The Wolf and the Lion

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Summary

Talila, a mid-twenty to late twenties year old woman with a kind heart and is a huge fan of the Dragon Age series, though she keeps it under lock and key. She adores the series but when she somehow ends up in Thedas (around the time of the Inquisition) things become complicated when she finds herself falling for one of the members of the Inquisition, but unknown to them her time being where she was she experienced Lyrium and the nasty addiction that comes with it was truly in a not so best situation and as a consequence has a hard time letting anyone in, except for one person: Cullen.

Cullen knows Talila does not belong to his world, but once it comes to his attention that she struggles with herself and with Lyrium withdrawals, he finds himself all but jumping to her aid; Slowly he develops feelings for her and refuses to give up on her, regardless of what she says or does, but when Talila starts acting odd, combined with bouts of unexplained rage, it swiftly comes to his attention that her family lineage has more secrets then even Talila is aware of.

(tags to be added or removed as the story goes on and as I remember who all and what all this story is about because I'm a goof and forgot!)

Notes

This is my very First (and probably most cringy) Dragon Age story.
Enjoy...maybe...hopefully? Ah just read and tell me what you all think of it if you want. This story is being brought over from its original homesite: Wattpad.
Fat and fluffy flakes of snow fell softly to the ground as the young woman walked to the huge building, her armor was scarred and showing signs of being well worn but those details were nothing new to her as she cautiously approached the building that now loomed before her in an almost foreboding way. With an unnoticed catch to her breath, she approached the doors that would lead to the warmth from the fires that burned within, fires she knew that were ever-welcoming and would warm her frozen bones and chilled body; but just as she prepared herself to reach out, one of the doors opened to reveal the love of her life preparing to leave. To her sight, he looked like he was fully prepared for an attack or for some kind of travel but which one it was she wasn't exactly sure. "Cullen?!" Her voice rang out as her sudden shock slowly wore off.

The man in question turned to the woman and stopped dead in his tracks. "Your back!" Relief flashed in his eyes for the briefest of moments, then they turned hard, "You've been gone for months!" He shouted as she flinched back in slight fear, she knew what this man was capable of doing, she had often seen it firsthand when he would enter any form of combat, then his right hand reached out and gripped her upper arm, in a rather rough manner, which caused her to once more flinch back and he loosened his grip a slight touch upon seeing her do so, but soon he led her away from the building behind him and took her straight to his office where he dismissed those who lingered around. Nothing was said as he shut the door behind the last person to leave and then he proceeded on locking it and the other two doors that were, from what she could remember, normally ignored. Now that they were out of the cold and in a warm room, the woman could feel the chill of winter leaving her body but didn't dare look up to the man before her who was quick to turn on his heel to speak with her. She could almost sense his mind working on lecturing her as he scanned her for any injuries, upon being satisfied that no harm had befallen her (that he could see at that moment), he finally spoke, "Talila, what were you thinking?" His voice was softer now and not as enraged as before, but it still held that lingering tone of him being upset with her. "You of all people should know how dangerous it is out there, and you're still in the stages of Lyrium withdrawal."

Still, the woman, now identified as being named Talila, refused to look at him. She didn't need to hear his voice to know how upset he was with her or how worried he had been, she could feel his relief and anger rolling off of him in waves. It was this combination of his relief and anger which kept him from touching her, though some little part of her reminded her that he would never intentionally hurt her, it was not his way. "I know, Cullen," She turned away from him with shame hanging around her like a storm cloud and walked over to one of the windows in the room to look outside. "But I..." She let out a sigh that held a mixture of shame and frustration.

Cullen followed her with his gaze and then worriedly he spoke again, "You've returned to taking it?" When no response came from her, he frowned.

"I can't deny that I haven't thought about it..." Talila finally and shamefully admitted as she closed her eyes to the snow-covered ground outside. Her weariness was now becoming apparent as she continued to warm up in this normally bland-looking office. "Even now I'm struggling with the thought as we speak before I left I was given some, but even as I took it with me I didn't use it, and a few days ago, I threw it as far away from me as possible." Talila's voice cracked as she reopened her eyes to the outside world, "How far I've fallen." She whispered bitterly as Cullen looked at her with continuously growing worry.

"What do you mean?" He approached her slowly, finally feeling calm enough to do so. He didn't need to see her face to know that there were tears welling up in her beautiful eyes. Eyes that were either as blue as the midday sky, or as dark as sapphires depending on how much light was in the
area at the time.

"I was not an addict a long time ago, I was...good. Always did good and stayed away from..." She paused for a moment to bit her nails, a habit she had picked up from a time long passed. Cullen reached out and gently grabbed her hand to pull it away from her mouth as she closed her eyes.

"Talila," He knew this mood that came from her very well and so spoke softly to her, "You are still a good person, you can't help that what happened to you and those who forced you into doing what you didn't want to have and will get what is coming to them," He turned her to him and, embracing her in his arms, he placed his lips to her forehead in a comforting kiss as her unshed tears started to flow freely from her eyes. As he comforted her, the memory of how this time came to be haunted her mind once more.

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Talila smiled at her close friends, "Come on, there's no way in any version of hell that anyone could pay me enough to do that."

"What? You wouldn't play stripper poker? Even if it was my birthday?" A dark-haired male friend of her's asked in a slight whine as Talila snorted out a laugh.

"Hell no," That got everyone around the two to chuckle.

"Mike, I think you've been denied big time." Another of her friends spoke up as the one named Mike whined low in mock sadness with his shoulders slumping and face falling to look at the ground.

"Damn," but they were all laughing now and Talila shook her head.

Eventually, Talila turned away from her friends to enter her apartment which they had been kind enough to walk her home too. After she entered and locked the door, she leaned up against the door with eyes closed. When she opened them again she looked over to her TV but ignored it and went straight to her bed, where she collapsed with a heavy sigh. Some days I wish I could just leave this world behind. Perhaps I would venture to the world that Dragon Age takes place in? Not sure what span of time frame I would like to visit though. But I know it would be ONE of them. She commented to herself as she closed her eyes. Maybe it would be around the time of the Inquisition... I would defiantly like to meet Cullen and.... have adventures with the Inquisitor... But as sleep took over she didn't finish her sentence. As she slept she didn't hear the sound of something tearing, as if it were fabric. But she did wake when an odd colored light started coming into her room from her open door. What the Hell? What is that light and where is it coming from? She asked herself as she stood up and accidentally knocked her favorite mug from the bedside table to which she cursed at as it shattered upon the hard floor. "Fuck!" She growled as she leaned down to pick up the pieces, she then proceeded to walk out of her room towards the source of the light and made it to her kitchen where she set the pieces of the mug on the counter, then as she walked out of the kitchen to investigate where the light had been coming from, she discovered that nothing was there. "Hello?" She asked confused but seeing no one there she "hmn'ed" and turned to return to her room, only to have her nose and mouth covered by a hand that was wrapped in cloth which was covered in something to knock her out, and barely heard two malicious male voices spoke as her world went dark.

"Perfect. She will be the perfect person to do our experiment on." The first of the voices and the one that was the closest spoke up.

"Perfect for what experiment?" the second voice asked sounding slightly confused as the first voice growled in irritation.
"To see if Lyrium will work on people from this world, you idiot."

"Ah. Best we get her back then before the boss throws a fit," The second person hoisted her limp body onto his shoulder and together the two people walked through something that would spell the start of Talila's troubles.
Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Talila cried in a corner of her "cell" things were not looking good from her perspective at the moment. Fresh wounds showed on her bare skin, she shivering not from just fear but also from the lack of warmth in her prison-like cell. She wasn't exactly sure how long she had been huddling in the corner but it was the same thing every day since she had arrived. She would be huddled in the corner of her cell, trying to ignore her pain that only seemed to disappear after they "treated" her with something called lyrium, which she was now craving. What little she could remember since being here was that they would come at dawn to force her to work the lyrium mine, then finally at dusk, they would reopen her scabbed over wounds to remind her that she was theirs to do with as they pleased. Eventually, she would fall asleep and sleep for about an hour before they would come and the process would be the repeat of the previous day. By now the lyrium they were forcing upon her was a staple of her daily routine and was probably the only thing she looked forward to having given to her. What have I done to deserve this? To earn this neverending torture? She thought as she heard the first of the cell doors open. Please just let this day end swiftly. She begged to whatever god or gods existed as the two men who had stolen her away from her home ripped open her cell door.

"Let's go you little bitch. Today is not a mine day for you since your little outburst yesterday. Its time for my Brother and I to have our fun with you." The first man, a man who she would hate for the rest of her life, cackled at her as he flicked the whip, that was ever present at his side, towards her, once more cutting open her exposed arm. She held back a whimper as the other strode towards her and yanked her up onto her feet by her hair.

"Ya, today is a special day for you, not only do you get thirty lashings but we get to enjoy your body as well," The second man sneered as Talila successfully fought back a whimper. With a swing of his arm, he released her hair and all but threw her out the door causing her to land heavily on another prisoner's cell door. She felt the fires of rage rear in her heart, felt it begin to spread throughout her veins as her heart pumped and, without warning, she lashed out at the second man now thankful that she had bitten her nails down just enough to cut open a long scar on his right eye. "You little cunt!" The man roared at her as he slammed her against the closest wall sending a wave of pain throughout her back and along her spine. "Just for that, I say give her fifty lashings and screw the fun part; until she is broken there will be no fun with her," After they dragged her away from the cells, they ensured that she received her lashings, then threw her back into her cell where she lay on the frigid ground now relishing in the coolness it proved to her heated and now bloodied body.

As she lay there on her side, she felt completely hopeless and barely managed to lift her head up to the only barred window and saw the rising crescent moon, which was something she had once considered a welcoming sight that had now turned into a dark omen. What did I do? Why are the gods so mad at me? She questioned as she laid her head back down, resting her cheek against the stone floor, where she managed to eventually, yet painfully, curl into a ball and fall asleep.

Weeks, months even five years passed, and a now twenty-five-year-old Talila still could not understand why the gods were being so merciless to her, nor could she figure out what she had done to displease them so fiercely. She fought against everything, but the lyrium dosages remained the only constant thing and her pain was evolving tenfold as the days went on. Eventually, Talila was ready to give up all hope, but as she lay curled up in the same familiar corner drifting in and out of a painful sleep, sudden and loud sharp noises, almost like steel ramming against steel, caused her to jolt into full awareness and caused her heart to pause in its beats as an all too familiar voice shouted to
kill the other prisoners. It sounded close, as if right outside her cell door, and when the heavy metal thing opened, the man she had marked with her bitten nails appeared before her in the doorway. Seeing where she was huddled, he rushed right over to her and gripping her by the throat he pinned her against the stone wall causing her already aching back to hurt even more. "Everyone but you," He growled low, "I am going to leave you with a little present Bitch. A reminder that you belong to me!" With that, the man drew a dagger and with a flick of his right hand he left a long bleeding red line over her left eye. As he dropped her to the ground he did not get the chance to escape the room as he found himself becoming something akin to a limp noodle on the end of a bloodied sword that had pierced right through his heart.

"Over here! There's one survivor but she's greatly wounded!" The person that came into her view as the body of the former man dropped to the ground was heavily armored but wore no helm which gave her the perfect view of his golden hair and eyes that were a strange amber-gold in color. She could see the concern and worry in his eyes as he scanned her but all Talila could see was another person approaching to gently and carefully lift her up. "Don't worry ma'am," The golden-eyed man spoke softly, "The healers will tend to your wounds and see that they close properly." He promised as Talila closed her eyes, allowing the safety she felt in the arms of the second person to lull her into a sleep that was absent of any and all dreams for the first time that she could remember. A month later would find Talila standing over the lyrium mine that had once been her prison, but it was now being mined by volunteer dwarves. She had come to learn that she was truly in the world of the Dragon Age series, that she was in Thedas, but as she looked over the mine she so hated, she did not hear someone walking up to her. "Hope I'm not interrupting anything." The masculine voice asked as she lifted her head to turn her gaze towards the owner of the voice, realizing only now the person had come up to her.

