.

As Harry went about setting up the tent, Tyrande scouted around, making certain that the boar, a male, had been alone. It was, and she returned reporting on this as Harry turned his attention from the now finished tent, such as it was, to the runes that he would put out to defend their camp.

Tyrande sat across from him as she began to put together a small fire so they could cook their meat, smiling faintly as a bird moved down through the foliage to land on Harry's shoulder. *I do not think it will take long for Harry to get in touch with his Phoenix side with the help of the Tauren. His snake side? For all his friendship with Quetzal and his combat style, I think that will take a bit longer.*

Shaking her head at that, Tyrande held out a small portion of the meat to the bird while watching Harry work. Harry had been teaching her about runes for a few weeks now, but Tyrande was nowhere near the point where she would be able to create anything herself, although it was astonishing to think that she might eventually be able to do so.

Not, mind you, that her people were without knowledge of runes. Runes had been a primary pillar of the Arcane arts used in times gone by by the Kaldorei before the Sundering, when Tyrande and Malfurion had led their people to turn their backs on the Arcane and the addiction it built up within those who used it. Even today, runes were used in certain places: the temple of Elune, the Well of Eternity, and other places of great importance. Places which were able to create their own magic to power the runes in question.

But what they could do with those runes was so... well, limited in comparison to what Harry's runic arrays could do. They couldn't do as many impressive things with their runes as the Highborn had been able to do with their magic. The runes also had no **direct** combat applications, like so much arcane magic was devoted to.

And yet, Harry's runic arrays could do so many more things. From something so prosaic as a runic array to keep bugs away from them, up to the defensive arrays that Harry was making now. Easy, simple to create once you knew the secret of the runes, and easy to take down once you were done. Not the work of dozens of people to create a single rune which would last until someone destroyed it.

To say nothing of the space expansion charms on Harry's tiny trunk, which she could see on its necklace around his neck. That kind of magic was almost unknown entirely to her. The closest she could think of was the blessing of Elune that created the partner-totems of the Sentinels.

The journey continued for a few weeks, their travels slowed by the need for Shy-Rotam to hunt daily and for Tyrande and to train with her. These were two different things, and the second was not aided by the frostsaber's natural instincts. Knowing how to follow orders and fight with someone whose body was not like your own was very different from what the young 'frostsaber was used to. Tyrande also taught her how to attack humanoid opponents, with

Harry joining in to help Shy-Rotam build up her combat sense: the ability to keep track of multiple enemies around you.

But beyond the odd boar and, at one point, meeting a bear, the trip was mostly uneventful. The bear in question was a massive matriarch leading a pair of cubs. But thanks to Harry's Nature Magic, it didn't automatically attack them, although Shy-Rotam seemed to think that picking a fight with her might've been a good idea before Tyrande calmed her down a bit.

Eventually, they began to see signs of the Kaldorei. They were small flashing lights in the trees, tiny crystals set here and there reflecting the light of the moon above. These were a visible sign of their devotion to Elune, small markers that denoted the edge of territory within the forest that the Kaldorei would truly call their own.

Tyrande began to point other markers out, and then made Harry come over to what looked to Harry like a small piece of art on a stone slab that had been set up in between a few tree bows, but which in reality was a sign, telling them how much further it was to the port, as well as where to find the nearest Sentinels. While Harry's translation spell allowed him to understand spoken Kaldorei, he could not read their languages, which came in two forms: one, a formal writing style that they used for everything important, and second, a more cuneiform-like style that was used when it was thought to be necessary to convey emotions or when describing something physical in nature.

A few moments later, a silver disk about as tall as Shy-Rotam was at the withers came up, caught his eye, and Harry asked what it was, being told it was a 'passing marker'. "Passing markers are placed on a tree nearby where someone has passed on, or more often, are made to mark something momentous in the lives of those who live there or nearby. This one," Tyrande leaned forward, pointing out a set of marks on top of the large, silver disk, then to the picture in the center. "This marks the passing of a group of Sentinels who were born in the nearby town during the war of the Satyrs. At the time, we had the habit of keeping units raised in communities like that serving together. It was not a wise policy, one I still sometimes feel guilty over."

"Erk," Harry grunted, shaking his head and patting her shoulder. "I can understand that. My own nation did something similar at one point, Pals Battalions they were called. Although I doubt that your losses were ever like what we faced in World War 1."

"The way you just drop the idea of a war large enough to be called a 'world war' in there would frighten me if I had not seen the horrors of the Demons in the War of the Ancients," Tyrande drawled, but the smile on her face, which had been bittersweet, was now somewhat wry. "Nor do I understand the word 'pals', although I can understand the gist of it. But while at times we Kaldorei grieve those who have passed before their time, we also celebrate the lives of those who have passed on in honor, hence this marker. It is not to simply grieve, but to acknowledge and honor the passing of the Sentinels in question."

“So these smaller pictures, they detail some moment from the lives of the Sentinels in question?” Harry asked, pointing at the image of a small tiger image that looked to be sitting on the back of another figure.

“Indeed, little jokes like that, in-jokes I suppose you could say, are common in Elistran.” Elistran was the name of the informal artistic writing style. “I’m afraid I could only guess about the nature of most of these images.” She turned away from Harry to gaze up at a nearby tree. “Perhaps one of the locals could tell us more, hmm?”

At this, two more Kaldorei dropped down from the tree she was gazing at. They were both men, and something about their unsure or awed body language told Harry they were young, or at least inexperienced, which he knew wasn’t the same thing. They wore what looked like a uniform, a black and green leather jerkin and leggings, with a breastplate that somehow seemed to have the same colors on it, letting the two merge into the darkness of the forest. They were both armed with bows and the same kind of double-bladed swords that Tyrande used, although they were not nearly as large as the high priestess’s.

For her part, Tyrande was both surprised, and somewhat thankful, to see two males in Sentinel colors. That was a rarity in this day and age. All too often, those men and women who wished to serve the Kaldorei nation as a whole instead of following a civilian profession felt that Sentinels service was for women only, and that men had to become druids. There was no reason for this, really. Yes, Elune preferred priestesses, but the Sentinels were not fulltime priestesses in her worship. Women could, in contrast use Nature Magic just as well as men could. But the Kaldorei society had somehow shifted to make it almost unheard of for men and women to join the other’s so-called ‘specialties’. Tyrande had spoken out against such thoughts, but for once, her words had not made headway against this strange societal drift.

The two newcomers had hidden so well that Harry, Shy-Rotam and even Quetzal were taken by complete surprise. Tyrande had become aware of the two Sentinels the moment they were within hearing range but had not said anything, wanting to see how Harry would react, and, moreover, wanting to speak to Harry in such a way as to make certain her own opinion of him was obvious to the two silent watchers.

Thankfully, as she had hoped, Harry simply turned in their direction but made no aggressive move. He didn’t even curse. Instead, Harry simply nodded in the newcomer’s direction. “That was very well done. Quetzal, how come you didn’t smell them? I thought you snakes took pride in your ability to smell things.”

“They smell of trees and forest. They have no scent of their own underneath to detect. Odd,” Quetzal shook his head from side to side, his needles slowly lowering from the aggressive stance they had been before.

Shy-Rotam yowled, “I didn’t smell them at all! I still have a lot of learning to do, I suppose.”

“The fact that you acknowledge that you have shortcomings is half the battle, my dear,” Tyrande said, patting the young tiger on the head.

The Sentinels had been about to greet Tyrande, but this, hearing both animals respond to their companions as if they were able to hold real discourse, threw the two Male Kaldorei off entirely. They looked between Harry the snake and Tyrande, then one of them seemed to gather himself as he began to speak. “H, High-priestess Whisperwind! It is a delight to be in your presence,” said one of them, bowing profusely to her, obviously continuing a prepared greeting.

