Ruins

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Ruins

by Charlatron

Summary

Our story begins in 9.27 Dragon with the death of Malcolm Hawke. Elodie Hawke, our eventual Champion, is aged just 18. The events of her fathers death force her to leave her home to seek refuge in the wilderness, were she finds love. Three years later the blight forces her to return home to save what remains of her family. She travels to Kirkwall, makes some friends, has some sex, finds love again (but who knows how long that will last!) and even saves a city. Chapters with smut will be highlighted "NSFW". Plan to take this through DA2 and into Inquisition. Chapters focus primarily on relationships, with lots of dialogue (I try not
to use too much game dialogue).

Notes

Debut chapter of my first large fic. This will be pre, during and possibly post events of DA2. Many chapters already written but would appreciate feedback on the first prior to subsequent uploads. Slight canon divergence but ultimately the same story line. Tags do currently reflect future chapters but will also be updating as the story develops.
Although the day began like any other, it would be forever remembered as one of the worst of her life.

“Why do you insist on visiting the Chantry?” She asked her bright-eyed angelic little sister, completely at a loss. “You do know it's full of Templar’s, yes?”

Bethany rolled her eyes, as she shooed her older sister away. “I will not be denied my faith. Besides, so long as I wear this...” she jangled the enchanted bracelet in front of her blasphemous sisters face. “I have no more magic than Carver.”

Once it had become clear that Bethany wasn’t going to be able to control her abilities, their father had sourced the magical bracelet to sever her connection to the fade. He’d been gone for weeks, searching for some way to help the youngest of his mage daughters, before eventually returning with the bracelet. He never did say what he had to do to get it, which in itself had been telling enough.

Elodie never understood her sister's devotion to the Maker. What kind of God would bestow a gift as great as magic upon His creations, only for it to be deemed a curse by those born without; and in His name no less. Magic wasn't evil, people were. There were far more magic-less criminals in the world, yet the chantry insisted that all Mage’s be locked away, just on the off chance they might be deranged psychopaths!

“Just...be careful.” She cautioned, once again defeated by her little sisters iron will.

Her sister smiled, gripping her in a not-so-gentle hug. “I always am, sister. You don't need to worry about me.”

She watched her sister skip towards the Chantry, without a care in the world, until she was out of site. Hearing a sigh behind her, she turned to find her father observing her with a worried brow.

“What is it?” She asked, fiercely, ever ready to deal with anything that might threaten her family's safety.

Her father broke out in to a smile and began to chuckle. “My brave warrior.” He declared, proudly.
“That's...funny?” She questioned, confusedly.

The smile quickly disappeared from his face and he became very solemn. “No.” He admitted. “It isn't.”

She continued to eye her father with a befuddled expression.

“I just wish you weren't always so...battle ready.” He confessed, cautiously choosing his words. “I want a normal life for you, Dove. That's all I've ever wanted. Not everything is a life or death situation. I sometimes worry I might have trained you too hard...put too much pressure on you.”

Now it was her turn to chuckle. “Father, despite what you might think I actually like who I am.” She assured him. “And that's thanks to you and everything you've taught me. I have no interest in being normal.” She used air quotes on her last word for emphasis. “The Chantry may not support the freedom of Mage's now, but I intend to fix that.”

“A brave warrior and a radical?” He mocked. “Just try to find some happiness between crusades, okay Dove?”

She rolled her eyes as he patted her on the shoulder.

“Do you have some time?” She asked, a little apprehensively. “I've been working on that Force Magic you showed me, and I think I've almost got it.” Though she made it sound like a work in progress, she knew she had perfected it. She simply desired his recognition for a job well done.

“After you.” He eagerly instructed, gesturing for her to lead the way with a knowing smile on his face.

They made the familiar journey to their training spot, deep in the forest away from prying eyes. She'd worked tirelessly for weeks, but the look on his face when he saw her conjure Makers First with relative ease made it all worthwhile. They laughed, freely, as they each took turns to smash a dead tree stump to smithereens.

Their laughter died in their throats as they turned to face each other with panicked eyes. They had
both felt it; the sense of oppression that accompanied the close proximity of a man sustained by lyrium. A twig snapped, drawing their attention towards a small group of Templar's.

She turned to her father, eyes devoid of fear but seeking guidance. He shook his head from side-to-side, so discreetly that she barely caught it. How could he expect her to do nothing? It would be the circle or death; the only real question was whose death.