"You not interrupting anything at all Commander," Talila spoke as she studied the blonde haired man with rather handsome amber colored eyes. This man was the Commander of the Inquisition's forces (And was the man who had been the one to save her from a more miserable fate), and the Inquisition itself was the reason she was still alive and now able to walk around freely. Studying him, she could tell from the way his hair was styled back that he was trying a little too hard to hide the fact that he had curls, the only way she that was because she had curly hair herself and had tried to hide the curls once but had eventually given up.

"I hate to ask, but what draws you here?" He asked her as she looked away while the memories of the two evil men that had burned forever into her mind came haunting back.

"Guess it's just that... well for five whole years of my life I spent my time here trying and somehow managing to barely survive," Talila spoke as her blood boiled with rage, a silent rage he could sense rolling off of her like a waiting tempest. "I spent those five years with hatred burning in my heart at the two men who harmed me, who had stolen me from my home. One of them I saw die with my own eyes, but the other is still out there and I will not rest until he has suffered for the pain he has caused me. Coming here... it helps to renew that flame," Talila informed him as he thought that over. "It also helps your lyrium addiction doesn't it?" At what the Commander said Talila froze in place, her eyes wide in surprise. "I know. We investigated the mine and discovered another survivor who explained what they were doing to you all," Talila turned to the Commander, seemingly lost in disbelief at his words.

"Commander Cullen, but..." At that, he held up a hand and she grew silent. She respected him enough to allow herself to be commanded by him, but she would still give him hell which often led to him trying to keep his temper when it came around to lecturing her.

"Let me finish," At the nod she gave, he continued, "... unfortunately, the other survivor died before
the healers could help him," At that Talila turned away, with this death of the only other survivor, it truly meant that she was the singular survivor of the hell she and so many others had been put through, "Your struggling, aren't you? You can tell me," he told her in a gentle tone.

Talila closed her eyes with an almost defeated sigh. "Its more than a struggle, Commander."

"Talila," Cullen walked up to her side and gently placed a hand on her shoulder. "Please call me Cullen," He told her, "I can't claim to know how bad you have it without lyrium but I know that it is a real struggle to go through. The agony you are going through, you don't have to face that alone," He tried to reason as Talila thought it over. She turned away and he let his hand fall back to his side.

"Yes I do, that's one thing about me that will never change," Talila said trying to keep the rage from her voice (which failed) as she began walking away. "I am always alone in everything I do, Ceannard*." She whispered as she walked back towards her horse who she planned on riding on before returning to the fortress that everyone called Skyhold. She could feel Cullen's eyes on her back but she just kept walking. He understands only a fraction of what I'm going through, but he could never understand the path I chose to walk. Talila hopped into the saddle and let her stallion begin to walk away from there. No one will ever understand...

Cullen sighed heavily as he watched her disappear from his sight but then walking over to his own horse, he hopped up into the saddle and looked back towards the direction she had gone. As much as he wanted to chase after her, he had to meet with the Inquisitor and the other advisors soon, but the thought of Talila would remain on his mind for a while. She is on a dangerous path, one that she doesn't fully understand. If only there was a way I could help her understand that I just want to help her. He thought as he steered his mare towards the path back to Skyhold. For now, he would give her some time to herself and allow her to calm her warring emotions and thoughts.

Chapter End Notes

*Ceannard= Commander
The next day would find Talila alone, practicing with her sword swings as her shield lay almost forgotten against a pole that helped seal off the nearby training ring. As she practiced with her longsword, she almost did not hear footsteps approach. "Talila?" Cullen's voice held some surprise as Talila continued to practice her swings. "What are you doing here so early?"

"Really?" Talila inquired as she frowned and raised a brow at his question while she stopped to slow both her heart rate and breathing heavily she looked at him.

"Oh right." He rubbed the back of his neck, as he finally now took notice of the sword in her hand. He knew why she was there, and something in him wanted to test her metal, wanted to see just how good she was with her sword but then she sighed and sheathed her the blade as she was preparing to leave, her momentum had been interrupted and was lost. "Talila, before you leave..."

"Yes?" Talila looked towards Cullen who she noted had a slight pink tint to his cheeks and that made her question why.

Cullen looked slightly embarrassed now, and it peeked her curiosity. "Can I...Do you... May we speak for a moment?"

"Of course we may."

"Follow me if you will," he told her as she followed him to the battlements with a slight frown on her face. In the time she had known him, she had never once seen the Commander act so...flustered... and it drew her curiosity like a moth to a flame. Upon the battlements, they stood for a while neither saying anything to the other. "Talila, how... how are you holding up?"

"If you mean holding out to the pain of my withdrawal from lyrium, I've been better." Talila huffed with eyes closing. Since their conversation the day before, they had been close to avoiding each other and this was the first time that Cullen had asked to see and speak with her this day, though to be fair it IS early morning and this is a time he wouldn't normally see me at. She could often feel the eyes of others upon her, but it was the group of warriors, the Templars as they were called, that lingered around who were the worst as they somehow just knew that she was having the issues of lyrium withdrawal, but now she looked to him. "Cullen, if I may ask: Why are you asking me about it? Are you afraid I won't be able to hold out?"

"Part of me does," He answered swiftly without missing a beat, "But part of me also knows that you can do it. But...I don't want you to do it alone," He looked towards her as he leaned against the nearby rampart.

Something in her found him quite attractive as he leaned against the stone and she had to mentally slap herself to clear her thoughts. No Talila, the Commander is way out of your league. These kinds of thoughts about your superior are highly inappropriate. "Commander, I...damn I don't know what to say." Talila looked away so he wouldn't see the hidden feelings she felt rising up in her, she was both surprised and afraid of the sudden thoughts she was having for the man, who most likely didn't realize the effect he was having on her. He doesn't know that I haven't experienced the true feelings of love, and how could he when I keep my past... Talila remained quiet for some time.

"Talila?"

She shook her head, "Give me a moment to think, please. My thoughts are scrambled at best right
now,” She looked at him her eyes showing that she really was scrambling to fix herself. Both she and Cullen could tell that the lyrium withdrawal was striking her at that moment and, standing from where he was leaning on the rampart, he approached her cautiously. He reached out, gently pulled her into a hug, and this time she didn't shy away from his touch, though this sudden affection coming from him did surprise her.

"Talila, you don't have to do this alone. I know your struggling, but please, let me help you,” Cullen almost begged her in a quiet voice. He wasn't sure why he was acting so differently towards Talila, but if it would help her to trust him, then he would continue to do so.

Unconsciously she wrapped her arms around his neck and buried her head into the fur around his shoulders as tears threatened to spill from her eyes as she felt his strong arms tighten around her. Cullen, I don't know what to think. But if your that willing to aid me then I guess I can try and let you help. Talila closed her eyes and just let him hold her for a while. She knew that this was only the beginnings of her struggle and that soon the signs of withdrawal would worsen, but Cullen for his part was willing to just hold her; he could somehow tell that this was what she really needed in this moment of time.

It would sometime in the afternoon that Talila was finding herself standing on the battlements and absentmindedly chewing on her nails, yet again, on her right hand, well key word being "was" until a gloved hand pulled her hand away from her mouth. "New habit?" Cullen's voice asked with the hint of amusement as she shook her head.

"I've been biting my nails for as long as I can remember. In fact... I can't actually remember when I started doing it," Talila admitted sheepishly as her mind scrambled to try and figure out when she had started biting her nails. Cullen walked to rest his arm on the stone and looked at her as she turned her gaze to him. "Something on your mind?" She asked as he shook his head.

"Not much," Cullen looked away as Talila looked him over.

"...Sure," she muttered not believing his words and that caused a smirk to play on his lips. Lips that Talila had come to note had a scar touching his upper lip on the right side of his face; she had also noted that when he gave her a smirk it often caused her to feel a slight warmth build up in her body and now she had to turn her gaze towards the mountains to try and chase away the thought of what kissing him would be like.

"How are you doing since we spoke earlier this morning?" He turned his gaze back to her and noted that she was biting her lower lip in thought as her gaze remained away from him.

"Managing, but barely. Hard to do really do anything when I'm being watched like I'm a misbehaving puppy." Talila sighed. That was the truth, as it seemed to her that wherever she went someone was always watching her, which had started to unnerve her greatly and thus it was the reason why she had come here, to escape those many watchful eyes. She looked out over the snowy peaks and found herself absorbed into their unique and snow-covered majesty.

Then as a completely random change of topic, he asked her something that confused her. "I've been meaning to ask but when is your birthday?" With that question, Talila turned to the Commander.

"Late spring, early summer, but I won't be around for it." She told him looking away.

"Why not?"

Talila closed her eyes then, "I've never had a pleasant birthday. Every year I was ignored or prevented from celebrating it and in all honesty, I don't care much for my birthday anymore. On top
of that I..." Talila turned her back to him, "...I've never had anyone special to celebrate it with."

"Talila," Cullen captured her wrist and prevented her from leaving, he soon walked around her to stand in front of her. "Are you telling me that you don't know what love is?" When Talila looked away he could see the shame and sadness in her eyes.

"I wish I could deny that, but its the truth," Talila frowned. "I don't know what love is, or how TO love someone. I grew up locked away from almost everyone all of my life, well all those who weren't my family," She felt Cullen move his hand to her chin and he gently lifted her chin which forced her to look at him.

"Talila," he whispered her name as his face drew close to hers. "Let me tell you as best as I can what love is or better yet, let me show you," But before he could kiss her they were interrupted. Once the person responsible for the interruption was dealt with, Talila was preparing to tell him that he should probably go back to his work but he captured her words with a surprise kiss. When they pulled away both were breathless, and Talila finally allowed herself to fully gaze into Cullen's amber eyes. "Don't leave when your birthday comes around, stay here and let me continue to teach you how to love and be loved by someone else," He almost pleaded with her as they kissed once more.

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After they had kissed and enjoyed several moments on the battlements, Talila soon made her way to the training ring and was thinking about something when the Inquisitor came walking up next to her. "So, you and the Commander huh?" The man asked as Talila looked at him with her own form of a smile playing on her lips.

"Is there an issue with that?" She asked as he gave her a challenging smile in return.

"No, no issue, at least not yet."

"What are you not saying?" She asked him as the man continued smiling.

"First, best five out of ten?" He asked motioning towards the empty ring as she thought it over.

"Same rules as always?" She asked as he nodded. "Okay, but loser buys the rounds in the Tavern this time." She challenged as he laughed, both hopped over the fence to the ring and began preparing their weapons and shields.

"Challenge accepted," He flashed her a smile as she went into a defensive stance. Since the Inquisitor had openly stated that he was interested in men (much to the shock of several people and to Talila's great amusement as she had had deep suspicions about it), Talila knew that it was safe for the two to do a bit of friendly teasing. The Inquisitor was more like an older brother to her even in the little time they had known each other and like family, the two were well known throughout Skyhold for taunting and poking fun at each other. "Come on Shorty!" He taunted her and she chuckled. As they went to town on each other with their mock combat, Cullen was in his office sitting in his chair (for the first time that anyone could really remember) reading over reports when a soldier came in.

"Commander," The woman said as he continued to read the reports.

"What is it?" He asked as she frowned.

"It's... the Inquisitor and Lady Talila." At that Cullen finally looked up with confusion on his face.

"What's wrong with them?" He asked as loud cheering came in through the open door, which made
him wonder what was going on.