“None of that,” Tyrande scowled, shaking her head as she let out a faint chuckle more rueful than merry. “After all, I am still on my sabbatical.” *And I would rather not have to deal with more of that formal fluff than I have to.*

The Sentinels all looked at one another, shrugging their shoulders. “As you wish, Mistress Whisperwind.”

“I suppose that’s going to be the best I can get,” Tyrande murmured, now keeping down a put-upon sigh, needing to put a surprising amount of effort into it. *Hero worship. Honestly, do I seem so aloof as all that to our younger generations?*

“And um, what, er, that is, who is this?” One of the Sentinels asked, pointing at Harry.

The other one was not nearly as polite. “Did you capture it? Is it some kind of pet that you have taught our language?”

“Oh, you are just making a lot of points right now with me,” Harry murmured, his eyes narrowing. “Pet, really?”

“That is how small Vrykul were kept at the height of Queen Azshara’s power,” Tyrande reminded him. They had talked about that before, soon after they had first met.

“How long did it take you to teach it to speak so well? My father always told me small Vrykul were almost as stupid as squirrel-monkeys,” the same young male said while his fellow shook his head at his bluntness, the movement showing a certain habitual note to it.

“It is a ‘he’, thank you, and would rather not be spoken to in such a manner. I am a human, and as sentient as any of you,” Harry said, although he was smiling as he did. “If you all continue to assume that I am a beast of some kind, perhaps spending some time as beasts yourselves would be appropriate?”

Rolling her eyes, Tyrande put a hand onto Harry’s shoulder, reproving him very gently. He was in the right here, after all. “Forgive this young man for his ignorance. After all, they have yet to spend any time in your presence. Nor do either of these Sentinels have the ability to feel the nature Magic within you.” She then turned back to the two local Sentinels. “This is Harry Potter. He is an ally and friend of mine, who has also been a student of Cenarius.”

Nodding, Harry bowed from the waist. "I have that honor, although my training is not complete just yet. If you're worried about any threat from either of us, the only threat that Quetzal poses is to the local boar population."

"Er, there were reports of seeing the marks of a large snake, and we were indeed concerned that it might attack some of our farmers. But if er, if Quetzal is smart enough to um, to speak, then I suppose we can assume he is trained well enough to..."

"There's that word again," Quetzal grumbled, leaning down and forward to stare into the Kaldorei's eyes. "I am not trained. I am intelligent and sentient and I make my own decisions. As Harry said, do not speak of me as if I am an unthinking animal."

"Or me!" Shy-Rotam growled. "I'm young, but I can understand you too."

"Th, That isn't so unusual young tigress, erm, it, it is our understanding of your kind that that is unusual," the Sentinel who had yet to be infected by his friend's foot-in-mouth disease answered. He fingered a small stone statue that was hanging from his belt for some reason. "How has such a miracle come about?"

"You have Harry to thank for that. He can use magic to perform many miracles. One of which is a translation spell. So long as the individual has enough basic intelligence to have an actual language, it will allow others to understand the target's speech. In this case, Harry has used the spell on Shy-Rotam and Quetzal." She felt adding that Harry could already communicate with Quetzal was a needless complication.

Eyes widening, the two Sentinels stared while Tyrande sighed internally. She had left out where Harry got his magical power and hoped to push back any issue on that score. It seemed to work, but it didn't make her feel any better, fooling such young examples of her race. *Why they cannot be more than four hundred years old.* That was barely past the teenage years for a Kaldorei. They were not only essentially immortal, but their race also matured very slowly.

However, her little lie worked. Instead of becoming defensive or hateful at the idea of someone using Arcane magic, the two took it as a given that Harry was a druid and that being of a different race, he would have access to different abilities. "Erm, could, could you perhaps your translation spell on our own familiars?" When Harry nodded, the more polite young man touched the small stone statue at his side. He pulled it off his belt and tossed it to one side.

As Harry watched in slack-jawed shock, the tiny statue started to blaze with golden and green light then shifted, shivering almost like water before it transformed into a fully grown panther in midair, which landed on the ground on soft paws. It immediately moved over to its rider, staring between Harry, Quetzal and Shy-Rotam, apparently, judging by its fanged scowl and the way it growled, only approving of the young tigress.

As his partner started to sooth the panther, Harry shook his head, leaning toward Tyrande. "You've been holding out on me. I thought your people didn't know about transformation-type magic."

"That is not an Arcane transformation. It is a blessing of Elune to our Sentinels, so that they are never forced to leave their bound partners behind." Tyrande then smirked. "And yes, I never told you about it, as I wanted to see your face when you saw the blessing in action."

"Heh, alright, I'll give you that, but if you think you're going to get away with just calling it a blessing of Elune, you had better think again," Harry mock grumbled. Then, when the panther's partner indicated they were ready, Harry pointed his finger at the panther. There was a light purple flash of some kind of magic, and then, Harry said, "Sorry if that startled you, your friend here just requested I use a spell on you."

The panther growled out, "And why did my bonded request this? Speak quickly, else..." The panther paused, staring in shock as his companion, who had gasped and moved forward, his eyes widening. "H, how, am I speaking like a Kaldor?"

"You are indeed," Tyrande intoned, smiling slightly.

Shakily the rude one also asked to speak to his own companion, and after ribbing him gently for a moment, Harry agreed. Soon, a tiger too stood there, blinking in shock as his bonded scratched at his neck, the tiger actually giving verbal directions now on where to do so.

Leaning in, Tyrande whispered into Harry's ear with a faint smile. "You see, Harry, that spell will get any Sentinel on your side."

Chuckling wryly, Harry looked at her sideways as if asking, 'are you sure about that' and then waved away the fulsome thanks of the Sentinels.

But when they sobered, Harry's opinion seemed to be shared by the two Sentinels. "Well, if you are being accompanied by Mistress Tyrande, that is enough to mark you as a friend, above and beyond this spell, which would make you as welcome as the mightiest of our own druids. Although... I doubt that Commander Nightshade will approve. She won't like the idea of a, a human going around in our territory, regardless of who vouches for you, since you are not Kaldorei.

Tyrande sighed loudly, not even bothering to hide it from the two young men. "Alas, that is all too believable considering what I know of Nightshade. Still, let us continue on. At least with you two escorting him, we will not have issues traveling through Danaveia. Still, it is best to get Nightshade's reaction over with quickly, before sunup." *This isn't even considering that Nightshade will detect that Harry is using something beyond Nature Magic. Translation spell or no that is bound to make this more annoying.*

Entering the town was a startling surprise to Harry. It was a very subtle change from the forest around them. The trees were larger, and broader but with fewer small branches on the

bottom several yards. At first, Harry thought that they were simply a new type of tree but noticed a uniformity that was impossible to find in nature. Then he started to see dwellings in the trees. They were not made of planks and such, rather the trees themselves had been molded into dwellings. Those dwellings were all interlinked as well by carefully designed walkways.

Meanwhile, on the ground, other houses, slightly more normal-looking, also began to be seen, with Kaldorei moving in and around them. The first few were Sentinels, these fellows wearing more complete armor than the two Sentinels escorting the group. Then more Kaldorei appeared, all of them seeming to be dressed in normal-seeming clothing rather than armor. The clothing was made of cloth, leather and something that looked like silk. No jeans were in sight, Harry thought with some amusement.

And as they moved out from around one particularly large tree, he found himself staring at what looked like a bazaar of some kind, spread out in among the trees, with several hundred Kaldorei. The sight of that many people froze Harry for a moment, not having been around so many recently, but then he shook himself before following Tyrande.

But what really surprised Harry was the various shades of skin, their eyes and the hairstyles. Lunara and the other nymphs that Harry had met all had the same wild, seemingly uncared for hair. But The Kaldorei, all of whom seemed to favor long hair man or boy, had dozens of different hairstyles, some of them very strange. The sight of one man who had his hair done up in several large spikes pulled out and formed into spikes directly over his ear, and a woman with a mohawk stuck with Harry. As did the skin colors. While Tyrande had violet skin, that was not the normal color for her people, who seemed to favor a darker, almost purple color or an even lighter violet color.