They stood completely still as three fully armoured Templar's - one warrior flanked by two archers - and one scribe slowly and cautiously began to close in on them. She looked at each of them, weighing up their strengths and weaknesses. The warrior instructed his scribe to run back to the Chantry and let the rest of the Order know to expect the arrival of two Apostate's. Her father must have felt her reaching for the fade as he quickly grabbed for her wrist to halt her.

“We don't stand a chance of escaping this if there are witnesses.” She seethed through clenched teeth.

“Don't make any sudden movements!” The warrior commanded as the three of them emerged completely from the trees and in to the clearing.

“Always knew there was something off about her.” She now recognised the younger of the two archers as a man she had once rejected, probably a little too viciously in hindsight.

“Malcolm Hawke.” Declared the warrior with an equal measure of shock and disappointment. “Thirty years in the order and I can still be surprised.”

“We're good people, Leroy.” She heard her father respond. “You know me, you know my family. Please, just let us go and I promise you won't ever see us again.”

“I considered you a friend, Malcolm.” The warrior sounded a little hurt, though ultimately firm. “But you cannot ask me to abandon my vows. Now please, come quietly.”

“You can't be serious!” She quickly interrupted. “You really think your Circle can teach us more than we already know?! We don't need your protection, and the world certainly doesn't need to be protected from us!”

“Elodie.” Shit, he sounded mad.
She noticed that the young archer had readied his bow in response to her outburst; aiming his arrow not to wound, but kill.

“You can't talk your way out of this one, father.” She insisted. “It's them or us!”

Before she had even finished her sentence she felt a wave of despair crushing her soul. Her father had described it to her once and she immediately recognised that she had been silenced. No longer able to access the fade she quickly began to unravel as she watched the warrior take a step closer to her father, anti-magic cuffs in hand.

“Leave him alone!” She pleaded as her instincts directed her to stand between them. She had only intended to shield her father, but the young archer incorrectly assumed she planned to attack.

“Elodie no!” Her father shouted in a panic as he watched the archer loose an arrow at his precious first born.

The seconds that followed seemed to play out in slow motion, as she turned to the sound of a snapping bowstring. She tried to erect a protective barrier, forgetting she had been incapacitated. Defeated, she closed her eyes and waited for death.

The arrow should have hit her by now, but instead she heard a pained grunt from directly in-front of her. She opened her eyes and gasped. Her father stood before her, an arrow head poking out of his chest. Blood soaked his tunic as his knees gave way. She caught him under his arms, slumping to the ground under his weight.

“You fool.” She sobbed, cradling him as he began to cough blood. “Why would you do such a thing?”

The Templar's were arguing amongst themselves.

What did you do?

It was an accident!
With what appeared to be a great amount of effort, her father reached up his hand to cradle her tear soaked cheek. “Run...Dove.” He sputtered, before taking his final breath.

She stared at his face in disbelief as his hand fell to the floor, shaking him violently and pleading with him to wake up.

“He's gone, miss.” The warrior spoke softly to her, but she wasn't listening. “You need to come with us now.”

“You killed him.” She breathed in disbelief, before being rapidly smothered by a sadistic rage. “YOU KILLED HIM!”

“Calm down now, miss.” The warrior pleaded, the softness in his voice now none existent. “Before anyone else gets hurt.”

She closed her eyes and began to wail, refusing to let go of her father. She thought she heard whispers murmuring in the distance, though too distorted for her to understand.

The archers looked at their superior, nervously awaiting his instruction.

Her wails intensified, evolving in to blood curdling cries of anguish as her fury bubbled over.

The older archer caught her attention as he began to approach. Her head jerked towards him, combatively, pinning him in place with a haunting stare. Her once beautiful silver eyes were now a demonic black as she heard the first clear whisper from across the veil.

_Blood slave._

She watched with glee as the older archer drew his bow and loosed an arrow at the warrior, impaling his thigh and causing him to lose his balance.

“Maleficar!” The warrior bellowed. “Kill her!”
The cursed archer shuffled towards the other two men like an undead meat sack, thrusting an arrow in to the warrior's throat as the younger archer clumsily tried to prepare an arrow of his own. Then came another audible whisper.