"You might want to come see for yourself," The soldier continued to frown as Cullen placed the reports on his desk and stood to follow the woman out towards the training ring, where another round of cheering escaped the multitude of people who had gathered. Making his way forward Cullen soon saw that Talila and the Inquisitor were "dancing" in mock combat and part of him wondered how long this had been going on for. He watched as Talila barely raised her shield up in time to deflect an incoming blow and was soon pressing her own attack against the Inquisitor. Normally he wouldn't have worried about them but this time they were using their actual weapons instead of the practice ones and with each swing of their swords and block of their shields, he couldn't help the sudden fear in his heart as he watched. He studied each motion and felt his heart stop when the Inquisitor barely scrapped Talila's cheek with the tip of his sword; he watched her leap away and watched as she raised her right wrist to check for any blood of which there was some.

"Giving up?" the Inquisitor asked with a victorious grin on his face.

"Not in a million lifetimes. Besides by my count, we still have one more round left," She told him taking him by surprise as she lunged at him again. He barely put his shield up in time to save himself from the swing of her blade. Cullen continued to watch as these two dueled it out and was amazed at how well Talila stood her ground against the Inquisitor, who by all rights was no pushover as the man had been known to train against the one called The Iron Bull, a tall and burly man (who made Cullen feel short) who was apart of the race known as the Qunari. When the two finally came to a stop their blades were only inches from the throat of the other and both were smiling as everyone seemed to stop breathing. Talila and the Inquisitor were both panting heavily, "I daresay that we have ended this with a draw?" She smirked as the Inquisitor chuckled.

"Seems like it, but to be fair you are the winner this time," he told her as she flicked her hair out of her face.

"Now you're just flattering me, but I'll take it," Talila could feel Cullen watching her but only turned to look at him as she and the Inquisitor drew their swords away from the other and sheathed the bloodthirsty blades. She quickly looked back to the Inquisitor who smiled, "Your buying drinks," She reminded him as he frowned.

"Fine, but I'm buying the good shit," He smiled before he left her, the training ring and the whispers and murmurs of the astonished crowd at how well these two had stood their grounds against each other.

Talila was smiling still slightly panting but eventually made her way out of the ring as well. She heard Cullen coming around to check on her and she looked towards him, "Commander," She greeted him as he stopped to look her over.

"Maker, how long were you two going at it?" He asked raising his hand up to touch near her injured cheek as she had to think about.

"What time is it?" She asked as he told her and she chuckled. "Well, that's a record. The Inquisitor and I were dueling for about two to three hours then." Cullen said something in disbelief and she smiled. "This really isn't the first time it has happened, Commander," She told him as he frowned.

"It is with both of you using your weapons instead of the training swords." He said as she shrugged.

"Even then it's not my first time dueling like that." He could only look at her as she told him that, "Stop worrying so much, you'll give yourself grey hairs," She told him as they walked away from the training grounds.
"With you being how you are? I think it is called for," He frowned as she sighed.

"Cullen," she stopped and turned to him. She only ever used his name when they were alone or with a select trusted few. "I'm fine. Yes, the Inquisitor managed to land a small blow on my cheek, but trust me when I say I've walked away from worse or did you forget about my scars from when I was practically a damn slave?" She asked as he looked away. "You did didn't you?"

"I...yes..." he admitted as she sighed.

"Jesus fucking Christ..." she muttered low. Cullen had to remember that she was from another world and though she had picked up on their version of swearing she was still very likely to use her world's version of it as well, as with her the two things were interchangeable. She shook her head with a huff escaping her. "I'm going to go get washed up and then I'm going to find the Inquisitor and remind him that he's buying drinks if he's not already in the tavern." With that, she left Cullen standing to watch her walk away. He shook his own head with a slight chuckle and began to walk back to his office, where he spent the better part of the remaining afternoon and late into the evening reading over reports.

Well, he had been until a knock at his door sounded and he turned his gaze to see a man (or well a mage) named Dorian walking in with a slight smile on his face, "Apparently our partners are both in really good moods. What happened?" Dorian smirked as Cullen groaned.

"How bad is it?"

"Talila can barely stand without falling over and is in a constant giggling fit, and the Inquisitor is dancing on a table half naked." Cullen could only imagine the sight of that and shook his head as Dorian told him this, "And they're still going and have also started telling stories when they aren't trying to drink the other under the table." Now Cullen really did groan.

"Please tell me it's just them."

"Unfortunately Bull, the Chargers, and everyone in the tavern, to include our most favorite Seeker, has been joining in and encouraging it, except for the barkeep."

"Maker's Breath!" Cullen pinched the bridge of his nose. "Why didn't you stop it?" He asked as Dorian huffed.

"What? And miss out on your reaction? I'm going to need you to help me stop it, and beings that Talila is unable to really stand I can't carry her back to her room and with Bull joining in with their fun I doubt he will be of much help."

Cullen rubbed his face with a hand. "Alright, let's go crash a party." He said following the mage towards the Tavern, where loud cheering was floating in their direction from.
A couple of months later, Talila sat curled up into a ball, her face showing the excruciating pain her body was going through at this moment. She did not hear the voices of the people outside of her locked door as the pain wracked her entire body as if a freight train had come and plowed right into her; she was fighting with it as best as possible, but it wasn't until she heard Cullen's voice call out over the crowd that had gathered just outside, that she knew just how bad it really was. "Return to your duties!" He sounded slightly angry but something in her told her that was just a front to get everyone to leave. Once the voices died down and had disappeared a gentle knock sounded and once more Cullen's voice echoed to her. "Talila? Are you in there?" As much as she wanted to answer him the pain slamming full speed into her body prevented her from doing so as she had to clench her jaws to keep from making a noise. "Talila, I have a spare key and I'm coming in," Cullen warned her but there was little she could do about it. When the door opened, Cullen's gaze swept towards her and upon seeing her curled around herself, he quickly shut the door again after entering. He was now all but racing to her side and after sitting on her bed, while still being ever so gentle, he pulled her close to him. "Talila! I'm here now. Everything will be okay." He promised as another spazzum of pain caused her to whimper as her eyes shut. Having him see her in this sorry state made her feel weak, and she did not enjoy feeling weak, but in some small way, it was also comforting to have him there. "It's okay Talila, I am here for you. I will stay at your side for as long as possible," He was whispering to her as any loud noises right now seem to hurt her ears and he managed to brush his fingers through her damp hair and he found that that simple motion seemed to calm her unyielding pain just enough to be somewhat more bearable. He made sure to note it for future reference and continued to stroke her hair until, finally, the sound of soft breathing had him laying her down and covering her with a blanket. "I won't leave your side for long," He promised as he left to speak with the Inquisitor, who was now in a worried state of mind for the woman and when Cullen returned back to her room he found her still sleeping like a babe.

When Talila awoke in the late hours of the night she saw that Cullen was passed clean out in a chair, and found herself unable to awaken him despite how badly she wanted to. I shouldn't wake him, yet... I can't bring myself to just lay here while he sleeps in that chair... then another thought struck her as she realized she was truly starting to care for him in more than ways then just love, What is wrong with me? Since when did I start caring so much... For Cullen...? It was then that Cullen mumbled something and Talila had to almost strain to hear his words, but what he said had her feeling the warm and fuzzy feelings of blossoming love and she tried not to smile which majestically failed. She closed her eyes and silently memorized those sleepy words of his not realizing that she quickly fell back to sleep. When finally she woke up for good and managed to sit up without pain, she looked out the window to see the sunset of another day. How long was I out?!

"Three days," Cullen's voice surprised her as he yawned having apparently taken a nap in the chair. He stood up and stretched, "Everyone is worried about you. Even you had me worried."

"I'm sorry," Talila spoke with sadness in her voice and showing in her eyes.

"Don't be," He told her as he moved to sit at the edge of the bed. He lifted a hand and gently caressed her cheek, "You can't help that this is what you're going through, it's not something I would not have wished on anyone, not even you." He placed his full hand on her cheek and she leaned her head into his palm.

"Cullen, I'm...." she stopped short. Nothing she could say would describe the feelings that were twisting inside of her at that exact moment, but one feeling that didn't show in her eyes was the feeling she had for him. I do care for him...but seeing him and hearing his voice...it sparks
"I don't need to be told, I can see it in your eyes. Your fighting it."

"It's not just that, I've been fighting with myself to not lash out at everyone and everything. I don't know if I have the strength to continue this fight. If I don't do something soon, I will end up lashing out and... I don't want to think of what could happen if I go into such a fit, or who I would hurt if it happened. Especially if that someone were you..."

"Talila, you wouldn't hurt me," Cullen explained watching her carefully.

"You don't know that," Talila forced herself not to cry and to keep as calm as possible. "I don't know what I would do if my rage gets the best of me. I could hurt you or worse..."

Cullen leaned forward and kissed her forehead, "I trust you," He whispered in a loving tone. "I trust you to be able to come back to your senses before you could hurt me."

"You're putting a lot of faith in me," Talila frowned as he kissed her forehead again.

"Because I have faith in you. Now I will return in a moment with something for you to eat. I don't want you to spend what little energy you have left after being down for three days too quickly." With that, he left but in his stead, a woman Talila had come to know very well walked in, "Cassandra, I need to call in that favor." Talila looked at the woman who nodded.

"I will get preparations ready for your...trip. Just make sure to return before next winter."

"Don't worry, I will. I can't risk hurting Cullen or anyone for that matter." With that, Cassandra nodded and walked out of the room. I'm sorry Cullen, I have to do this. For both my sake and yours. And a few days later, once she was able to move freely without the stinging pain of the withdrawals, under the cover of moonless night, Talila left Skyhold. She dared to look back only once before continuing on her way, and now for the longest time that she would be able to remember Talila was completely and utterly alone. Forgive me, Cullen.
Talila opened her eyes, the memories fleeing as she looked at the man standing before her. "Cullen...I-" But before she could say anything more Cullen sealed her lips with his own. They had climbed up the ladder from his office to his room while she had been lost in the memories they shared and now he tenderly caressed her cheek.

"Don't ever leave me like that again," He commanded her with a quiet almost tear-filled voice as he enfolded her in his embrace, "I need you. I lo-" this time it was her turn to cut him off as she stole away his words with a kiss.

"I love you too Cullen, and I need you just as much as you need me," With their next kiss, self-control for both of them was being lost as their kisses became more passionate, more hungry, needier.

Cullen didn't want to wait anymore and he looked at her. "Talila?" He asked her name in a quivering voice.

"I'm ready Cullen. I want you forever," She whispered back as he kissed her again. With that kiss, their passion exploded into an inferno. Cullen and Talila soon felt their armor coming off and heard both sets fall to the floor before he laid her on his bed though both were still dressed. He kissed the scar on her eye, the scar on her cheek, captured her lips with his, before moving along her jaw and onto her throat, where he began to nip. She felt his sly hands move under her shirt and suddenly found herself without the breast-band that had become a usual thing for her to wear. She found his lips and all but forced him to let her sit up as her shirt followed the breast-band and went somewhere (where she wasn't sure and really didn't care at this time). She felt her hands helping to remove his shirt and soon she was pinned back under him as he claimed her mouth with his. She wasn't entirely sure when, but she soon found herself undoing his pants and was stroking him, which caused a rather uncharacteristic moan to escape him. Things after that seemed to go rather quickly and soon they found that their sexual high led Cullen to empty himself into her waiting womb as she tightened around him with her orgasm. They eventually collapsed upon the bed with him holding her close; though they did continue to gently kiss, neither being able to find the words to speak. Somehow another inferno was sparked and refused to die until the night began to wane. But even after that was spent, Talila refused to leave her ex-Templar (she had discovered early on in the relationship that he had once been a Templar but was no longer taking the lyrium that the others did, and much to his surprise and relief, her finding that out did not chase her away like he had feared it would) and she stayed the rest of the night with him. "I love you, Cullen," She told him as he smiled at her words.