As soon as the people in the town spotted her, it was obvious that many of them recognized Tyrande, but thankfully, most of the Kaldorei didn't seem to have the same need to get near and touch their idols as humans did. Instead, as one, every Kaldorei there bowed deeply, murmuring, "High Priestess Whisperwind," as they did so.

Only a few came forward, kneeling for a moment on the grass and dirt beneath as they crossed arms over their chests. The move reminded Harry of a movie about ancient Egypt he'd seen once. "High Priestess Whisperwind, may Elune bless you!" Others, as they got over their surprise, shouted out to Tyrande to come and try their wares, or their food or whatever.

Harry moved to stand beside his friend, whispering, "Is it always like this? If so, I can see why you want to take a sabbatical. Heck, I think you deserve a medal for only taking one sabbatical every three hundred years. I'd take one every other year. And yes, the sabbatical would still be a year long."

She smiled wanly, then shook her head. "It's not this bad near the main temple in Nordrassil, with other priestesses of Elune, or the upper echelons of government for... various

reasons. But I don't think I've actually ever visited this town before except once when it was being built. And too many people still view the leadership of myself and Malfurion as the real reason we were able to win the War of the Ancients."

As Harry shook his head, he became aware that a lot of the small crowd, if it could be called that. The Kaldorei seemed to not believe in getting as close to one another as humans would, were now staring at him. It reminded him of being back in Hogwarts that first few days of his life in the Wizarding World: being stared at like an exhibition in a zoo. *Oh, hell no. Once was enough, thank you very much. Ugh, please don't let the Tauren react like this. I would not be pleased to be the, the constant outsider, the constant source of interest.*

"What is the High Priestess Whisperwind doing with a tiny Vrykul?" One voice said, loud enough to be heard through the susurrations of the rest of the Kaldorei.

"At least he isn't dressed like a barbarian. Although those clothes do look strange. Very unusual." Another voice, louder this time.

"I am not a tiny Vrykul," Harry shouted, winking at the one who had spoken, causing her to blush and stammer, looking away, not having realized he would overhear her. "I even believe myself quite civilized, thank you."

That won him some chuckles, and much of the crowd of Kaldorei's around them started to back away, still bowing their heads towards Tyrande but no longer bothering Harry so much with their strange gazes. A few were still looking at him, but their eyes were narrowed, their gaze wary rather than confused or curious about this new curio of this new attraction. Many of them had scars and looked older than the others in the crowd.

As they moved through the crowd, stone and metal began to appear among the building material on display. Or rather, silver, not steel. And it wasn't used as building material, only as display markers here and there, a small but intricate etching and a few disks which were obviously set up in the trees above to reflect the light of the moon down into the town. Stone, though, was used as a building material. Several houses were made out of it amongst the trees, a few houses showing stone and wood merged together.

Soon they started to see a large octagonal palisade ahead of them, and they also started to see real roads. These were not paved as they would've been in a human town. Rather, they were made of hard-packed earth, the roads creating a circle around the keep, with branches leading off in various directions.

The palisade itself was made of stone pillars and trees planted between the stone, and these were not average trees. They were thicker than even the majority of the other trees in the town. They also grew upwards taller than the rest to grow together in an intricate network that seemed to absorb the stone pillars.

Harry thought it was a fallback point for the townsfolk in times of trouble and nodded approvingly.

Right up until he passed through the gate and found himself in the training ground inside. Then Harry found himself facing several dozen drawn bows in the hands of fourteen Sentinels like the two who had escorted them her, along with ten Sentinels all fully armed and armored in scale mail, their twin blades at the ready as they sat on their bonded animals.

The Sentinel in the center was riding a massive tiger, his orange coloration dimming with the gray of age. She was taller, broader in the shoulder than any of the others, her armor full-plate rather than the others' scale mail. In her hands was a massive spear, reminding Harry of Cenarius, except this one was tipped with metal instead of oak from tip to butt. "Move away from the High Priestess, Arcanist!"

Staring at the half-circle of battle-ready Sentinels, Tyrande felt the beginnings of a headache coming on. Commander Nightshade, this is Harry Potter. He is not a small Vrykul. His people call themselves humans. He has been my companion for several moons now."

"High Priestess Whisperwind, far be it from me to question you, but you cannot bring this Arcane user into my town and assume I will just stand by and allow it!" The lead Sentinel exclaimed, a scowl visible under her helmet. "I can smell the Arcane on him! Who is to know if he used his magic on you somehow?"

"Beyond my word and the fact I have my goddess's blessing? Or the word of Cenarius?" Tyrande replied.

"Again, High Priestess, he might have ensorcelled you to say that. I cannot take the chance of this, this strange creature and the power I can see within him," Nightshade replied firmly. "Leothi, Cainor, bind his hands and muffle him."

As the two Sentinels paused for a second before reluctantly moving forward, Beside Tyrande, she felt Shy-Rotam shift uneasily. Yet her eyes were locked with that of the chief tiger, staring back at that experienced firm glare, not doing anything but not showing any deference either. She was the daughter of the king and queen of frostsabers, and as learned and powerful as this Hunter was, she would not be intimidated.

For her part, Tyrande too hesitated. She could order the commander to leave off, of course. But technically, she was still on sabbatical, and she had used being on sabbatical before to get out of making any kind of command decision, even in combat situations a time or two. It would be hypocritical of her to turn around and use her authority now. *I just hope that Harry remembered what I said about keeping things nonlethal*, she reflected, shaking her head once and stepping to the side and away, very visibly wiping her hands of whatever was about to happen. "On your head be it then Nightshade."

When the two Sentinels with them attempted to put their handcuffs on him, Quetzal appeared, phasing out from behind his chameleon cloak and hissing. "I think not!"

While Leothi and Cainor both backed away, staring in shock and wondering how they had missed that Quetzal had turned invisible as they moved through the town, the other Sentinels didn't hesitate. Bows twanged, all of the archers having instantly turned their attention on him, and the other Sentinels charged forward on top of their companions.

For all their martial prowess, Harry was ready. He flicked his hands, and a gush of wind caught up the arrows as well as the two nearest Sentinels, hurling them away. Then he was pointing his hands forward. Before the Sentinels could cover more than a single bound toward him, a wide burst of magic splashed out and away from Harry. "Immobulus."

An instant later, all of the Kaldorei found themselves immobilized. Even the leader who had leaped forward without even as long as a millisecond delay after the snake appearing was caught, her mount rearing to leap forward. "Now, if I was an enemy, I could finish you all right now." He let that sink in, moving forward and even tapped the end of Nightshade's spear, waiting until he saw the light of fear overriding the concern.

"Instead..." Harry winked, then thrust out his hands once more.

An instant later, all of the trapped Sentinels, man and woman, began to laugh, hit by the Tickling Charm. Even the commander, who seemed like the sort to never have laughed in her entire life, couldn't stop herself from chuckling, although she tried and failed to clench her jaw around it, thanks to the spell holding her still.

After a few seconds, Harry released them from the second spell but not the first one as he turned to Tyrande, a roguish smirk on his face and a twinkle in his eyes. "I find that laughter is the best medicine, don't you?"

Turning in place, Harry looked around at the Sentinels as they slowly began to recover. "Now, I hope I have proven that were I an actual threat, you would not be able to do much at the moment. So let us move on to the other issue you have with me, my use of magic. Am I what you call an Arcanist? Honestly, I do not believe so. Judging by what Tyrande has told me, all Arcanists among your race start off weak on their own and have to find an external source of power for most of their magic. Further, connecting to such a source of magic appears to act almost like a drug, and can change your people on a physical level. Am I wrong?"

Nightshade scowled, and Harry released her head from the spell, moving to look her in the face while trying not to listen to the growls and snarls of the tiger under her. Despite not having used a translation spell on him, the tone of those growls didn't leave Harry in any doubt as to their meaning. "Well?"