*Blood spatter.*

Without warning the older archer exploded with so much force that it knocked the younger Templar off his feet, landing close enough to where she sat that she could look in to his eyes as she robbed him of his light. His former comrades blood coated him like a poison, weakening him so that he was unable to stand. Then came a final whisper, as clear as her own thoughts.

*Haemorrhage.*

She looked in to the damned murderer's eyes, psychotically entranced, as blood began to pour from his every orifice. He gasped and gurgled, clutching at his throat before being overwhelmed by a violent seizure. She stared, smiling insanely, as she watched him simultaneously drown and bleed out. It took only a few minutes for him to die, but she relished every agonizing second of it.

She blinked rapidly as the darkness slowly drained from her eyes and the rage ebbed away. Unable to make sense of the horrific scene in front of her, she began to sob hysterically, clutching her father's lifeless body as she rocked back and forth.

When she was physically unable to cry any more, she suddenly remembered the scribe. He would surely recognise her when they came looking. Snapping out of her despair, she realised she had to flee. With a renewed sense of mana, whether through the silence being ended by the Templar's death or the lingering effects of the blood magic she had just unwittingly used, she levitated her father's body, pulling him along behind her as she sprinted home.

Her brother was just on his way out when she arrived, deceased father in tow. He hurried towards her as she gently lay their fathers body down on the ground. “Templar's” was all she managed before she began to sob again.

“Are we safe?” He asked, hurriedly.

“I need to leave.” She confessed.
“We'll all go...” He began, but she immediately cut him off.

“No!” She objected. “This is my mess. You'll be safe if I flee.”

Noticing the amount of blood which covered his sister for the first time, he began to panic.
“Sister...did you?”

She gave him a look that answered his unspoken question. Yes, she had killed the men who did this.

“Go then.” He commanded. “Before they come looking.”

“Make sure Bethany wears her bracelet, always!” She demanded, fearful that if a mage as strong as she could succumb so easily to the call of demons, her sister surely didn't stand a chance.

She hugged her brother tightly as her Mabari came bounding out of the house, her emergency supply pack in his mouth. Andraste bless that dog.

“Where will you go? Denerim?” Her brother enquired.

She shook her head. “In to the wilds.”

“What did you do, sister?” He questioned, gravely.

“You’re going to hear some terrible things...just know that father was avenged. Tell them I'm sorry, brother. And that I love them.”

She hugged him one last time, wondering if she would ever see her family again, then fled from everything she had ever known towards the Southron Hills.
Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Elodie Meets a handsome Dalish elf in the Brecilian Forest.

She had chosen a good time of year to turn bat shit crazy. Had it been winter, she would have surely frozen to death without a tent. As it was, the night time air was pleasant enough and the heat from her Mabari kept her adequately warm each night. The pack he had so cleverly grabbed was a conscious decision she made some years ago: always be prepared for an emergency getaway. It contained things such as small weapons, clothes, a bed roll, rations, cooking equipment and a small amount of coin.

The sudden sound of her stomach grumbling interrupted her thoughts, causing Fenton to look at her with a concerned head tilt. They had been travelling for almost a week now and her rations had dwindled to almost nothing.

“I guess we should probably try to catch something, huh boy?” She said, hesitantly.

She had always felt guilty about eating animals, and the prospect of having to actually kill something to sustain herself made her feel physically sick. Sensing her unease, her four-legged friend set-off running. She ran after him, trying to keep up, but he was soon out of view.

“Fenton!” She yelled after him.

He ran back in to her view, jumping on the spot to encourage her to follow, then swiftly disappeared again.

“Bride of the Maker.” She exasperated. “Fenton!” She yelled, louder this time, as she sprinted after him.

She ran in to a heavily wooded area and almost tripped over the furry fool, who was now sitting quietly as he watched something with such an intensity that it immediately halted her from chastising him. She peered through the tree's in the direction of his gaze. Way off in the distance was a large Dalish settlement. She wasn't close enough to see the ears, but the aravels and green armour made them instantly recognisable.
She had always been fascinated by elves, particularly the Dalish. She wasn't an avid reader, but almost everything she had read was about elven lore. She had seen a couple of Dalish scouts in the village once, bartering for supplies when she was just a girl. She remembered thinking they were beautiful as she stared at them in amazement.

As interesting as she may have found them, she knew they were known for their distrust of humans and that it would be best if she remained unnoticed.