"I love you too, Talila," With that, he held her in his arms and together they fell asleep.

*****

A year later, Talila stood at the mine once more, its lyrium deposits where not running out, rather she had come here at the request of the Inquisitor as there had been rumors of something odd happening here; though while she stood looking at the area around her, she noted that nothing particularly out of place was happening (which slightly irked her as she had been looking forward to a minor skirmish to test out the strength of her new armor) but it did give her some free time to think and as she thought, she found that the only source of her rage was at the man who had escaped death. The man who helped inflict this accursed lyrium withdrawal issue onto me. When I find him, Maker help me so I don't outright slaughter the pig.

"Talila?" Cullen walked up to her, startling her from her thoughts, "New armor?"
"One of the blacksmiths forged it for me, said something along the lines of "being the Commander's woman you need better armor than your beat up old armor"." Talila smiled, a full year had passed and every day they drew closer and closer to defeating the one everyone called Corypheus and delivered blow after blow to his general, Samson, and to his "Red Templar" army. "Shame really, I rather like my old armor, but I guess this will have to suffice."

"Well if it makes all the difference I like the new look on you."

"Trying to win me over?" Talila smiled as she looked to the love of her life.

"Well no, I...ah...um..." He blushed fiercely as he rubbed the back of his neck.

"Oh hush silly, armor is armor but my best gift yet is you," Talila smiled with a slight laugh and he reached out to touch her cheek. She loved to tease him and he really didn't do anything to stop her as it brought a smile to her face, and he loved to see her smile.

"How are you holding up?" He asked in a serious tone as he referred to her withdrawals.

"Surprisingly I feel perfectly fine," she sighed, "Sometimes I feel the pain, but it's not as bad as it once was," She looked into his eyes, and he smiled. Both knew the worst part of it was over as she had been struck by a particularly bad withdrawal a day after they had returned to Skyhold from the Empress's Grand Masquerade. It had lasted a good full month, and Cullen had worried over her every day as it worsened and despite their best efforts, not even elfroot had been able to help subside the pain that had ensnared her in it's like a wild cat with a hare in its claws. It had gotten so bad that Cullen had come to fear that he might lose her, but with the aid of the apostate elf named Solas, Talila's life had been saved due to a way having d been figured out to break the fever that had been making it worse. Cullen was just grateful that Solas had been able to confirm that the worst part of it was over and while it was now easier for her to ignore lyrium on some days, other days a minor withdrawal would strike and she would struggle, but Cullen would not let her suffer alone. "You know, I was asked by the Inquisitor to come here to keep an eye out for any odd happenings and so far nothing has caught my attention." She informed him as he looked around as well.

Cullen frowned, "Has anything seemed off?" He asked slipping into his Commander's mindset.

"Not unless you count the birds chirping only once in a while but other then that nothing in particular!" She suddenly felt the ground shaking under her and felt Cullen reach out to help steady her as their horses whinnied in fright. "What in the blazing hell?!" She looked towards Cullen as they steadied themselves. "What was that?" She asked as he looked at her, checking her over.

"I think we found what was causing the rumors," He told her as they went to their horses, Cullen hopped onto his mare's saddle and looked towards Talila who was hopping onto her stallion's own saddle. But instead of facing the proud beast towards Skyhold she turned him to face the path down to the mine.

"Cullen, you get back to Skyhold and tell them what we found. I'll go check on the workers!"

With that, she spurred her horse down the path and Cullen took off towards Skyhold. An hour later healers arrived to tend to the wounded and the Inquisitor and his Advisors came with them.

"Talila?!" He called out as she responded.

"Over here!" She told them as they saw her helping to free someone where a rather large boulder was damn near crushing the poor man's leg. Once he was able to be moved safely from the area Talila and the others let the boulder fall back into place and barely dodged the damn thing as it slipped forward. "Holy fuck!" She exclaimed as she turned to the four watching her. "You're really
not going to like this, Inquisitor..." she said with a frown as she reported what information she could give them. "...unfortunately that means that this particular mine can be considered no longer useful to us, well until the rock slide can be taken care of, but that may take months if not up to a year to clear away."

"How many died?" The Inquisitor asked as Talila frowned.

"Off the top of my head? Six that I know of so far," she told them as someone shouted that they had found another person dead, "Nevermind. Make that seven. Unfortunately, I'm afraid that it is possible that number will rise before the end of the day," She told them as they walked with her through what they could of the mine. She knew the mine well enough to be able to map out all areas and even told some of the rescue teams to check the areas for certain signs to signal "safe rooms".

"Safe rooms?" Cullen asked as Talila turned to him with a nod.

"The safe rooms are a failsafe incase something like this would have happened. Granted when I was still a slave working in this damnable place we never had reason to use them, but that was one thing that was always there." She informed them as she looked for signs in the walls, "Those of us who worked in here had come up with special markings to signify which rooms where the safe rooms." Spotting a particular sign, she called out catching the attention of a nearby group and traced over the symbol to open the hidden door. "Have to love when those who marked the rooms were mages," she smiled remembering the only good that came from being trapped as a slave in the mine.

"Why did it react the way it did to you?" The Inquisitor asked as Talila removed her gauntlet to reveal a tattoo upon her wrist that matched the mark next to the door.

Putting her gauntlet back on she told them, "We had to have some way to identify ourselves if the mine was abandoned, so when we could sneak time away the mages who were slaves here as well came up with the symbol that helped with our little idea." She sighed as the last person was helped out of the room. "That's everyone?" She asked as the last of the team came out with a nodded. She touched the symbol near the door again and this time both her mark and the one on the wall flashed as the door closed. Cullen said nothing about it but he was thinking on how that sounded like a very smart idea while the Templar side of himself tried to argue against it, but the proof was there and could not be denied. They discussed a few more things then the Inquisitor and the three who had come with him returned to Skyhold to speak of what to do next as word reached them of another quake and another mine collapsing.

However, a few days later would find Cullen back at the mine with Talila. Both were looking over a map of the mine and she was telling him everything that she knew about the mine when a soldier came up to speak with her. "Speak," she told him as she and Cullen looked over the plans for the mine. Due to the quake, a whole new branch of the mine had been opened up which was brimming with untouched lyrium and they had decided to add it to the map of the mine.

The soldier saluted, "I come seeking you out on the Inquisitor's command, my Lady. A strange man has been found trying to enter your room and he has been claiming strange things against you."

"Oh?" Talila looked up towards the man over to the side of the table as Cullen also looked up from the map. "Tell me one thing he claims." She stood straight, feeling her spine protest against the movement. She made a small mental note to take a hot bath later to ease the pain she felt building up.

"He says that you killed his brother and he is demanding revenge against you for the death of his sibling."

If Talila were a dog or a wolf her ears would have gone flat against her head and her hackles would
have rose while Cullen's eyes hardened. She knew who this man was then and felt her blood starting to boil as she forced herself to not snarl. "Lead me to him," She told the Soldier who nodded. Cullen was right on their heels and soon all three were riding into Skyhold where, after dismounting, they walked to the main hall and into the "courtroom" where Talila instantly recognized the man the soldier had been talking about. "YOU!" Talila snarled out as Cullen barely had time to wrap his arms around her to prevent her from drawing her sword and ramming the man through. The rest of the room grew quiet as everyone, to include the Inquisitor, looked their way.

"Well if it isn't the slave bitch who got away. I've come to put my claim back on you and to punish you for what you did to my brother!" The man spoke with a wild madness in his eyes.

"Your brother deserved what he got, you're just extremely lucky that the Commander is holding me back else I would ram you through the heart with my blade for the suffering you and your bastard of a brother caused me!" Talila snarled at him in return. Cullen was fighting to hold her tight against him, but the heat of her reined in rage rolling off of her made him also want to pull away. He could sense how badly she wanted to tear the man apart, to rip him into pieces but remained steadfast as the man threw more insults her way.

"Commander Cullen," the Inquisitor calmly called out as everyone turned to face the calm headed Inquisitor. "Let Talila go, soldiers restrain this slavemaker and we will move this out onto the training grounds. If he so desires the feel of steel through his gut in combat against one of the Commander's best, then let it be so," The soldiers who where holding back the man were quick to act and dragged him outside as Talila looked to Cullen.

"I'm not one of your best fighters, I haven't even seen a true battle in this world yet."

Cullen looked to her then both looked outside as thunder boomed, "You may not have seen a battle in this world, but I have a feeling that you will prove your own form of war prowess here soon," He spoke as lightning flashed, which helped set the mood for the coming duel.
Five

Thunder boomed in the foreboding clouds as the heavens began to slowly release their tears. Lightning flashed revealing Talila staring down the man from earlier who now stood a small distance away from her as the members of the Inquisition gathered for the coming duel. The heavy tension that hung like a dark cloud seemed to choke out any and all words as Talila unsheathed her long sword from its resting place. Now that Cullen could get a good look at it he noticed that the end of the hilt was a wolf’s head with snarling jaws and ruby eyes that seemed to glow with the same angry aura that Talila seemed to own at that moment. Talila’s own eyes seem to glow a very eerie and unnaturally ghostly-blue; her armor glistened thought it was an ebony to obsidian black, her natural blue-black hair was straightened out by the pouring rain and a lock of it was in her face as it had landed between her eyes. As the tension rose into the air a bolt of lightning landed between Talila and her rival, who they all had come to learn was named Ymbert. She waited until he was beginning to circle to copy the motion; everyone was now thankful that the training grounds where large enough to hold the hundreds of people in Skyhold while still giving the two combatants enough space to not harm anyone. For a while Talila and Ymbert circled each other, both waiting for the other to make the first move, but Talila was more patient then Ymbert who finally made the first move and charged her, like an idiot. Talila, being a bit more experienced with combat thanks to dueling with both the Commander and the Inquisitor, had waited for this moment and dodged the incoming attack and with her blade swinging out she struck him hard. His blood splattering onto the ground, onto her armor, her, and on the tip of her sword; she quickly brought her sword back around and the bloodthirsty steel bit into his arm. Ymbert cried out in rage and turned on her bringing up his own sword to slash her across the face causing her turn her head away from him. Cullen watched this exchange of blows with batted breath, but when he saw her turn back towards Ymbert, he felt his breath catch at the look in her eyes as they gave away what was about to happen and his heart stopped. His eyes grew wide and something in him, possibly the Templar side of himself, wanted to jump and pin her to the ground but he felt glued to his spot.