"Yes!" Nightshade growled out. "Magic is a drug. Once you have found a source of power enough to give you Arcane users the power you all seek, you are compelled to drink

from it again and again. Only Nature Magic is pure! You and your foul magics are dangerous to anyone..."

"In that case, there's no problem," Harry interjected, looking around at the others. "My magical power comes from inside me, an internal source rather than external. Nor am I addicted to magic itself. I'll admit I use it a lot, but it's just a tool to me.

As to my being dangerous, certainly. So is every single one of you with your great big bows and your great big arrows, and your oh-so sharp and intimidating swords." Harry snorted, releasing some of the Sentinels who were using bows. They all looked at one another, then at Harry, but made no move to attack again, knowing intellectually that they didn't really constitute a threat to this strange 'hooman'.

"But that doesn't mean I'm going to be dangerous to anyone under your command or your protection. Tyrande and I are friends, and I am willing to do my part to make certain that that friendship extends to her people as a whole," With that, Harry released the remaining Sentinels.

The felines all stumbled, but the commander's companion turned that stumble into a twist, then launched towards Harry, Nightshade's tri-sided moonglaive flashing towards his new position. The other mounted Sentinels also made to follow suit, but an Immobilus spell caught the pair once more, catching the tiger with one paw on the ground, and a look around at the others stopped the rest of the Sentinels in their tracks.

"But you are not making it easy," Harry muttered, hitting her with a cheering charm this time. "Now come on," he snorted, holding the spell on the woman. "Give me a smile."

She scowled, despite the nature of the cheering charm, her face promising further violence. But Tyrande shook her head, and at her gesture, both Shy-Rotam and Quetzal moved between them. Shy-Rotam, with all the courage of youth, moved over and batted at Nightshade's leg where it was around the tiger. "You are a very silly Kaldorei. Even a youngling like me can tell when I am overmatched. **And** when I am in the wrong."

"If you wish to continue this battle," Quetzal hissed, rearing up to his full height, which was now pushing two stories and more, to stare down at them. "You will be forced to deal with me as well. And my ability to paralyze involves biting. Not nearly as nice as my friend's spell."

Tyrande waited for the knowledge that both animals had seemingly spoken in Kaldor to sink in and the whispered shock to go around the group then spoke up. "As I was saying. Cenarius came to see me in the capital at one point and convinced me to take my sabbatical up in the Winterspring mountains. There, I met Harry Potter, and together we campaigned through the mountains against local monsters called Frostmaul giants. They were a formidable enemy who had wiped out most other life in the area, and had almost wiped out my new bonded's clan, the frostsabers. Harry is indeed able to use magic, but his spells are vastly different from

what the Highborn performed, and his heart and moral fiber are both of high quality regardless of him not being Kaldorei.”

She paused, then moving around the group, then back to lock gazes with Nightshade. “And both Elune and Cenarius vouch for him. As High Priestess, I vow this to be the case. There is nothing more that needs to be said.”

At her look, Harry released Nightshade from the two spells on her. Now released, she scowled, but, as her tiger settled back onto its haunches, glaring down at Shy-Rotam with affronted dignity, Nightshade hopped down. She glared at Harry, and Harry gazed back before Nightshade, now realizing what had already occurred to her followers, turned to Tyrande. “You vouch for this creature?” she ground out.

“I just finished saying so, Commander Nightshade,” Tyrande answered, although her eyes flashed in annoyance. *And you will be Group Leader Nightshade the instant I come back to work. That will be the first bit of paperwork I see to, I swear.* And yet, Nightshade didn’t seem to notice, simply staring between Tyrande and Harry, before throwing her hands up. “Very well, but if you do vouch for him, it will be on your head if this creature goes insane from the use of Arcane power. I want him kept far away from me. And I will demand that two of my Sentinels are assigned to you as long as you all are within my purview.”

She looked around at her command and chose out the youngest pair of night elves there, two young women even younger than the two men who had escorted them to the garrison. “Berena, Sylina, you two watch him. He is not to do anything magical during his time in this town without permission. If he becomes a threat, I expect you to do your duty.”

The two young Sentinels exchanged glances as if asking one another ‘how!?’ which Harry could sympathize with even as he took in their appearance, trying hard not to just nod in hormonal approval. Both appeared young, obviously, and dressed in brigandine armor with leather skirts down to their knees, long daggers at their sides and bows on their backs. There, their similarities faded.

One had a somewhat coltish appearance to her, nervously moving from one foot to another, with a small, barely perceptible bust, thin legs, and a somewhat thin face and thinner ears than Tyrande or most of the other Kaldorei Harry had seen so far, although she had the same gorgeous violet skin Tyrande did. Her hair was white and done up in long braids, with tiny stones braided into them. Harry couldn’t determine the color of her eyes in the moonlight, but she at least was smiling, if hesitantly.

While her companion’s face was just as youthful, she had much more mature body. Indeed, the second young Sentinel assigned to ‘guard’ Harry had the largest chest Harry could see among the bow-wielding Sentinels. Her skin was a dark, almost black purple color rather than violet. Her hair was done in two long ponytails falling down to either side of her chest and

was a pale green. She, too, was smiling, a bit wider than her companion as she looked at Quetzal and Shy-Rotam.

“Now, if you’ll excuse me, I have work to do.” With that, Nightshade turned away, moving to the small barracks nearby, her tiger following her with a final snort towards Shy-Rotam.

Harry winked at them, and Tyrande moved over to them, nodding politely to the youngsters. “Don’t worry, he doesn’t bite.”

“That’s my job,” Quetzal hissed cheerfully. “What fools these warmbloods be, to take counsel of their fears so much so that they make fools of themselves in front of their betters.”

Ignoring the sarcastic snake, Tyrande looked over at Harry. “You looked interested in some of the wares in the marketplace, or am I wrong?” When Harry nodded firmly, she smiled and gestured to their new companions. “These two can take you back there to start shopping while I procure us a ship.” She looked over at the two young girls. “If Harry finds anything, tell the seller that the temple will reimburse them if they refuse to take his payment.”

Harry nodded, bowing grandly to the two. “Lead the way, Berena, Sylina. Although before you do, which is which?”

“I’m Berena Snowglare. She’s Sylina Sungaze,” the woman with the large bust smiled good-naturedly at Harry. “Are you really able to allow us to communicate directly with our companions as you did just now with the snake and young frostsaber?”

“Help me find the goods I want, and I’ll perform the spell on your bonded too,” Harry answered, nodding his head, while Quetzal, much to his surprise, moved over to follow Tyrande. *Then again, I suppose we might get a little too crowded without Tyrande around in the marketplace, and I know he wouldn’t like that.*

Smiling happily at the idea of being able to talk to her leopard, and completely, one could almost say willfully, ignoring the fact Harry would have to cast a spell to allow it, Sylina asked, “so, what are we shopping for exactly?”

“Clothing,” Harry announced firmly, amused by their reactions, and grateful to see that Tyrande wasn’t alone in being accepting of him and his magic. “Clothing and a tent. I’ll cheerfully pay for the best tents money can buy. I do have gold coins to use, even if they won’t be in your currency. As well as a sleeping bag.”

“Sleeping bag? You mean a bedroll?”

Harry sighed. “I suppose a bedroll will do for now. But clothing is more important, and a tent. And underwear,” he added. “I need some new underwear.”

Both of the young women giggled nervously at that, looking away from Harry before Berena waved him to follow them out of the bastion, while Tyrande whispered something in Sylina's ears as she passed. The portcullis opened for them with what Harry could only discern as mechanical reluctance to let Harry escape from the fortress's environs. Outside, Berena retraced their steps on a bit of an angle, following one of the main roads rather than, as Harry and Tyrande had, coming in from the side.