“I don't think we'll find any help here boy.” She whispered, sadly. “Although...” Her eyes widened as she spotted the veritable feast: a small clearing littered with an array of edible fungi. “Good job, boy!”

If a dog could truly smile, this one had it nailed.

She carefully selected the varieties she knew were safe; chanterelle, oyster, honey fungus. She couldn't believe her luck when she spotted a small patch of beautiful bright red scarlet elf cups, considering they were out of season, and hastily claimed every last one of them.

They settled down for the night, with bellies full of lovely mushrooms, and her mind cleared. She found, rather surprisingly, that she quite enjoyed the isolation; knowing that nobody was around to see her casting spells. She had managed to repress all knowledge of what had happened before she left, she was always good at compartmentalising her emotions, though this felt more like denial.

After a few more days of travelling, she stumbled upon a little cottage just uphill from a large river. The forest had almost completely reclaimed it, which suggested it had been unoccupied for some time. The surrounding areas however had clearly been touched by magic. Although a little overgrown, there were an abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables still growing.

With a little help from the fade, she cleared the house of foliage, patched up the holes in the roof and rejuvenated the gardens. She couldn't believe her luck when she found undamaged fishing equipment and alchemy gear in the cottage. She would never need to leave this place.

After a hard day’s work, she sat down to read her favourite book on Elven Lore, for possibly the hundredth time. She knew The Brecilian forest contained Elven ruins, though didn't exactly have a map. She told herself that once the cottage was finished, she would venture out to see what she could find. Might as well try to achieve something while she was hiding here.
A week later, happy with her progress, she spelled a lock on the cottage door and began to explore. Each day she would travel only as far as half the daylight would allow, ensuring that she returned home before dark. The forest was a dangerous place at night, they had been attacked by wild animals many times before finding the cottage.

Growing tired of disappointment, she decided to take a day off. She picked vegetables for the stew she would later make, then headed down to the river to catch some fish. It was an unbearably hot day, so she wore only her smalls. She knew the heat would drive her to jump in to the water eventually, and there was nobody else around, so clothes would only be a hindrance.

Fenton ran ahead, barking excitedly all the way.

“Fenton, hush.” She asserted. “There’ll be no supper if you scare all the fish away.”

He whined a little then trotted up to her to nuzzle his nose in her hand.

“Good boy.” She praised with a scratch behind his ear.

... 

Satisfied with her catch of several eels, she packed up her gear then dove in to the deep water. Fenton whined as he paced back and forth on the wooden ledge which had been helpfully constructed for fishing.

“Come on boy.” She encouraged, but he just carried on whining.

She dipped her head underwater for a few seconds then popped back up, pretending to panic. “Help! I'm drowning.” She bobbed her head back under for a few more seconds then came back up for air. Sure enough he had fallen for the ruse and jumped in to save her. He paddled towards her and began growling when she started laughing.
“Oh don’t be like that.” She pleaded. “You can't deny how much cooler it is in here.”

He gave her his suspicious eyes then yelped in agreement before licking her face. She laughed as she struggled to get away from his slobbering when the hairs on the back of her neck abruptly stood on end. Her laughter stopped and Fenton quieted as she inconspicuously surveyed the trees on the other side of the lake. She didn't allow her gaze to linger, but she knew she had spotted something metal, probably a weapon, reflecting the sunlight.

“Act natural.” She whispered to her furry friend. “I'll be right back.”

She focused all her mana as she fade-stepped in to the forest on the other side of the lake, careful to leave plenty of distance between her and the foreign invader and leaving a mirage of herself behind to occupy their sight.

She re-materialised at least thirty metres from the shiny blade she knew she had seen. Whoever it belonged to however was obscured by a large tree. She looked down at herself as she suddenly remembered what she was wearing.

*Shit!*

Yep, she could see the colour of her nipples through her sodden breast band. Despite being quite satisfied with her own physique, she couldn't help but feel a little embarrassed. How was she supposed to look intimidating now?

*Fuck it!*

She fade-stepped again, re-appearing just a few paces behind the man who was still watching Fenton, convincingly swimming around the mirage of herself she had left behind.

She reached out her hand and gently gripped the hilt of his sword, careful not to jostle it and give herself away. Once her grip was secure she yanked it from its scabbard and pointed it at his throat as he spun around to face her.