Talila turned back to Ymbert whose smug smile faded away and was replaced with pure terror when he saw the look in her eyes. Her rage was unbridled and now he would face a fury he had never seen the likes of before. "You will pay for that!" She snarled at him. What he did not know was that his blade had caused her to bite into her own cheek and she had tasted her own blood. Now, not only she had blacked out, but her formerly bottled up rage was had come forth, as it was now free. Giving an almost inhuman snarled battle cry that sounded more like a werewolf’s roar, she lunged at Ymbert and swinging her sword with her full strength she caused him to go flying backward with an open wound across his chest, but Ymbert refused to go down so easily and leaping to his feet, he lunged back towards her. He swung his sword over his head but when she reached out over her own head she gripped the blade with her bare hand, stopping it in its tracks while the steel bit into the soft flesh. Her dark red almost black in color blood slid down her arm and along the blade as she yanked it away from Ymbert and threw it into the ground. "You will learn your place like your brother did," She snarled at him, "I have no time for your petty games, slaver." With that she reached out and gripped the man's throat in a choke hold with just her injured hand, smearing her blood on his throat; though Talila was only five foot three, she lifted the taller man up into the air while cutting off his air supply. "You believed yourself MY alpha, my ruler. You thought you could control me, but now you will see that it is never wise to believe that a wild animal such as the wolf can be so easily tamed." She threw the man across the field towards his blade but when he landed, it was heavily, and the sound of his shoulder breaking was audible to everyone. Ymbert looked to Talila and at that moment he did not see her as a human woman but instead saw what he believed to be a huge black wolf with ghostly blue eyes and pearly white fangs bared for all to see. When he blinked he saw Talila walking towards him and looking to his blade he lunged for it at the same time she
lunged at him, he spun around in time to stab her, causing her to snarl out in pain, but he watched as that did not deter her, only served to enrage her further and witnessed her blade come down faster than his heart could beat. Bones snapped as the blade dug into the man's chest, something akin to a squelching sound echoed as her blade found his heart and the sound of more breaking bones echoed as the blade finished its journey into the chest of Talila's enemy. The man felt blood well up and out of his mouth while his last view of the world was of Talila snarling over him but he barely heard her final words, "No more will you enslave anyone, no more will the thought of you having escaped your death torture me through countless sleepless nights. Join your brother now in the deepest pit of Hell that you deserve you sorry sack of shit." Talila yanked her sword out of the man's chest and he fell to the ground, dead. Talila backed a good few feet away and collapsed to her knees as she finally came out of the blackout to see her side bleeding. She heard voices but only one voice reached her ears as she felt herself fall onto her right side.

"TALILA!"

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Cullen paced worriedly, he and the others waited just outside of Talila's room for news on how she was doing. "Cullen, sit down I'm sure she'll be fine," Bull spoke as Cullen looked to him.

"I can't." He replied, "I'm worried about her."

"We are all worried about her, even if she survived how bad that wound on her side is, it'll prove that she is hard to kill and leave a wicked scar."

"Bull is right, Cullen," The Inquisitor spoke as Cullen looked to him. "Pacing a hole into the floor won't speed up the work of the surgeon," Cullen looked defeated, but before he could sit down the surgeon walked out of Talila's room. "Any news?" The Inquisitor asked before Cullen could speak.

"She is in a lot of pain, the bleeding has stopped for now which gave me the chance to see that the wounds are not too deep. I managed to stitch and bandage her up, but she keeps asking for you by name, Commander. She refuses to rest until she sees you," The woman spoke calmly as Cullen nodded. "Just make sure she sleeps after your visit. She needs to allow her wounds to heal. I can only do so much for them." With that, the surgeon left and the group disbanded to do their own things, while Cullen entered to see Talila bandaged up and only one of her eyes staring towards the ceiling.

"Talila?" He asked her name carefully as she managed to look at him from the corner of her good eye.

"Cullen," she managed through a hoarse voice. "I...I'm sorry..."

"For what?" He asked as he gently sat down on the edge of her bed. He took his hand and brushed his fingers through her hair which had her close her eyes, "There's no reason you should be sorry."

"Yes, there is..." Talila spoke as he continued to brush her hair with his fingers. "I...I let my rage get a hold of me...I blacked out and killed the man who I had been waiting to do so to for so long...If he hadn't stabbed me through the side like he had, I could have hurt someone else or worse..." She spoke as her voice changed from just being hoarse to a tired-sounding hoarse.

"Talila, listen to me," Cullen began, "This time it's my turn to say that you don't know the struggle I had to go through watching that. I was holding myself back from jumping in after I saw the look in your eyes that signaled your blackout," He told her in a low voice, "I don't know if that was the Templar in me or just me but when I saw that murderous rage in your eyes, it took everything I had
to hold myself back from ramming into you and pinning you to the ground," He admitted to her as she managed to look at him again. She could see that he was not lying but couldn't find the energy to smile as she closed her eyes once more.

"I'm so tired," She whispered as he nodded.

"You can sleep now, I won't leave you."

"But Cullen-

"If I start to get tired I will lay right here with you, that way if you need me I will be close by," He promised her as she nodded and fell into a dreamless sleep. He kissed her forehead and couldn't help but watch her as she slept and felt his heart skip a few beats as he brushed some hair out of her face. "I will always be right here." He whispered in an oath as a thought struck him. But it was a thought that could wait until he felt that the time was right.
Six

Chapter Notes

A part of this chapter was inspired by the Balto 2 Wolf quest movie as I was watching it at the time. So it's my little tribute to a very particular scene so if you've seen Balto 2 you can probably guess which scene I'm talking about.

Cullen sat down on his bed still dressed in full armor, three weeks had passed and Talila had recovered at a pace that surgeon nor anyone had expected. He looked at the ceiling and sighed, Talila had been avoiding him for the past week which he found odd, but it was also explainable as he had seen her training to regain her strength but when she wasn't doing that she was in her room with the door open writing on paper which she had told him that what she was writing when she was in her room was either letters, a story or poems; or she was in the library reading through multitudes of books. Since Cullen tended to avoid the library unless he had a really good reason for being there, he found that that was where she was spending most of her time outside of training, but today as he decided to walk out of his room, he found her on the battlements looking at the sky with a worried face. "Talila?" he asked her name carefully as she spared a glance at him but returned her gaze to the sky.

"Cullen," She greeted him shortly which took him off guard.

"Can we talk...if your not busy that is."

Talila closed her eyes with a heavy sigh. "It's not that I don't love you, I do, with all my heart I do, and I haven't been meaning to avoid you, I've just been...well...I... shit, how do I explain this without sounding stupid."

Cullen looked to her like she could read his mind. "....How did you...?"

"Body language gave it away. I don't know how but since that fight, I've been able to read everyone's body language with perfect precision," Talila looked to him, her eyes were more of the light crystal blue than their normal dark blue, a trait she had told him that belonged to many of her family.

"How come you have been avoiding me?" He asked walking up to her.

Talila felt him wrap his arms around her and all but melted into his familiar and comforting embrace, "I've been trying to find my father."

"Your father?" Cullen asked as he kissed her neck causing her to shiver slightly.

"Yes. My mother would often tell me that my father 'hailed from a world completely different to the one I was born in'. She also told me that he came from a world called Thedas, but that she did not know where exactly in Thedas he hailed from," Talila sighed, "If I can find him, I can't say it will be a happy reunion, but maybe he will be able to answer some questions I have. Questions that Cole... Person? Kid? Something?... Made me start to wonder about."

"Like?"
"Why in the hell I've had people look at me like they see a wild animal and not a person. Or why..." She trailed off as Cullen turned her around and sealed her lips with his. "Cullen..." She whined as he touched his forehead to hers. His kiss sparked up a fire within both of them a fire that he wanted to badly follow through with.

"Maker...I've been waiting for a full three weeks to feel your lips again," He told her as his eyes met hers, they kissed again and then stayed together in a hug, even as the Inquisitor and a visiting Templar Knight-Commander happened to walk by on the ground. Both noticed them and the Knight-Commander looked to Cullen and Talila, who happened to giggle at what Cullen said after giving him a light slap on the shoulder. He pretended to be hurt and then chuckled at her as she kissed him. "Knight-Commander?" the Inquisitor asked as the other man looked at him.

"Is that former Knight-Commander Cullen? And who is the woman with him?"

"Yes that is Cullen, and the woman with him is Talila, a woman who hails from another world," The Inquisitor spoke with confusion, "Why?"

"Has... has she been looking for someone that you know of?"

"Her father, from what all I understand. Do you know him or where he is?"

"Bring her and the others to your war room... She needs to know that you've found him," The Knight-Commander looked to the Inquisitor who was shocked now but before the Inquisitor could ask the man spoke again, "I am her father and I...I have a lot of questions to answer," He spoke with a saddened look on his face and a sad tone to his voice.

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Talila felt rage boil her blood once more. "So for almost twenty-seven years of my life, you were here!" She snarled looking to the Templar who stood with eyes averted from her.

"Talila please, I had to come back. I didn't belong in your mother's world, and when I returned I was assigned to a new circle..." the Knight-Commander spoke as he looked to Talila, who was being slightly held back by Cullen, "I loved your mother dearly and I didn't want to leave her, especially when I found out that she was going to bring you into the worlds. I wanted to meet you, to hold you in my arms but I was forced to return here," He begged her to understand with his eyes but he was met with anger.

"I don't think you understand! The **pain** I suffered from because of not knowing you! In my world to grow up without a father is a damn death sentence that involves those children to be excluded from everything!" Talila growled.

"I'm am sorry Talila...I can't change the past or else I would have never left you and your mother...but please, Talila, don't let your hatred for my mistake overwhelm you, it's not safe for you to lose control."

"YOU DON'T THINK I DON'T KNOW THAT!" Talila shouted, "I've spent all of my life trying my damnedest to protect those around me. To hide my rage, to hide my hatred from my friends, only end up having pushed them all away!" Talila glared at him, her blood was now beyond a boiling point and Cullen was forced to pull his hand away.

"Talila, listen to me!" The Knight-Commander spoke in a tone that explained to everyone present that he would take no argument. "I can't undo what happened. But for the Maker's sake control yourself! If you keep up like this you'll lose yourself in the rage of the wolf!"
At that moment Talila really turned on him. "So my suspicion can be confirmed. My lineage on your side is cursed!" She growled as he tried to correct her.

The Knight-Commander looked taken aback and now greatly ashamed, "Not cursed, but we are descended from a...werewolf," With that Talila looked confused, then her emotions flitted from confusion to realization then landed back on rage as Cullen looked towards her with shock and worry.

Before he could speak again, she fist her hands. "So it was as I believed all along!" She growled. She all but stormed past him but stopped to look back in his direction, "Who?" She demanded as the Knight-Commander looked away.

"My father was the werewolf." He admitted as Talila looked away.

"Great so it was my grandfather who was the monster, fucking lovely!" She said as she turned away from him.

"Talila, I'm sorry I didn't come to find you sooner and that I couldn't explain what your mother wasn't willing to."

"SO my mother knew about it all along too?" She questioned as he nodded slowly.

"I'm sorry Talila."

"Sorry doesn't cut it anymore, not after this." She snapped as she finally stormed off.

"Talila wait!" But she didn't answer, instead, she bolted out of the room with him shouting after her, "TALILA!"

Once she was outside of the main hall, she rushed to the stables and issued her command to a stable-hand. "Ready my horse!"

"Yes ma'am!" the young man said as he raced off, while she went and gathered only a few things that she would really need, to include a map of Ferelden.

As soon as her stallion was ready she hopped into the saddle and as her father came out of the main hall to attempt to stop her (with Cullen close behind) she kicked her horse into an outright gallop and with a whinny, he took off. The horse didn't mind this gallop as he sensed the storm within her heart and had been longing for a good long run anyway. His dark hooves stamped upon the ground with loud thuds, and together they bolted out of Skyhold and into the wilds away from Talila's father. The stallion galloped hard as the mountains, trees and underbrush flew by; wherever they where going neither horse nor rider knew, but eventually Talila slowed the stallion down and gathered her wits about her, which wasn't helpful considering she had no clue where they were but now she let him walk as they kept going for three days and nights until, finally, they stopped at a river. She yanked out a map from her saddlebags and studied it, but she didn't see where she was and sighed. "I have no fucking clue where the hell we are, boy. I know we are in Ferelden but no idea where at exactly," She spoke as the horse nuzzled her arm with a snort, "But where ever we are, I can certainly say that we won't be going back to Skyhold anytime soon." She rolled the map back up and shoved it back into the saddle bag it had come from; She sighed heavily then as she petted his velvety black nose and rested her head on his shoulder. They stayed in that area for a while, then eventually her stallion (who was a handsome white coated horse with black stockings, tail, mane, and nose) felt the itch to gallop again. "You know I still haven't named you...hmm...How about... Spirit?" She asked the Stallion as he nodded. "I thought so!" She smiled, "You are a spirited and very handsome stallion after all," She hopped back into the saddle and patted his neck, "Well Spirit lets g-!" before she could
say anything the sound of hooves rushing towards them had her move him into shade of the trees, where she had him lie down as she covered him with her dark blanket. She yanked up the hood of her own cloak and peeked out of the underbrush to see the people who were now coming into view were her father and his men, keeping Spirit and herself quiet, she gripped her sword's hilt all while watching as they searched for her, but when they found no traces of her they left.