It turned out that the marketplace the foursome and their guides had passed through initially was only a part of the total marketplace. Indeed, Harry estimated that the town was far more sprawling than he had even thought at the time. *Far fewer people per acre than humans for certain, and way more spread out. Plus, no outer defenses. Still, with their Sentinels' skill, I suppose they don't have to worry so much on that score.*

As soon as Harry stepped outside and into the marketplace again, he found that many of the night elves were staring at him in suspicion once more. But not nearly as many as he had feared. Harry knew that part of that was because he had arrived with Tyrande and because he had yet to use his magic in front of the masses, so to speak, but even so, it was nice to see that at least a few of the people who had been staring at him for being a different species had stopped. And as he neared them, they began to cry out their wares to him just as much as the other passerby.

"Can I ask why you need clothing?" Berena questioned, looking down at his pants. "If you think you'll find anything like you are wearing, I believe you should reconsider. The shirt seems to be made of wool, perhaps? We could do something like that or better, but the pants? Just by looking at them, I admit that I have no idea what kind of material they are made of, although they certainly look to be a very hard hearing substance."

Harry glanced down at his jeans before shuddering very slightly. "Leggings will do for me. I'd just like them to be tough, that's all." He smirked then, sending a sly glance at his two companions. "And while hard-wearing, these jeans are my only pair, and I think at this point, if I took them off they would be able to stand up on their own."

Both young women blanched at that, and he chuckled but made no move to share the real reason just yet. Because the real reason was that most of his clothing these days had been transfigured from something else, transfigurations lasting much longer than conjurations. He'd gone through most of the clothing he'd been able to pack when he was with Cenarius. The nymphs and Lunara liked to play rough, and Harry had found out that there was a limit to how many times you could use a repair spell on items of clothing before they started to fall apart.

This was exacerbated by the fact that Harry had not been able to pack as much clothing at all, especially in the realm of underwear, and again, cleaning charms only worked for so long. So, Harry had taken to transfiguring some underwear for himself in the last few weeks learning

from Cenarius. But over the months that he had been traveling with Tyrande through the mountains, it had started to bother him.

Harry found himself feeling itchy in various places, scratching at his side or thighs or other places. He didn't know if it was all in his mind or a real sensation, the transformation slowly fading. Regardless, Harry could no longer get over the fact that he was wearing underwear and shirts made from leaves or other materials.

With Berena in the lead, the group moved through the town, still gaining a few looks, but nowhere near as much as Harry had feared. Soon they came to a boutique, which apparently was one of the few indoor stores. Over its doorway, a series of pictures told everyone who passed by that it was 'the Golden Weave', which Berena read aloud for Harry before questioning, "You can understand our verbal language but not written?"

"At this point, I don't need a translation spell to understand your language," Harry chuckled. "I haven't used a spell on myself since I was training with Shan'do Cenarius. But he didn't actually have any examples of your written languages to help me learn with."

Berena laughed. "True, our Druids aren't exactly the best when it comes to writing things down."

"Comes from those bear claws they like to transform their hands into. That and the beards, they interfere with the male mind," Sylina opined, nudging her friend in the side and speaking up for the first time.

Harry smiled at their interaction as he opened the door, bowing them inside. He had become used to Tyrande and her more mature, low-key sense of humor and controlled body language. These two were far less self-possessed than Tyrande and far more emotive. *I know they are older than the modern age in my own world, but I still get the impression that they are about as old as Fleur or Bill at most.*

Inside they found the first overweight Kaldorei that Harry had seen so far. She was a short, plump woman, who reminded Harry of Madame Malkin as she bustled forward, smiling, before freezing at the sight of Harry. Her welcoming smile seemed to fade very slightly, but she nodded at him all the same. "And who, or what is this?"

"My name is Harry Potter, ma'am," Harry said, deciding to put his best foot forward. "I recently arrived and decided that I needed more clothing than I already possess."

The older woman looked at him thoughtfully with her head cocked to one side for a moment, then shrugged. "Well, you can speak like an intelligent being anyway. So long as you can pay, I am willing to see if I can find anything to suit your needs."

Harry nodded and reached for the pouch at his side, which he had earlier taken out of his luggage. Pulling out one of the gold coins within, he held it up to the woman. She took it, staring at the faces on it for a second, frowning, then moved over to her desk, where she pulled out a set of scales, which was dusty from disuse. She set the gold disc down, then took out a series of other coins in local currency, setting them down one after another as she watched the scales.

As each one landed, her frown slowly disappeared and eventually turned upside down. "That will do nicely. I will give you two gold and a silver for every one of your gold coins."

Harry nodded, making no comment on the fact that she had actually stacked four silver coins onto the other side of the weight along with the two gold. After all, he had more than enough gold to go around. *And I would be willing to pay any price to get some new underwear that doesn't make my mind think of leaves!*

With that, the woman bustled off, calling over her shoulder, "What exactly are you looking for? And might I examine your leggings at the same time you're trying some on? That material looks fascinating."

"You can indeed, Madame. I'm sorry that I can't tell you how it's made. I was a soldier where I came from, not a clothier," Harry answered as he followed.

Beside him, Sylina was already moving over to one side, hopping on her feet as she remembered what Tyrande had whispered in her ear as they left. *Dark brown and maroon, is it?* She held up shirts of those colors, looking between Harry and the shirts thoughtfully, and then nodded. Tyrande was right, she decided, as should be expected of the high priestess. With that, she pushed the shirts into Harry's hands. "Try these on."

Harry looked at them, shrugged, nodded, and moved over to a changing booth set along one of the store's walls. Despite the material that it was made of, the store looked much like Madam Malkin's dress store back in his old world. Although Harry was amused to note, it had a lot more clothing in stock and far more styles available, if not types of material.

Unfortunately, denim flummoxed the store owner. She thought at first it might have come from an animal and was simply a type of leather, but it didn't appear as if it was. The zipper, though, was fascinating. She made a note of it, wondering if she could find a metalworker that could do that kind of fine work.

With Sylina's enthusiastic help, Harry eventually bought ten sets of leggings, all of them the more expensive kind, which had pockets included along with small built-up pads on the thighs and knees. Beyond that, he purchased four belts, twelve shirts, and several leather jerkins, both long-sleeved and not, to go over the shirts.

Leaving behind a very happy shopkeeper, Harry wondered about armor and decided to ask his two local guides about that. "By the way, is there an armorer here?"

"There is, but the Firetongue family aren't the best smiths, whatever they might tell you," Berena answered instead of the more voluble Sylina. "All of the armor the Sentinels here use are actually made in Darnassus . If you want good armor you have to go there, and you would probably be unable to wear any of the armor we have on hand."

Berena glanced at their odd charge, shaking her head, setting a few of the stone beads in her hair to gently clack against one another. Harry was not as tall as a Kaldorei who had yet to gain their full maturity. At the same time, he was broader in the shoulders as well as in the waist, something his new shirt showed off rather well. His legs were also a little shorter. So anything made for a man of similar age would have to be fitted to him, a harder process for armor than for clothing.

She idly wondered how old Harry was for his own race and decided that he was probably quite young. Perhaps the age where a Kaldorei would be thinking of his future profession, but no older. *Although he is certainly much more...not certain what word to use, mature doesn't' quite cover it. Self-assured is closer. Self-assured and not as shallow as such a young person would normally be.*

Shrugging his head at that, Harry looked around, asking allowed, "So, where do we go for tents?"

Unfortunately, Harry discovered that not all shopkeepers were created equal. The tent seller's stall was outside its wares on display to one side. Each tent was small, well made and colored to blend into the environment.

All that was good. But the moment the possibly married couple manning the stall saw Harry moving towards them, they scowled. And when he and his companions got there, the man addressed his harsh question to Harry's two minders. "Where is this one's a leash? You do yourselves a disservice to assume that you can control it as well as High Priestess Whisperwind could without physical reinforcement."

Harry quickly turned to his minders as well, asking, "So, is this the only place we can get a tent? Obviously, they don't want the business."