She forgot herself for just a second, mouth agape as she drank him in. He was an elf, obviously Dalish from the Vallaslin on his face. He was a head taller than she, broader and more muscular than any of the city elves she had ever seen. His eyes were such a dark shade of brown she couldn't tell
where his pupils ended and he irises began. His chestnut hair was a magnificent thick mane, shaved down each side with the top combed back and trailing behind him just passed his shoulder blades.

“How...” He looked at her confusedly as he turned his head towards her mirage and back again.

“Garas quenathra?” - Why are you here? She demanded, remembering one of the few Dalish phrases from her book.

His eyes widened with fascination. “Aneth ara, stranger.” He replied in a captivating accent she had not heard before. Though she recognised his words as a greeting.

She moved the sword closer to his neck, tilting his chin upwards as she noticed his eyes drop to her chest. “Eyes up here, elf.” She demanded.

“My apologies. “ He cleared his throat, blushing a little. “Would you believe me if I said this wasn’t what it looked like?”

She raised a disbelieving eyebrow at him.

“Okay, maybe a little.” He admitted, jokingly. “I was scouting the area, saw you and became...curious.”

A smile threatened to break out across her face. “How so?”

“My name is Olithir.” He began. “My clan passes through here every few years, though I must admit I have never encountered a lone human this deep in the forest before.”

“I'm not alone.” She corrected him. “I brought my warhound.”

“That thing is a warhound? Truly?” He chuckled.

“Hey!” She objected. “I'll have you know he can be quite fearsome when he needs to be.”
“Look, is the sword really necessary?” He complained once he stopped laughing. “Couldn't you just as easily set me on fire if you wanted to?”

“I could.” She admitted. “Though I prefer lightening.”

“Good to know.” He countered with a suggestive smile.

*Is he flirting?*

“Fine.” She finally replied after a long silence, as she lowered the sword and offered him the hilt. “But if you try anything, I will entomb you in stone and leave you to rot.”

“Noted.” He replied as he took back his sword, his fingers grazing her own for just a second.

She began to shiver as her body registered the drop in temperature in the shade of the trees.

“Here, take this.” He quickly insisted, not missing a beat, as he handing her a tunic from his satchel.

She looked at him warily before accepting. “Thanks.”

She slipped the tunic on, which was more of a short dress on her, marvelling at how soft it felt against her skin. The black fabric made her skin look even paler, which she rather liked.

“It suits you.” He teased.

She eyed him curiously. “Well this was fun.” She teased back. “But I should be getting home.”

Without another word she fade-stepped to the opposite side of the river, excitedly greeted by Fenton who had raced out of the water to meet her. She picked up her gear and eel's and made her way back up to the cottage to start supper.
“You didn't tell me your name.” Came a shout from across the river.

If he really wanted to know, he would have to come find her again. She simply turned and shrugged her shoulders at him before resuming her hike back up the hill towards the cottage.

A few minutes earlier...

He walked through the forest, assessing the area for dangers. His clan would be camping for a few months at least, and the keeper had sent him out to ensure they would be safe. It had been a few years since he was last here, but he vaguely remembered his way to the nearby river.

He heard the water before he saw it, casually following the sounds to refill his skin for the journey back to camp. As the river came in to view, he watched as a woman eagerly jumped in to the water. He stopped still, wary that she may pose a problem, and cautiously observed.

The woman was human, that much he knew. She was now seemingly pretending to drown in an effort to get her whimpering dog to join her. The elf smiled to himself as he watched the dog fall for her ruse and the woman began to laugh. She suddenly stopped and looked around slowly. Had she heard something? She then abruptly turned back towards the dog and just floated, seemingly unmoving.

He began to feel as though someone were standing behind him, when his sword was yanked from its scabbard and he spun around to defend himself. The woman from the river was standing directly in-front of him, holding the point of his own sword to his throat. He glanced back to the river to see her still unmoving form. A mirage, he now realised, conjured by a clever mage. He should have been more concerned, but his thoughts were all but consumed by how beautiful she was.

Her wide cat-like eyes, framed by long lashes, were the colour of silverite. Her pale red lips were full and enticing. Her wet hair was long and impossibly black, stopping just above her breast band which he was now noticing was slightly transparent; revealing pale pink nipples. She was a head shorter than he, her frame was unfamiliar but oddly appealing. Her legs were long and muscular, her thighs gently touching at the very top. Her skin was almost as white as snow and completely unblemished. Her stomach was impressively flat, save for a hint of two faint muscles just underneath her sternum. She had a tiny little waist, though her hips and breasts jutted out a few more inches; giving her the look of an hourglass.