Once she was sure they were gone Talila removed the blanket and Spirit stood up, he shook the dirt and twigs off, and she put the blanket away. Once more she hopped into the saddle and walked Spirit out of the shadows, only to draw her sword as a voice startled them both. "Clever move, I would have never thought of that. You surprise me every day, Love," Talila turned Spirit to face the owner of the voice and her blade barely, barely, stopped an inch away from the throat of her beloved ex-Templar as her stallion's ears folded back.

"Cullen, you son of a bitch!" She spoke as she pulled her sword away and sheathed it, "You fucking scared the hell out of me!"

"Sorry," he said apologetically, rubbing the back of his neck.

"Are you following me?" She asked

"I left Skyhold a few minutes after you bolted out the front gates, so in a sense yes I was following you," He guided his mare close to her and her stallion and the two horses nuzzled each other as he reached out and touched her cheek, "Guess things have taken a turn for the worst?" He asked calmly as Talila looked down at the ground.

"To be honest, I don't know what is up and down now. Or even where the hell I belong after having what my father told me dropped on me out of nowhere," She said as he took her horse's reins from her.

"Come home to Skyhold," he whispered to her as she looked at him worriedly.

"After that outburst I had? After finding out what my father said about my lineage on his side of my dysfunctional family? I'm not so sure I'll be welcomed back with open arms and on top of that I'm pretty damn sure that a "descendant of a werewolf" should not be on your list of people to love unconditionally," Talila spoke but the look of determination on his face had her sighing, "Fine, for what it's worth I'll go back with you.

"If anyone tries to stop you they will have to go through me and besides, I have no complaints about loving you, a descendant of a werewolf or not. I love you," Cullen spoke with a protective note in his voice. With that, they headed back to Skyhold, but the whole ride there Talila began to wonder what Cullen was truly thinking about her and, letting her worst judgment get the better of her, she settled on the fact that because of his Templar training, he probably hated her now. As she stewed in that type of thinking she looked to the ground in sadness. Nothing will be the same between Cullen and I now... I'm an abomination... There's no way in hell he loves me now. Eventually, they returned to Skyhold where everyone was waiting as Cullen lead her straight to the stables where she was quick to dismount and let the stable-hand take the reins of her stallion and he greeted her.

"It's good to see you again Ma'am. Have you named your stallion yet?"

"His name is Spirit. I named him for his spirited heart," Talila told the man with a smile as he nodded and returned Spirit to his stall, making sure to take Cullen's horse's reins as well.

"Spirit?" Cullen asked as she looked towards him.
"Long story." Talila had her cloak's hood up as the sun was blindingly bright and because her eyes were so light in color right now they were more sensitive to the light than what Cullen's eyes were. She looked to Cullen as he gripped her arm gently in a motion that signaled to follow him, which she wasn't exactly eager to do but she followed him anyway, never removing her hood which he was happy to let her keep up to protect her sight. Thankfully they reached the main hall and then the war room undisturbed, but when they entered she was pelted by questions that she had little time to comprehend. Luckily for her, the Inquisitor stopped that as everyone looked at him.

"Give her some breathing room!" He exclaimed as he noticed she had yet to remove her hood. "Talila? Why don't you take your hood off?" But at the mention of that Talila shifted her weight from one foot to the other, made unusually uncomfortable by his suggestion. Cullen looked to her, worry showing on his face as it hit him that she had yet to do so, but then again he knew why as he had been the one to suggest keeping her hood up.

"I'd...rather not..." She said nervously as the Inquisitor frowned but a small blonde haired city elf, named Sera, was a little too curious for her own.

"Awww come on, Tala! If not for them maybe for your favorite prankster?!!" Sera was the only one who called Talila by that 'pet' nickname, and sometimes Talila had a hard time resisting and right now everyone could see that Talila was torn between giving into Sera's request and not giving into her request.

"Why do I have the hardest time resisting your puppy eyes, Sera?" Talila asked looking away from the child of a woman who giggled like a school girl. "Fine... But it's not because you asked, brat," Talila smiled, which brought a leap of joy to Cullen's heart. Seeing Talila smile and interact with Sera, made him think of her words when he first saw the two together. "She reminds me of my sister when we were younger. Always playing pranks on anyone around." Cullen smiled remembering what Talila had told him of her family, how she had a younger sister and how they had both been "encourageable" pranksters when they were children but her sister had been killed by a rabid bear and she had been injured. Watching the two he saw Talila suddenly holding, or attempting to hold, Sera back with a foot while trying to keep her from removing the hood that Talila held tight against her head. "Hey calm down! I said that I would remove it, ya pest!"

"But I want to!" Sera whined as Talila managed to barely hold her back.

"No!"

"Please????!!"

"NO! HEY !!!!!" Talila was quick to hold her back with her other foot as Sera laughed uncontrollably.

_They really do act like close sisters sometimes_, Cullen thought as everyone laughed as the two argued back and forth on this matter.

"Okay fine! For fuck's sake!" Talila caved to Sera's pleading. But before Sera could remove the hood Talila beat her to it to reveal messy hair.

"You need to brush your hair bad!" Sera commented as Talila rolled her eyes, but when Talila shook her head, the hair settled down and everyone but Cullen gasped. "SO COOL!! YOU HAVE PUPPY EARS!" Sera tried to touch them but Talila held her back while bending her neck backward away from the other woman's hand. "I wanna pet them!"

"No!" Talila spoke but once more Sera pleaded with her.
"PLEASE????!!!!!!"

"No!" Talila growled as Bull walked up, grabbed Sera and throwing her over his shoulder he walked away with her. "Thank you, Bull."

"Your welcome, Talila." He smiled back at her, "But I am curious now: do you have a tail to match the ears?" With that as Talila frowned and her ears flattened a look of shock ran through the others.

"Really? Nothing to say at all about the ears... but Maker forbid if you worry about if I have a tail or not..." Talila seemed thoroughly unamused.

"Qunari, remember? I have horns so I'm probably not the best person to judge you on your ears."

She saw his point to that, "No I don't have a tail, just the ears. I'm not special enough for a tail."

"Shame, I'm sure you would love your future children pulling at it," At that Talila's ears folded flat against her head in annoyance and she yanked up her hood again, to hid them once more. Cullen approached Talila but she shied away, he didn't want to show he was hurt by the move but her eyes begged him to hold off on anything until they could be alone.

At that, he could agree on, so when they could finally be alone, he led her to his room and as they entered she noticed her stuff had been moved to his room and she looked around surprised. "Cullen, when did you move my things to your room?"

"I ordered it to be done before I left to chase after you." Cullen smiled at her as she looked at him, Cullen took her hand and led her to the bed, where they sat down. He kissed her on the lips as they shared this tender and quiet moment together. "Can I... Well, may I touch them?" He asked nervously as she removed her hood revealing her soft black ears once more.

"You may," Talila gave him the permission that no one else would get. She saw him remove a glove and felt his rough hand touch the soft fur and he seemed amazed.

"They're...surprisingly very soft." He observed as he noted that rubbing them in a circular motion had Talila closing her eyes. The ear he wasn't touching folded back but the face she was making told him he found another secret thing that he would be able to use against her to help keep her calm when she would let him.

"Damn you, Cullen," She muttered under her breath, as he smiled. When he stopped he saw her semi-smile fall into a pout. "Okay, now you're a tease," He laughed seeing her pouting.

"Did I find something you enjoy?" Cullen smiled as she pouted at him. "I did." He smirked now, "Well now, looks like I will have to use it as much as possible." She growled slightly, but he went back to rubbing her ear she shivered and soon he found his hand falling away from her ear as he began kissing her and he pinned her to the bed but he studied her eyes. "Talila, I know Bull irritated you with the question but I just want to make sure-" He started as they sat back up.

"Talila!" He touched her back, but she managed to take deep breaths. "Are you okay?"

"Just..." she groaned in pain as the muscles in her shoulder tensed up even more, "An old wound...acting up..." She closed her eyes, but the pain would not lessen. That's when she realized she did not have her medication to help with the pain. Her ears flattened as the pain spread to her
elbow. Damn that Grizzly bear! If it's claw hadn't pierced through my shoulder I wouldn't have this issue. Talila bit the inside of her cheek, hard enough to draw blood but the pain in her shoulder was far more intense then what she was used to. Before she knew it one of the healers was there to look at her shoulder (thankfully Cullen had lifted her hood up to hide her wolfish ears) and as the healer studied her shoulder, the only news he could give was unnerving.
Seven

Talila was once more bitting her nails but then closed her eyes as she remembered a song from her mother's world that she had loved to basically death. Her arm was in a sling, and her shoulder was tightly wrapped to keep her from really doing anything, which was irritating her beyond belief. Cullen was away from Skyhold at this time so using him as a distraction was out, but eventually, Solas came walking up to her. "Talila?"

Talila found that her irritation did not stop with the fact that Cullen wasn't around to help her keep her rage in check. "What?" she snapped in an irritated voice.

"I can see the spirits were right about you, without the Commander you are irritable. But I think I have found a way to undo what is being done to you," He told her calmly.

Talila looked at him showing a bit of surprise. "You do know that Cullen is my mate, and I refuse to do anything without his input on it first?"

"I know, and so I can wait until he returns to discuss it further."

"That would be a wise decision on your part mage." Talila turned away from Solas but he didn't leave, and so her ears folded back in irritation.

"I do not mean to linger but I have now noticed that your arm is in a sling," At that, her eyes hardened and she snarled as she turned to him. He saw that the blood of the cursed that ran through her veins was not kind to her as now she had sharpened canine teeth on both top and bottom jaws. "I can make that go away."

"I didn't ask for your help mage," She growled low.

"I know but allow me to heal your old injury? I can see that you are getting bored by the minute and even I know that boredom can lead to trouble.

Talila thought about it and sighed. "Fine, but don't take this as a sign of friendship," Talila mentally slapped herself sixteen times. What are you doing Talila? Get a hold of yourself. Just because my mate isn't here doesn't mean I can be cruel. She growled at herself in her mind. Solas approached carefully as if she were a wounded wild wolf. She allowed his hands to run over her shoulder and soon the pain she had felt in her shoulder just melted away as the bone and sinew finally heal properly. She watched him carefully and something struck her as odd about him. "Dread wolf," She said as he looked at her, "Your body language and scent gives you away," Together they removed the bandages and he handed her a potion of some sort. "What is this?"

"A potion that will restore if not enhance your stamina," Solas urged her to drink it and after taking a quick sniff, which she regretted soon after, she pinched her nose and down the potion, "And yes I am the dread wolf."

"You have nothing to fear from me, I have reasons to keep my secrets and I'm sure you have your yours," She sneezed and the smell of the potion came back to haunt her. "Ugh! Couldn't you at least try to make it smell better?" She whined slightly as he smiled.