Berena winced. "Unfortunately, they are the only pair who sell tents and other such equipment in town. We're not a major source of cloth, alas."

"And before you ask, we Sentinels don't use tents. We simply have bedrolls and make ourselves comfortable up in the trees," Berena added, glaring at the two stall owners. "This is Harry Potter. He is not a small Vrykul, and he is actually quite intelligent. High Priestess Whisperwind has vouched for him, and according to her, so has Lord Cenarius."

"He's also willing to pay in gold," Sylina added tartly. "Which I assume would be more important to you two."

"Mind how you speak to your elders," the woman of the pair barked back, scowling at the two young Sentinels. Then she looked at Harry and said sharply, "If you wish to buy a tent, it will cost you 10 gold coins."

Harry didn't need to hear the sharp intake of breath from his two companions to know that that was far more than he should be paying, and he smiled thinly, biting back any desire to taunt or otherwise tease these two, shaking his head slightly. *Tyrande probably wouldn't like it if I used my magic to make these two miserable.* "And it's obvious that they do not want the business," he repeated, shaking his head. "Let's just move on."

With a final scowl sent to the two shopkeepers, Sylina and Berena led the way through the bazaar.

How long Harry spent immersed in the bazaar after that, he didn't know. But it was certainly enough to take away the taste of those two from his mouth, quite literally, because he spent most of that time sampling this or that type of food or spice, delighting in some and buying quite a lot of the spices in small bags, adding them to a series of packages that he was carrying.

As he did, he and his two companions got to know one another, and Harry learned that Sylina had been posted out here from a small community on Nordrassil just outside of Darnassus, having been raised there most of her life. On the other hand, Berena was a local girl, well known by the stall owners, and something of a voracious eater. She matched Harry plate for plate as they moved through the stalls and helped to direct him to a few of her particular favorites.

One of which, the braised fish skewers, Harry loved. Each chunk of fish stuck on the skewer between each of them was coated with subtly different spices, and he spent several moments almost begging for the recipe to the laughing delight of the man who ran the stall and a smirk from Berena. He even took several away from the stall to share with Tyrande and their two animal companions later on.

Harry did note that there was a distinct lack of dessert-type food on display. He wondered if that was because of the time of night it was – pushing dawn by this point and thus when most of the Kaldorei would be turning in - or if it was a societal thing. *Or maybe this market just doesn't have any? If they did, I'm certain Berena would already know of it,* he thought in amusement, watching Berena gobble up a second fish skewer. *I take it back. I now think she a bit younger than me,*

At the moment, Harry was pushing seventeen years of age (again). Berena, when she ate at least, reminded him of Luna, a year younger than him but somehow even younger-seeming thanks to her innocence.

Eventually, however, one of the other Sentinels from the bastion came looking for them. He was an older man who had the most magnificent sideburns Harry had yet to see, a thin, severe face and scale mail armor, unlike Harry's two companions. He took a moment to glare down at Harry for a second, who he topped by at least two feet, before shaking his head and very frostily, if politely saying, "Harry Potter, High Priestess Whisperwind has secured a ship to take the two of you to the Broken Isles. She is waiting for you down on the docks."

He then looked at Harry's two companions. "Commander Nightshade has also decided that the two of you will continue to travel with them for a time, along with a full unit of Sentinels. Broken Isles being what it is, High Priestess Whisperwind will need protection."

Harry's eyebrows rose at that, and he shook his head slightly, looking between his two companions and the man who had just given them the message. "I don't suppose Nightshade talked to Tyrande about that point, did she? That's rather like assigning a team of house cats to guard a full-grown tigress."

"I'd resent the implication if I didn't agree with you," Sylina giggled under her breath, shaking her head.

But she wasn't exactly unhappy about the assignment. Like the rest of the Sentinels, she had been appalled at the idea of an arcane user like Harry being within their territory. But her disgust faded greatly when High Priestess Whisperwind had vouched for him. Then talking to Harry and using him as a dress-up model in the clothing store and even later as they moved through the marketplace had been fun. He was so full of curiosity, and there was something welcoming and warm about him, added to a wry, teasing sense of humor that was unlike most she had seen before. All too many males of all stripes took themselves too seriously, in her opinion.

Berena had her mind on something else entirely, though. She poked Harry in the shoulder with the end of her skewer, and when he looked at her, intoned firmly, "The translation spell for our companions, please."

Laughing, Harry agreed, and the two took out their totems, Harry watching avidly at the flash of what Tyrande had called a blessing of Elune. Soon enough two panthers stood there, blinking in some confusion as they heard one another speaking Kaldor. A moment later, both were talking excitedly with their partners, thanking Harry profusely for the opportunity, while the Sentinel officer looked somewhat dyspeptic, but said nothing.

Harry supposed he had been talked to by Tyrande, before coming to find him. Or perhaps the man was fighting the desire to ask for access to the same spell, his hatred of the Arcane warring with his wish to speak naturally to his partner.

All too soon for the Sentinels they were at the docks, and once more, the construction of the docks and the surrounding wharfs reminded Harry that the Kaldorei were not human, for all that they seemed to have many of the same types of people among their number. To one side of the large dirt road leading down from the forest to the hills around the docks, Harry could see a single large wooden door cut into the raised side of a hill, which probably was a single large warehouse. There were no other buildings around them, save for small, stonelike structures Harry could tell had some military purpose.

Below that, though, the docks themselves were amazing to look at. Fossilized wood was pored with stone, the stone twisting around the wood like twin vines, reaching out from the shore into the water of the tiny inlet. At the far end of the centermost, largest wharf, Harry could see a giant tree growing, so big it made the trees in Danaviea look small in comparison. Several large green and silver lights could be seen within its massive boughs, winking in the waning light of dawn. *A kind of watchtower, maybe? Or rather a light tower.*

Harry also noticed something else. While it looked as if each of the wharves could handle six or seven ships large at a time, there were only two ships in port at the moment, with several other, smaller boats scattered around. *A naval power this place is not.*

The ship that Tyrande had found for them was also interesting, and although Harry had no idea whatsoever about ships, he could tell that this one was built for speed. While there were a series of catapults along the vessel's sides, the ship's seemed thin and low in the water. It almost gave the impression of being some kind of bird of prey.

Tyrande awaited them along with Quetzal and Shy-Rotam by the plank leading up on the ship along with another Kaldorei. Harry estimated that this one, a man, was perhaps as old as Nightshade or Tyrande. He stood there confident and poised, his face blank, as one finger strokes the bottom of a long, pointed goatee, his eyes deep-set in his head.

His skin, too, was weathered in a way that Harry had yet to see in any of the other Kaldorei, although looking around, he saw that a few of the other Kaldorei working on the boats in the port seemed to have the same weathered appearance. *I suppose that's because they spend their life at sea?* He had read a few fantasy novels that seemed to indicate that, and the term weather-beaten came to mind.

For her part, Tyrande smiled as she took in Harry's new appearance. He looked almost like a Kaldorei now. If you could ignore his facial features. *Those emerald eyes are indeed unusual, and those small ears of his. Still, I was right. The dark maroon color of his shirt definitely works very well for Harry. It would be rather silly to wear such a thing in the forest, but it still looks good.*

"I see that you were able to procure clothing at least. You look much nicer than you did in the mountains," Tyrande teased, causing Harry to snort. Then she went on, introducing the man next to her. "Harry, this is Captain Sunstide. He's graciously agreed to provide us with passage to the Broken Isles."

A vague uptick from one eyebrow seemed to indicate that the man didn't think of this trip as something he could've avoided, but he nodded politely enough to Harry and gestured him toward the ship. "If you would all board, we will be on our way. The tide comes with the dawn."

Harry nodded and mentally put that alongside the whole weather-beaten thing as a reason why the captain's skin looked a little tanned and ruddy in comparison to all the other Kaldorei Harry had so far met. Evidentially the ship was prepared to sail during the day rather than at night.