“Garas quenathra?” Demanded the human.
His eyes widened with fascination. “Aneth ara, stranger.”

Who was this woman? He looked her up and down, momentarily distracted by her now erect pink peaks.

The human moved the sword closer to his neck, tilting his chin upwards aggressively. “Eyes up here, elf.”

He blushed at being caught out. “My apologies.” He began. “Would you believe me if I said this wasn’t what it looked like?”

The human raised an eyebrow, clearly not believing him.

“Okay, maybe a little.” He joked in effort to break the tension. “I was scouting the area, saw you and became...curious.”

The human looked like she was trying to suppress a smile. “How so?”

“My name is Olithir.” He began. “My clan passes through here every few years, though I must admit I have never encountered a lone human this deep in the forest before.”

“I'm not alone.” The human confidently declared. “I brought my warhound.”

“That thing is a warhound? Truly?” He chuckled in disbelief. He had been laughing at that dog’s cowardice only moments ago.

“Hey!” That seemed to anger her. “I'll have you know he can be quite fearsome when he needs to be.”
“Look, is the sword really necessary?” He complained, trying not to laugh. “Couldn't you just as easily set me on fire if you wanted to?” He knew she was a mage.


“Good to know.” He countered with his most flirtatious tone and smile.

“Fine.” The human eventually conceded as she lowered the sword and offered him the hilt. “But if you try anything, I will entomb you in stone and leave you to rot”

“Noted.” He replied, intentionally grazing her fingers with his own for just a second as he relieved her of his sword.

He noticed her shivering. Although the day was hot, the shade of the forest was cold and she was wearing only sodden undergarments.

“Here, take this.” He chivalrously insisted, pulling a worn but unsoiled tunic from his satchel.

She looked at him warily before taking the tunic from him with a quick “Thanks”.

He watched as she slipped the tunic over her head, noticing how the black fabric made her skin look even paler. Something about seeing this strange and beautiful creature wearing his tunic excited him.

“It suits you.” He had intended only to think it, but had inadvertently said it aloud.

She gave him a curious look that he couldn't decipher. “Well this was fun.” She japed. “But I should be getting home.”

Without another word she disappeared from view. He turned back towards the river and sure enough she was there, collecting her things and walking towards the old abandoned cottage in the distance.

“You didn't tell me your name.” He shouted across the water.
She turned to look at him, now walking backwards, and simply shrugged her shoulders before turning back around and walking away.

He decided that very second that he would not be satisfied until he discovered this other-worldly woman's name.
Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Hawke and Olithir's friendship develops.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

It had been five days since her encounter with the handsome elf. She hadn't been back down to the river, attempting to play hard to get, but she rarely stopped thinking about him. She had even resorted to sleeping in his tunic, enjoying its intoxicating scent of cedar and violet.

Fresh from a bath, she slipped his tunic over her head before running her enchanted hairbrush through her wet locks, leaving behind silky smooth waves. Darkness had fallen, but it wasn't all that late, so she took a seat on the large cushioned chair and reached for her favourite book.

Fenton began to growl as she finished the first page, followed a few seconds later by three confident knocks at the door. Her heart jumped in to her throat as her companion began to bark. The Templar's must have found her. Three more knocks sounded as she hesitated, knowing they would not simply leave. She grabbed her daggers, making sure she would be able to defend herself should they try to silence her again, then urged Fenton to be quiet.

“Coming.” She responded, not quite as blasé as she had intended. She walked slowly to the front door and took a deep breath before swiftly pulling it open. The relief she felt when she saw the handsome elf, was enough to knock her off her feet. Without even being aware, a huge smile spread across her face.

“You have dimple's.” He observed aloud, before blushing slightly. “That smile wouldn't be because you're happy to see me now would it?”

“Happy you're…not who I was expecting, is all.” Her response was a little harsh, but she wasn't about to throw herself at him. He stood silently looking her up and down for a little too long before her brain caught up and realised he was recognising his tunic. “Ahh…I didn't have anything else to sleep in.” She told him as she crossed her arms over her chest, self-consciously, her lack of a breast band no doubt glaringly obvious.