"Sadly potions like that are hard to make smell good. When the Commander returns I will be happy to explain more about what is happen-!" Solas about lost his balance as the ground shook but thankfully Talila gripped his arm which stabilized him. Talila looked over the ramparts and snarled as she shouted out. "SOLDIERS TO YOUR POSTS, WE ARE UNDER ATTACK!" Talila called
out as she was quick to react to what she saw, the horns of war sounded as she rushed away from Solas who was thoroughly surprised by the attack. "Get the civilians to safety. You there! Toss me my blade," She barked out orders as everyone did as told. Soon her sword was tossed to her and catching it she drew her blade. The sound of unsheathing steel rang out across the ground. Cullen, where ever you are, hurry back, we could use you and soon. Talila let that thought brush against her mind for only a heartbeat as the battlements were filled with archers as they filed into positions, "Archers!" She called out as the archers prepared their bows and crossbows. "Fire!" she called out as she saw that the fiends attacking them were the leftovers from the Red Templars. I thought they were all taken care of! Shit damn it! Cullen where are you when we need you?! "You, send word to the Commander and the Inquisitor! We need their forces back here now! I am unsure of how long we will be able to hold out."

"Yes Ma'am!" the young soldier saluted as he took off.

"TO ARMS!!! Archers continue to fire!" Talila felt herself slipping into her own commanding mindset and she let it run rampant as she thought battle plans through. Shit I've been spending too much time with that man. "Mages! Templars!" She called out as the two factions looked to her. "Mages! War is at our doorstep ready your spells for cover fire! Templars! There are abominations among the enemy ranks, so prepare for combat. Let no enemy pass through that gate!" She knew her ears where visible but so far everyone was working together and somewhere deep inside of her she knew that if they continued this, they would make it last long enough for the Inquisitor and Cullen to arrive. Pray to the Maker that the message reaches them in time! "FOR SKYHOLD! FOR THE INQUISITION!!" Talila screamed out like a banshee and leaping down towards the gates she stood side by side with Templars, Mages and soldiers alike, "BRING OUT THE HOUNDS!" She hollered as the Marbari war hounds where brought out by the hound master's underlings. Talila looked to the Knight-Lieutenant who stood shoulder to shoulder with her, "I thought Templars hated abominations?"

"Your the love of Commander's life, you think I want an ass chewing for abandoning someone who works so hard to get us make our defenses last? You're dead wrong."

"Fine, but entertain me, let's have a friendly competition to see who can kill the most demons, abominations and Red Templars before the main force arrives. Whoever gets the most kills owes the other one a drink!"

"You're on!" He smiled as the gate came crashing down hard and as one the ground forces moved into the fray.

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Cullen sat on his horse wondering if Talila was okay. The situation he had left her in hadn't been the best and he would rather be with her but his thoughts were interrupted when a scout, who was completely out of breath, came bolting up to him and the Inquisitor. "What is going on?!" Cullen asked as the scout panted heavily before shouting out the dire news.

"SKYHOLD! IT'S UNDER ATTACK!" the scout could barely breathe but his message was swift to get across. The Inquisitor looked to Cullen who shared the same thoughts as him.

"Who is leading the defense?" Cullen asked as the scout frowned.

"Lady Talila."

"But she still injured!" the Inquisitor spoke shocked.
"The Elven mage, Solas healed the wound, last I saw she is shoulder to shoulder with one the Knight-Lieutenants in Skyhold and she is fighting alongside the Templars, mages and those soldiers who where left behind to defend. Please hurry, Lady Talila was not sure how long the defenses can hold for!" the scout told them as Cullen order him to remain behind with the others and began to race back to Skyhold. As swift as lightning, he spurred his horse into a full gallop as the Inquisitor and their friends followed hot on his heels.

*Talila don't do anything stupid! Please, don't do anything stupid!* Cullen begged her as he raced her way. When the group and a sizable amount of the main force reached Skyhold a good majority of the enemies had been slaughtered, and Talila's voice was heard over the commotion.

"KEEP GOING! THE MORE WE KILL THE LESS THE MAIN FORCE HAS TO DEAL WITH!" Cullen scanned for any sign of Talila and when he found her he saw that she was ramming a demon through with her sword, this same demon was also beheaded by the Knight-Lieutenant who she was fighting alongside, he saw them exchange a few words but then they went separate ways as they returned to fighting. His horse whinnied as he saw a flash of black and white racing towards Talila, which she was quick to hop onto the back of. He recognized Spirit as the warhorse proved this day that he was truly bred for war. Eventually, Talila leapt off the proud stallion and slashed her way through the ranks of the leftovers of the previous battles with the Red Templars. Cullen didn't even give the Inquisitor time to call out for the charge, as he bolted towards Talila right as he saw her come to a close call. He drew his own blade and began to cut through the horde before him. Upon reaching her, he leapt off his horse and slaughtered a demonic creature that was about to take his beloved down. She turned to him but there was little time to celebrate the return of the main force.

"We are going to have a very long talk when this is over Talila!" He called out as they stood back to back, hacking, slashing and defending the other one.

"HA! I am aware of that but let me have my fun first!" Her ears were folded back as another sword was thrown at her. She looked to the Templar who threw it at her and nodded her thanks. Now that she was dual-wielding, hell was going to be fully unleashed. Talila snarled as if she truly were a wolf and together they slaughtered the fiends that came after them. Once the main force had joined, the battle was swiftly over and Talila slaughtered the last dying straggler. "Damn..." She panted heavily as she looked to Cullen who was also breathing heavily. "Cullen..." She watched as he looked to her but before she could say anything more, with just a few bounds he was at her side after wiping demon blood off of his face and away from her lips before they kissed.

"We are still going to have that talk later," He promised as she nodded, together they checked for injured and found that the was no shortage of that but what took them by surprise was there was more deaths then ever before. And as the number went up, Talila felt the pain of each loss and Cullen pulled her close with one arm around her shoulder. Just then the Knight-Lieutenant walked up and smiled at the two.

"Lady Talila, I believe I owe you a round of drinks. In all my years of service to the Templar order, I have never seen a better pair of fighters. You two were made for each other," With that, the man left to check on his own forces and the Mages.

"What a strange man he is," Talila commented as she looked to her friends, Iron Bull being one of them as he looked to her. "Something on your mind Bull?"

"Yea, remind me to never piss you off," He chuckled as she nodded. Her ears which had been flat against her head where now facing forward as she looked around.

Cullen looked to her as she counted up the body total, his hand twisting into her's. He could see that the deaths weighed heavily on her shoulders. He lead her away as her ears folded back but before
they could get any further a soldier stopped them. "Ser, Ma'am. There is a Red Templar asking for you by name, mi'lady." Looking to each other in curiosity they followed the Soldier and arriving at where the fallen Templar was sitting up and Talila recognized him as her father and her ears showed her surprise.

"You've fallen pretty damned far father," Talila spoke as she walked up to the dying man, who managed to look at her at.

"I....I know..." Pained spasms wracked his body, "I just wanted....I just wanted us to be happy.....to be a family again...But..." he gasped for air as she looked on unsure of how to react to his words or to him. "...but I guess we can't always get what we want..." He looked at the sky. "Is it raining baby girl? I can't see anything anymore," He asked as she felt the rain and looked up to see that it was.

"Yes, it is father. It's a gentle rain come to wash away the blood and battle of today," Talila leaned down to one knee, "It's coming down to wash away the hatred I wrongly felt towards you."

"Child...I deserved your hatred..." He looked at her even though he had said he couldn't see anything anymore. "I should have been there for you...I should have brought you home a long time ago..." he blinked slowly, "Is that Cullen boy with you?"

"I am here Ser," Cullen spoke up as Talila's father attempted to look at him.

"Take care of my baby girl..." he smiled. "I am entrusting you to keep her safe and out....out of trouble......"

"I will Ser, this I swear."

"Good boy... Talila? this is the end for me... I hate leaving you parent-less...But I know you are in good hands now........." he spoke as he managed to weakly touch Talila's face, he could feel her unconsciously shedding tears soaking his glove "..Farewell, my little wolf......" with that his hand dropped to the ground and his spirit fled his body. Talila lifted her own hand up to his face and closed his open eyes.

"Father...." She whispered as her tears continued to escape her eyes, the group gathered around her as Cullen walked towards her, his boots hitting the ground as he placed a hand on her shoulder.

Cole spoke quietly as everyone listened to him speak each looking to him in surprise, "Found yet lost. She lost him. She waited to see him all her life. And she lost him again. She blames herself."

Eventually, Cullen embraced Talila as best as he could. When he felt her arms wrap around him, he knew that she was still crying and he let her cry for as long as she needed. A day later, though, Cullen waited for Talila who was with Solas and when the door to his office opened he was met with his beloved who nodded, "Its over. I won't anything to do with my father's werewolf lineage any longer," She managed through a tired voice. She was purely and thoroughly human now and as he walked over to her, they embraced. A few weeks later, Talila stood laughing with Sera, and Cullen watched the two disappeared to play more pranks on the unsuspecting population of Skyhold. But was soon taken by surprise when he felt her arms around his torso, with a smile he turned to face her and kissed her, "Get tired of pranking people?"

"No, the Inquisitor took away Sera so I can't pull anymore pranks until she returns," Talila rested her head on his armored chest and felt him chuckle.

"Talila..." he lifted her chin which forced her to look at him. "Maker's breath...your beautiful..." his eyes sparkling at that.
"Cullen, are you planning something?" She asked watching him closely as he laughed nervously with a slight blush to his cheeks.

"Caught me." He smiled, holding her close. For a while they remained embraced, his chin resting on her head and her resting her head on his chest but he couldn't resist the moment as it was the perfect time to ask her what was on his mind. "Will you marry me?" He asked quietly.

"Hmn?" Talila pulled away to look him in the eyes.

He knew that he had said it too quietly the first time and repeated the sentence, "Will you marry me, Talila?" Cullen asked again as Talila took a moment to register what he had just said. When it finally clicked, she all but knocked him down with excitement.

"Of course I will Cullen!" She had tears of happiness in her eyes and he felt his heart bursting with unyielding joy. They kissed once more, this time for longer then usual. "You know that there's going to be a big fuss when Leliana and Josephine hear about it right?"

"Let them make a fuss, it wont bother me, so long as I'm with you, I don't care," he smiled, but he didn't realize just how much of a fuss the two women, along with Cassandra, Dorian and the Inquisitor would make over both him and Talila.

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Talila sat looking at drawings of dress designs that Josephine had peppered her with, "Thanks Cullen..." she muttered under her breath, "You fucking asshole with your "Let them make a fuss it won't bother me"...asshole!" She growled finally pulling away from the papers to look out the window. Cullen had rearranged his office to permit her to have her smaller desk in there and she was grateful for it. But I have to admit I do love that nerdy goofball. She blushed slightly as she thought of her plate-wearing, lion furred lined pauldren, wearing man. She smiled absentmindedly as she saw how beautiful the day was, she could hear the birds chirping happily outside but completely missed the sound of Cullen's boots on the stone as he walked into their shared office.

"Smiling, I'll take that as a good sign." Cullen's voice spoke in her ear as she rested her head against his shoulder, only after she about jumped out of her skin.

"Well considering I was thinking about you, I would hope you take it as a good sign," Talila smiled warmly as he kissed her neck. Right now they were the most talked about couple in Skyhold, aside from Dorian and the Inquisitor (both of whom Talila was trying her hardest to talk into getting married, much to Dorian's amusement and the Inquisitor's despair).

"Sera will be here soon. I really don't like it when you two go running off as you are both want to do."

"Well if I were you I wouldn't leave anything where she and I can get a hold of it," Talila giggled as Cullen realized what she meant just as she slipped away from him.

"You two DID do something to my desk didn't you?!" He asked but before he could do anything about it she slipped further away from him with her irresistible smile on her lips and was soon on the other side of the room. "What did you two do?" He asked her as she continued to smile. She stuck her tongue out at him and leapt out the door now closest to her. She was quick to disappear as Cullen came chasing after her. He stopped giving chase when Sera came round the corner and he heard Talila call out to her.