"Have you been told about our new companions?" Harry questioned, gesturing to Berena and Sylina and then to the other four Sentinels standing nearby, watching as the two young Sentinel's companions returned to totem form.

"I have," Tyrande shook her head, and if it were anyone else, Harry suspected that Tyrande would be grumbling right now. "Nightshade decided to foist them on me despite the fact I have no need of guards, and you have no need of a minder. Still, that is within her powers." *Though not for much longer if I have anything to say about it.*

The man who had come looking for Harry and his two companions seemed about to frown, but the look in Tyrande's eyes said that sabbatical or no, there was a limit to how far she would bend. His mouth clamped shut at that, and he bowed stiffly, sent one last glare Harry's way, and turned to join his companions.

Rolling her eyes, Tyrande placed a hand on Shy-Rotam's head, pushing her very lightly towards the plank. "Come, as the captain said, we should be off."

With Tyrande in the lead, they all boarded the ship, Harry thanking the captain politely as he did so, getting another incremental shift of an eyebrow.

However, Harry's goodwill towards the captain for letting them use his ship faded quickly. Because the moment they got out onto the ocean, the motion of the ship began to get to him. By the time the sun was in the sky, Harry's torso was over the gunwales, heaving all of the food he had recently eaten down into the ocean. Worse to his mind, while the ship's crew was small, much smaller than Harry had expected, not one of them looked anything more than amused and dismissive of Harry's troubles.

Tyrande was somewhat more helpful, patting his back occasionally. "I remember my first voyage at sea. It was most unpleasant for me at the time as well. But you will get over quickly enough. Quetzal, on the other hand..."

Nearby, Quetzal was curled up around himself, his head too stuck out over the gunwales, his eyes closed as he tried to fight through his nausea. Snakes did not have a regurgitation reflex, but his stomach certainly did not agree with this voyage. Shy-Rotam, too, was a little annoyed, but that was more because she simply couldn't seem to get her feet under her against the ship's movement.

"I, I'll have to take your word for it, then. Although knowing you went through the same experience is oddly therapeutic too. Kind of a 'y, you too are mortal' thing, even if, by definition, you aren't," Harry tried to quip before leaning back over the side of the ship and continuing to feed the fishes.

Tyrande laughed aloud, shaking her head in amusement, even as she winced slightly at the sunlight beating down on her. *It has been far too long since I traveled night and day if simply having the sunlight in my eyes bothers me.* "Ahh, Harry, if I ever became as arrogant in my position as Azshara, you would do a magnificent job of making me humble once more."

"H, h, I, can really feel the concern, Tyrande," Harry gasped out between dry heaves.

True to Tyrande's words, Harry quickly got over his seasickness. In contrast, the voyage only grew worse for Shy-Rotam the instant she was able to move around and looked over the side into the green-blue water. An instant later, she backed away rapidly and refused to move away from the ship's mainmast afterward.

"There's no bottom! How can there be no bottom to water?!" The young tigress moaned, refusing to even look at the horizon. Quetzal also seemed a little unnerved by the ocean, moving away from it quickly and wrapping himself around the mainmast. And none of the Sentinels even attempted to bring out their companions from their totems.

However, Harry didn't really have much time to spare for the two animals' care beyond making certain they were being fed. A few hours after Harry's stomach had subsided, Tyrande came up to him, a wooden sword in either hand. One was the match for her own normal double-bladed swords, while the other matched the proportions of Harry's sword of Gryffindor. This she tossed down in front of Harry. "Now that your stomach is settled, I think we should resume your education in the blade."

Harry stared at the wooden sword in some distaste but nodded, picking it up as he got to his feet, moving into a series of stretches as Tyrande watched, smiling faintly.

This was something they had taken up in their months traveling together, but now Tyrande wanted to start pushing their training harder. By the time they reached the high

mountain clan, Tyrande knew that she would probably have to turn around almost immediately, leaving Harry to his own devices. And while Harry's magic made him incredibly formidable, he still wasn't nearly as good in a hand to hand fight as Tyrande wanted her newest friend to be. Even though her triple-bladed moonblade was only superficially like Harry's longsword, she could still help him.

Then Harry turned to her, his sword raised. "What are you going to teach me today?"

"I think we're going to spar for today and then move on to a few forms when the sun goes down." With that, Tyrande brought her own sword up to a guard position, then without any warning or tell that Harry could detect, the high priestess of Elune launched into an attack. First came a quick thrust to Harry's chest, followed by a slash towards his leg, then another up towards his face.

To one side, Berena and Sylina watched as Harry danced back and forth with Tyrande, with Tyrande setting the tone from the get-go. Soon they were joined by the other Sentinels, watching Tyrande avidly. She was known as one of the best combatants the Kaldorei could boast, and it was obvious to all that watched, that she had not lost a step. "Good grief, I knew the stories about Lady Whisperwind, but this is something else," Berena murmured, gaining rumbles of agreement from the others.

Although, Sylina noted that Harry was doing somewhat well too. He wasn't in danger of winning, but he was still moving extremely quickly, and she couldn't detect any issue with his footwork, which was the core of good swordsmanship. Footwork was indeed what Harry and Tyrande had spent most of their time working on in the mountains.

Beyond that, Harry was very aware that he had something like preternatural reflexes compared to most humans he had met. Very, **very** rarely had Harry met someone whose speed and hand-eye coordination could match his own. It was what had made him a star Seeker during his time at Hogwarts.

But Tyrande's experience and speed were a combination that he could not hope to match, which she showed in the next hour. Tyrande seemed to know his movements before he even began them and was not only stronger but faster as well. Harry consoled himself by thinking that it was simply experience rather than natural talent, but the attempted salve to his ego didn't help much. She pinned him against the mast, tripped him up, then quickly disarmed him, going so far as to grab his sword out of the air, shaking her head. "Your left foot was too far off-center that time. Try again."

At that point, Harry was given a reprieve by Berena. She came forward asking, "Mistress Whisperwind, could we spar as well? Only, it isn't often that we have the chance to learn from someone with the amount of experience and training that you have."

Shaking his head, Harry kept quiet, knowing that line would not have been taken well by any human woman. But Tyrande simply smiled politely and gestured Berena to stand across from her. "Come, let us begin. And Sylina if you could spar with Harry? I would rather like to get him used to training against other people, not just myself."

However, something unusual happened that night, after Harry had finished training for the day. He was performing some final stretches, watching as some food was brought out for the crew, when Sylina came up to him. "So, we've seen you use a stasis spell, that tickle charm which is just wrong by the way, please don't ever use it on us again, and the translation spell. But Lady Whisperwind says you could use other spells too. Are there any safe enough for you to show us?"

"What else would you like to see?" Harry replied, somewhat confused. "And I thought all Kaldorei wouldn't want to have much to do with magic like mine, which isn't Nature-based."

"We wouldn't, normally, but High Priestess Whisperwind vouches for you," Sylina answered. Then she smirked, her ears twitching. "And besides, I figure if you do anything bad out here, you'll have to swim back to shore."

"And neither of us thoughts to bring books or anything else along to keep us busy," Berena added somewhat more truthfully. "That, and you represent something new, which is always interesting."

Harry glanced over their shoulders at the rest of the Sentinels, who were looking over at them in disapproval. "Your fellows don't seem to agree."

The two young women both shrugged her shoulders in unison, something the two of them seemed to do occasionally without even thinking about it. "They'll get over it, eventually. For my part, I think that you're no threat to us and certainly aren't allied with the demons. You don't seem the type," Sylina said, speaking for them both.

Harry nodded slowly, then smiled, gesturing the two of them to sit down beside him against the ship's guard rail. "So, what would you like to see?" *And I'll note they aren't mentioning my runes, so I will keep those to myself. I already have one student in them, and that's enough, thanks.*

"You mentioned conjuring. What's that?" Berena asked instantly.