He looked at her expectantly, unspeaking until the silence became fraught. “Aren't you going to
“ Invite me in?”

“And why would I do that?” She teased. “An unchaperoned young woman inviting a handsome stranger in to her home in the dead of night...what would the neighbours think?”

He raised an eyebrow at her use of the word *handsome* before chuckling at the rest of her statement. “I came to trade.” He finally ventured.

“At this time of night?” She asked, incredulously.

He sighed loudly. “Sorry.” He began. “My clan wouldn't exactly approve...”

“Then why come at all?” She interrupted.

“Because I wanted to.” He replied honestly, staring intensely in to her eyes.

“And do you always do whatever you want, consequences be damned?” She asked, sarcastically.

“Mostly.” He nonchalantly confessed.

She took a step to the side, turning away from him slightly, and gestured for him to enter. He hesitated for a second then gingerly stepped over the threshold and in to her living space. She gestured silently for him to take a seat as she excused herself before quickly returning wrapped loosely in a blanket. She took a seat opposite him and waited for him to speak, but he didn't. “You had something to trade?” She prompted.

“Oh, yes, of course.” He said, snapping out of his daydream. “Here.” He produced two wineskin's from his pack and set them down on the table in between them. “Nettle wine.” He announced, seemingly pleased with himself.

She took one of the skins and popped off the stopper to sample the contents. “Smells divine.” She admitted before taking a sip. “Wow. That is good wine.” She laughed as she coughed a little from the pleasant harshness. “Though I'm not sure I have anything you'd want.” She admitted, disappointed that she wouldn't be permitted to keep this heaven in a wineskin.
“Your name.” He said simply, as he looked around the room to avoid her gaze.

“Seriously?” She asked, warily. “That's all you want?”

“Or I could just call you Dimples?” He mocked, as he returned the attention of his intense gaze to her face, causing her to blush slightly.

She cleared her throat, fearing her voice would betray her nerves. “Elodie.” She told him as she nervously tucked her hair behind her ears.

He smiled, triumphantly, obviously pleased with his success. “A beautiful name. It suits you.”

She blushed a little deeper as she tried to suppress what would surely be a goofy smile.

“I'd like to come see you again, Elodie.” He confessed. “At a more convenient time, of course.”

She stared at him quizzically, wondering how he could possibly be interested in a fuck-up like her. “Okay, Olithir.” She eventually permitted.

He stood to leave, towering over her. He gently captured her hand, stooping as he pressed his lips against her knuckles. “Ma serannas, Lethallan.”

The sound of the door closing behind him reminded her to breath. Finally alone she allowed herself to smile. Who was this man and how was it that he could make her blush so easily. She sincerely hoped she wouldn't have to wait another five days before she saw him again.

…

The next time she saw him was a completely accidental meeting. She was exploring the forest in the hopes of finding some old Elven architecture, when she practically bumped in to him. Caught completely off guard, she began to mumble incoherently; attempting to explain why she was traipsing through the forest. When he eventually understood her intent, his grin was the only warning
he gave before seizing her about the wrist and dragging her along behind him. They eventually arrived at an impressive, despite its decay, statue depicting Fen’Harel. She had read about the Elven gods, but the prospect of listening to him re-tell the tale in his entrancing Dalish accent was too tempting an offer to pass-up. She sat in silence as he eloquently regaled her with the tale of The Dread Wolf. He was a marvellous story teller, eliciting gasps and sighs from his audience. Even Fenton was hypnotised by the story.

“He must have been very lonely, afterwards.” She sighed, unthinking. She had read the story many times, but always felt as though much was missing. Why would an immortal being curse himself to the solitude of being the last of his kind to walk this world, without a good reason.

“You pity The Dread Wolf?” He asked, flabbergasted.

Suddenly remembering that the Dalish typically thought of Fen’Harel as an evildoer, she ineloquently tried to explain herself. “Well…I mean…what kind of person would actually choose to be so completely alone…unless they had no other option?”

He looked at her in a way that undoubtedly said you.

“That’s different.” She objected with a stern look on her face, before pulling a complete U-turn. “Actually, no…it is the same. I had no choice either.”

She looked away from him quickly in the hopes he wouldn’t notice her glistening eyes. Fenton growled when he sensed her mood change, effectively ratting her out.