"RUN! He figured it out!" Together Talila and Sera ran away giggling like school girls. Later as
Talila and Sera sat on the roof of the inn they were laughing and eating cookies while throwing the more shitty ones into the well and earning points for bouncing the "rocks" off of helms. "Tha seo spòrsail, I haven't had this much fun in forever." Talila spoke as Sera looked to her. "Tha seo spòrsail means "This is fun"."

"Really?" Sera's eyes went wide as Talila nodded. They spent the rest of the day together, until they noted Cullen walking their way. All that was needed was one look and both vanished from the roof just as Cullen looked up, wondering if he had actually seen the two up there or not. The two women rushed to his office cackling like a couple of magisters (as Dorian would so kindly put it when he had heard them from the last time) they quickly did something to Cullen's desk once more and vanished faster from that area then ever before. They returned to where Sera was staying and finished the day off with some more cookies (this time some really good chocolate ones), but eventually, Talila returned to Cullen's side and heard him growling about Sera and she tried not to laugh. She walked up to him, wrapped her arms around his waist and he turned his head to her with a chuckle.

"You are a mischievous short little minx you know that?" He smiled as she giggled. Now that Corypheus was dead and gone and the threat of the Red Templars was no more, she had the free time to joke around and pull pranks.

"But you still love me," She felt him turn around and his arms wrapped around her. "That I do," He kissed her gently. The kiss slowly turned into a heated passionate kiss, and they were quick to disappeared up the ladder to answer their passionate fire.

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The next month found Talila standing in Josephine's office with her nerves trying to get the better of her. "Calm down Talila, you look beautiful," Leliana spoke with a smile as Talila flashed her a glare. "Ever heard of wedding jitters?" Talila spoke as Josephine grabbed her hands.

"It will be alright. Just breath," Josephine instructed as Talila took deep breaths. "I wonder if Cullen is having the same issue?"

"I doubt it," Talila said as the women helped her with her nervousness, but as they did that Cullen was, however, worrying greatly.

"Oh don't worry, my Dear," Dorian's voice sounded as Talila looked over towards him. He had dressed up rather nicely for this and was with the women to help with Talila's nerves. "He's just as much of a mess as you, if not more so," Dorian took her hands into his own. "In fact, I'm sure our beloved Inquisitor is trying to calm him down right this moment."

Which to say that would be a complete understatement as the Inquisitor watched Cullen pace. "Calm down, Cullen. I'm sure that when Talila sees you whatever nervousness you two have will flee," the Inquisitor smiled at the thought of the Commander being so worried.

Cullen stopped only long enough to look to the Inquisitor with a frown. "I am trying and I'm not worried about that it's just..."

"Still can't believe she agreed to it, Curly?" Varric, the dwarf who was truly the only person shorter then Talila, smiled as he wrote something down, "Besides I'm sure she will be excited to see you, and I'm pretty sure she will have to hold herself back from running to your side when she sees you again."
"Why are you still here dwarf?" Cullen asked Varric as he smiled.

"For reasons," Was all he would give the worrying man who only huffed.

When the time for the wedding drew closer, Cullen took his place where he was supposed and as he looked to the entrance where Talila was being lead through by Dorian, it took all his willpower to stay in one spot, but soon enough she was at his side and the wedding commenced.
Eight

Talila bolted up wide awake, she quickly looked over to see that Cullen was still dead to the world asleep, but as Talila looked around it suddenly hit her why she had woken and barely managed to race off of the bed and out onto the balcony before her stomach forced itself to empty whatever was in it from the day before. As she stood shaking, she felt Cullen's hand suddenly rubbing her back as he came to stand over her, trying his best to soothe her. It had been a full year and a half since the wedding, the Inquisition was now a peacekeeping group in service to Leliana who was the Divine and time seemed to pass slower but still Cullen and Talila remained at Skyhold to aid the Inquisitor whenever the help was needed, sadly a week ago that all changed for Talila when she had started to become ill without known reason. "Are you okay?" Cullen asked as Talila waited a bit before answering him.

"I think so," She said as he pulled her into his comforting embrace. They had found out that Talila was carrying their first child and Cullen had been thrilled beyond words, but then he had made it a point that Talila was no longer going to leave Skyhold without him accompanying her. She hadn't dared to argue against his wishes (or against the command of the Inquisitor), and while she was excited to meet her child she was just wishing the nine months would hurry up. So far she was only three months in and already she was hating every minute of it, but having Cullen there to help her through it made it worth every minute. He lead her back to the bed and held her close as they lay snuggled together, him with a single hand over her belly, since the discovery he had spent many nights like this and as each month passed Cullen proved each time just how excited and worried he was over both Talila and the growing child within her. Eventually, the last month came, and Talila sat upon their couch watching Cullen pace. "Is something on your mind, love?" She asked as he looked to her.

"Nothing to concern yourself over," he smiled gently as he walked over to her. He knelt down and placing his hands on her swollen stomach, a look of wonder, pride and peace come over him. "It will be any day now that we will get to meet our child," Talila spoke as she placed a hand on her husband's cheek as his loving and gentle gaze turned to her. "I hope he or she will be like you," Cullen chuckled as he leaned forward gently to place a kiss on her lips.

"I'm sure there is going to be a mixture of us both," He whispered as he placed his forehead on hers, he soon stood and moved to sit behind her, letting her rest her back against his armored chest. He rubbed her arms and for the moment everything seemed perfect, well that was until Talila gasped in pain. "Talila?!" he asked worriedly as she shivered.

"I don't think our child wants to wait to meet us anymore." She managed through the sudden pain. Cullen was very careful as he got up and raced to get the midwife who came hot on his heels to get Talila as the pains became worse.

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Word had spread quickly to the others of Talila having gone into labor and everyone was worried. "It's been over six hours, I hope she's okay." The Inquisitor frowned as he crossed his arms, "Poor Cullen must be worried out of his wits."

"Cullen and Talila will be fine." Cassandra told him, but her fear was the same as his. A lot could go wrong with the birthing process and Talila was no exception to that rule. But four more hours later and the screaming cries of a child could be heard. "Looks like the newest member of the Inquisition has made his arrival."
"How can you tell that it's a boy?"

"I just can." Cassandra smiled as the midwife came out.

"It's a boy," She smiled and left with the group disbanding as eager as they were to meet the newest arrival they decided it would be best to give the new parents time to bond with their newborn son.

Cullen looked to Talila who held their little one close. He couldn't believe just how much happiness he was experiencing at this moment as pride swelled in his chest. He saw Talila look to him and he couldn't help but rest his forehead against hers as they sat together on the bed. "Do you want to hold him?" She asked as Cullen nodded. He took the little one from her gently, almost as if he was afraid to hurt the little one. But when his son's eyes opened he felt all his fears just vanish, the boy gurgled and Cullen could no longer describe what he felt as he stared into his son's amber with blue eyes. Tears were in Cullen's eyes and slowly sliding down his cheeks as Talila rested her head on his fur lined shoulders and lovingly placed her hand on the boy's tiny cheek as Cullen felt the child grip his finger in his tiny hand. "I think our little one has out done us both with his eye color," She laughed quietly as Cullen nodded.

"I think he will be the perfect unison of our personalities," Cullen was smiling like a total goof, but he didn't care. This was possibly the most perfect stolen moment in time, and a time he would never forget. "What are we going to name him?" Cullen asked as she thought it over.

"How about Adrian?" She opened her eyes and looked to Cullen who nodded. "But I know in my mother's family all sons and daughters share the middle name of either their father or mother." She informed him as he smiled at the thought.

"Adrian Stanton Rutherford," He was still in disbelief that he was holding his little one, their little one, but the name just rolled off his tongue and it fit perfectly. "Welcome to your new home Adrian. My son." Cullen smiled as Adrian yawned, falling asleep in his father's arms as Talila sighed lovingly. For the moment all time seemed to be at peace, at least for now.

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Around fifteen years would swiftly pass and neither Cullen nor Talila seemed to be slowing down in their work, even as Adrian grew into a strapping young teenager who was proving that he was his father's son in all aspects of his life, to include being just as stubborn as his father. Adrian had seen the Templars come and go from Skyhold and as if history was repeating itself, he would turn to his father and mother and peppered them with questions about the Order and now, a few months into his pleading and begging, both watched as he left for training. They had told them of his father's experience with the Order, how Cullen had dealt with lyrium withdrawals, but that did not deter the boy and so however unwilling they were, they let him go. Talila watched as Adrian vanished with the other recruits to go for training and felt Cullen place his hands around her waist. "No, not his father's son at," She spoke as Cullen sighed.

"Don't remind me," He chuckled, "Let's just pray he doesn't run into the same issues I did when I was younger."

"I'm sure he will be fine. He does have half of both of us in him, so if the half that is you fails the half that is me will make up for it," Talila smiled gently as Cullen pulled away to frown at her and protest, but a quick kiss interrupted his words and, after a hardy laugh, both returned to their duties and would await the day their son sent them a letter telling them that he was a full Templar.
"DAMNIT!" Cullen's fist slammed into the war table as everyone watched, "Why would she not tell me?!" He growled as a hand rested on his shoulder, he looked towards the person and saw his son looking at him.

"Surely mother had a good reason to hunt the Dread Wolf on her own?" Adrian questioned, his armor glistening in the sunlight as the young man's eyes watched his father carefully.

"The Knight-Commander, your son, is correct, Cullen," Cassandra spoke up as everyone turned to her. She was back into the armor of the Seekers of Truth and looked every bit as intimidating as one could get, "Talila has her reasons about why she does things and this is no exception."

Then the Inquisitor slammed a blade down on the map on the table. "Whatever her reasons, It's time to save our friends from themselves." The Inquisitor's word was final and Adrian saluted.

"Agreed," Dorian spoke up swiftly from where he stood beside the Inquisitor.

"Then I will go prepare my men, she is my mother and I won't sit this out," He spoke sternly looking to his father who wanted to protest, but Cullen closed his mouth. Adrian really was as much his father's son as he was his mother's son.

Cullen sighed then looked at the Inquisitor, "Then I am going with you Inquisitor, I want to find out why Talila has left and I'll be damned if I just sit here waiting," With that everyone left the room to prepare for the last adventure of their lifetime. They were going to find Talila and bring her back no matter what, even if Cullen had to sacrifice his life, he wanted her home with him and Adrian. I'm coming for you, Talila and I will not rest until I have found you. Even if it kills me.

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As the members of the former Inquisition and her son prepared to come find her, Talila was already several steps ahead of them and now stood above the fabled Dread Wolf on a boulder looking down on him as his eyes met hers. "You called to me Dread Wolf. It has taken you years to figure out what I really am to where it had only taken me moments to figure out who you were," Talila watched him as his eyes bled to black with his irises bleeding to red. Her own eyes mimicked the bleeding effect only hers bled out to the unnaturally ghostly blue.

"I don't want to fight you, Fen'Mirthradra*," Solas spoke looking towards the woman above him.

Talila could almost laugh, "Na melana sahlin**" she replied as his eyes narrowed. "I have known the ancient language you speak for many years, Fen'Harel. You call me Fen'Mirthradra, but yet you yourself know no honor. For what honor is there in killing hundreds if not thousands of people for a world that should remain in the past where it belongs?" Talila asked him as he frowned, "Come Fen'Harel. Let us see who is the truly honorable one between us," Talila frowned as Solas growled. He called upon his power and as he unleashed his full might against her, Talila lunged towards him her own might becoming unbound. Had anyone witnessed this battle from the Fade they would have sworn they saw a many red-eyed wolf taking on an ebony she-wolf with ghostly blue eyes, but the fight would have faded from their view as Talila drew closer to Solas.
Chapter End Notes

*Fen’Mirthradra= Honored Wolf
**Na melana sahlin= Your time is come

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