Despite still being on display after a fashion, Harry found that he didn't mind it so much. He tried to convince himself that it had nothing to do with the fact that the two people most interested in his magic were both young and extremely good-looking Kaldorei. They were the very definition of exotic in his eyes. But he only succeeded in doing so to a slight degree.

However, what he did do was demand that Tyrande explain the whole totem-to-living-animal thing the Sentinels seemed to have access to. He didn't come right out and say that it was something he would dearly like to do with Quetzal. After all, what the snake might say about that was probably not printable. But his interest was quite plain that first day out of port.

Alas, it turned out it really was a blessing given by Elune. "When one becomes a Sentinel, one bathes his or her hands in the fountain called Elune's Handmaiden in the main temple In Darnassus. When Elune recognizes the new Sentinel's fidelity to her service and the defense of the Kaldorei people, a vial of water that shines with Elune's light appears in their hands. This vial is then fed to the animal companion they wish to bond with. The bond allows them to be shrunk down into a totem-form at need, and bonds the two together on a mental level."

Harry asked a lot of questions about the whole ritual, but in the end, knew realized wasn't something he would be able to figure out how to do with his own magic. There were just too many different enchantments going on in the ritual Tyrande described, even if Harry could probably supply the necessary power.

After that first night, sparring, training and then showing off his magic became Harry's routine aboard the ship, causing the time to fly by. As the trip continued, Harry got to practice with the other Sentinels while on the ship. He found that he was overmatched by them as well, something too many of them were visibly happy about for his presence of mind. Once more, the Kaldorei proved to be superior in speed, reaction time, although none of them dominated Harry as much as Tyrande.

Sparring with the Sentinels turned out to be more worthwhile for Harry because of that. After all, losing against someone you could at least track was worth more than a one-sided slaughter. In turn, that was eclipsed by the work stance and cuts that Tyrande helped him with.

Despite sparring with him, most of the Sentinels assigned to protect Tyrande's dignity ,or whatever Nightshade had thought was needed, did not warm up to Harry. Only Berena and Sylina did not treat Harry like he was a danger to Tyrande. So, despite the training and his acquaintance with Berena and Sylina turning into something approaching friendship, Harry was very happy to hear the shout of "Land ho!" from the lookout after about three weeks on the ship.

The island soon came into view from the deck, and Harry stared at it in awe.

It was huge. Harry had nothing to compare it to, but it certainly looked that way to him, anyway. It was also mountainous, a series of mountains rising higher than Harry could see. The island was also green, but not the green of the forest. This was a brighter, almost astonishing green, from one end of the island to another.

And as they came closer, Harry could see massive bits of rock sticking out of the ocean to either side, causing the ship to slow down and start to avoid its surroundings as they continued on their way. A bit after that, they started to see the port they were aiming for on the island. Although, calling it a port was extremely misleading.

Looking around as the ship entered the harbor, Harry could tell that this area had many natural features that anyone looking for a port in a hostile land could want. The area around the port was small, with hills surrounding it, the kind you could easily put, say guard posts on or something similar, and the water was supposed to be deep once you got past a certain set of four rocks sticking out of the water. However, instead of a large port like Danaviea, what awaited them was a small fishing village with a single wharf.

Which, admittedly, is pretty darn amazing looking. Harry thought, looking at it. It was made entirely of stone, unlike most of the things he had seen the night elves do so far and jutted far enough out into the water to service three or four ships the size of theirs, per side. It looked almost like concrete, but Harry realized it was made of marble, or a similar material, when he stepped from the ship. Here and there along its surface just below the water, there were glowing green lights.

Harry, for the first time in a long while, had the opportunity to use the word dichotomy in a sentence as he said, "That is the most interesting dichotomy I've ever seen: that wharf, and that village."

The village was extremely primitive, far more primitive than the town they had come from. Indeed, it looked more primitive than anything he'd seen in this world so far. Wooden huts jutted out here and there near the waterline, along with several actual treehouses beyond, with a few of the loghouses.

"Indeed. This place was once slated to become an outpost of the Kaldorei Empire under the queen. One of her courtiers created that wharf in preparation for that expansion, but the town itself was never built, and the project was abandoned during the War of the Ancients. The Kaldorei here wished to retreat entirely from our society, even after we had already exiled the Arcane among us. Many of them came to live here, forming their own small community, where they commune with nature in a more primitive fashion than the rest of my people," Tyrande answered from where she was standing beside him.

From her tone, Harry understood there was a story there. But evidently, it wasn't a bad one considering the moment they saw Tyrande striding into the town from the wharf, all of the elves there bowed, young and old. One of the youngsters, a young boy who seemed the youngest in sight, raced forward, holding up a crown of purple flowers to Tyrande.

Tyrande knelt in front of him, her movements carrying an air of formality even as she smiled at the youngster as he put the crown around Tyrande's head and said something too low

for Harry to hear. As she stood up, her eyes flicked over to Harry and Quetzal, promising pain if either of them said anything.

But Harry was far too bright to go there. Instead, he was wondering why, of all the Kaldorei he had seen so far, that only here did he see old people. Several oldsters, in fact, men with long wispy white beards and women who looked like the Kaldorei equivalent of old biddies. Still, he didn't question it right now. Instead, he gestured Shy-Rotam and Quetzal forward, only to pause himself as Tyrande gestured them to wait. She then exchanged a few greetings with one of the greybeards for a few minutes.

Finishing greeting with the locals, Tyrande turned to smile over at the leader of the Sentinels who had accompanied them on the ship. "And with that, group leader, your duty has been fulfilled. Thank you and give my regards to Nightshade when you return."

"My lady, my orders are to guard you until you are back from Danaveia," the Sentinel with the magnificent sideburns said, looking a little uncomfortable.

"But the Broken Isles is out of nightshade's command, and as such, I am overruling her." Tyrande answered, her tone almost sweet but her expression stern. "I have no need of minders, and if over the past three weeks Harry has not shown himself to be no threat to me, then I rather doubt that anything will for now. Furthermore, the Highmountain clan might react negatively if I bring an entire group of Sentinels with me unannounced."

The group leader began to puff himself up as if he would argue, but Harry's next words cut through his pomposity with ease. "Of course, there is a way that they could prove that taking them along might be a good idea. They could face us in a mock battle. There's enough room on the docks here for it. If they could take on you and me, Tyrande, along with Shy-Rotam and Quetzal, then perhaps bringing them along might be worth it."

"I quite agree," Tyrande laughed, looking back at the guard commander, her head cocked to one side, her ears twitching in amusement even as she gazed at the man. "What say you, group leader Ashleaf?"

The man, whose name Harry hadn't heard before this somehow, looked pained, then shook his head. "No High Priestess Whisperwind, I am not so foolish as to try my luck in that kind of battle with you. I will not return, but I will await your return here. Is that sufficient?"

Tyrande nodded firmly and looked over at Harry. "Unless you need anything, I suggest we start moving now. I would like to be in the jungle before nightfall comes. That will allow us to get used to the forest's nighttime noises before we continue traveling tomorrow night." Being out in the day like this was not comfortable for Tyrande, although she still didn't know how much was because of her connection to Elune and how much the habit of several thousand years.

Harry nodded and turned to Berena and Sylina. "Well, you two, this is where we part ways. I doubt I'll be coming back this way with Tyrande, come what may."

"If you come through the port again, look us up," Berena replied, shaking Harry's hand firmly. "It's been fun. And I cannot thank you enough for the translation spell on our companions."

"Agreed," Sylina too took Harry's forearm in a warrior's clasp. "And your magic is still fascinating to me."

"Now I know you only like me for my magic," Harry replied poutingly, causing the two girls to laugh.

He released Berena's hand, then, without another word, moved over to follow Tyrande and Shy-Rotam out and away from the port towards the jungle beyond, with Quetzal following along. And as he stared ahead at the jungle and the mountain rising in the distance, he smiled. *Time for a new adventure*, he thought, his pulse quickening as he wondered what lay beyond those close-packed trees.

End Chapter