“I didn’t mean to pry.” He insisted, apologetically. “Though if you did need to talk to someone, I would be willing to listen.”

She quickly wiped the single tear from her cheek before turning to face him. “You would see me differently.” She looked away again, unable to hold his gaze.

“And how is it you think I see you, now?” He teased, a half smile tugging at his lips.

She laughed, bitterly. “Not inherently dangerous?” It was as much a question as a statement.
“Oh I most definitely think you're dangerous.” He japed. “You threatened to kill me the first time we met, did you not?”

This time her laugh was a little less bitter, but it quickly died in her throat.

“Try me.” He said as he took a seat on the floor, casually leaning against the giant wolf statue, patting the floor beside him.

The silence stretched for a few minutes, while she seriously considered his offer. Eventually she made her way to the spot beside him, carefully lowering herself and crossing her legs beneath her. She could not look at him however, instead facing straight ahead as she spoke. “I lost control.” She eventually admitted, already feeling lighter for having finally spoken it out loud.

“I’m sure there are few who could say they have not, at some time or other.” He offered, tentatively.

“I’m sure fewer of those could say they allowed a demon to influence them.” The words tumbled out of her mouth before she had the chance to vet them. She turned to face him, to see the horror in his eyes, but all she saw was warmth and compassion.

He placed a careful hand atop her own which rested on her knee, gave it a light squeeze and encouraged her to continue.

“Do you know what it’s like for mage's, outside your clan I mean?” She asked, needing to understand how much she would have to explain.

“I know you are treated unfairly.” He admitted. “That you are either prisoners or fugitives, regardless of your actions.”

He knew enough then. “My father grew up in a circle.” She began. “Through events unbeknownst to myself or my siblings, he eventually escaped. My mother was pregnant with me and they fled their home.”

She remained silent for a moment, to collect her thoughts. He waited patiently, never trying to hurry her.
“All they ever wanted was a normal life, for us. Then I went and spoiled it by coming in to my magic. He worked so hard to teach me - which wasn’t always easy living in a small village with a chantry and a constant stream of Templar's. We found a safe place to be alone, for years we trained there.” She took a few shaky breaths to try to calm her nerves. “But the Templar’s eventually found us.”

His hand, still upon her own, gripped her tighter.

“Anyway.” She tried to dispel some of the tension with a breezy tone. “One thing led to another and before I knew it my father lay dead in my arms.”

“Lethallan.” He breathed, his hand now stroking up the length of her arm in a sympathetic gesture.

“I lost it.” She admitted. “I’d been silenced, so couldn’t use any magic to protect myself, but…I heard whispers.” She visibly shuddered at the memory. “I don’t really remember what happened after that, but when I came too the Templar’s were dead.”

“And then you fled?” He asked.

“I took my father home first, so that he could be laid to rest. I spoke to my brother before I left, but I didn’t get the chance to say goodbye to my mother or sister. I worry what they must think of me.” She leaned forward placing her face in her hands, trying to suppress the sobs she had held back for so long.

“You have endured much.” He eventually offered. “And I cannot say that I wouldn’t have done the same, had I been in your place.”

She looked up at him abruptly, searching for any tell tale signs in his expression that he was lying, to make her feel less guilty. But all she saw was apathy and sorrow. “Truly? You don’t think me a monster?”

He smiled as he tucked a stray lock of hair behind her ear. “If someone so much as threatened someone I loved that much, I would not have required the temptation of demons to answer in kind.”

She stared in to his eyes for what seemed like minutes, though it was likely just a few seconds. She eventually cleared her throat and looked away, moving back to a standing position. “Thanks, Oli.”
She offered him a hand to help him to his feet. His grip was both tender and electrifying. It took every ounce of self-restraint she had to keep her expression deadpan, she hadn’t realised just how attracted to him she was until that very moment. Once on his feet, she quickly let go of his hand, certain she would begin to blush if they maintained this skin-to-skin contact for much longer. “I guess the old saying is true…that a problem shared is a problem halved.”

“There is truth in that.” He admitted.

“We should be getting back, it’ll be dark soon.” She announced to no one in particular.

His brow furrowed in confusion for a second, before he realised that by “we” she meant she and her dog. “Come. I will lead the way.”

She followed silently as he led them back to the path to her cottage. “We know the way from here.” She offered. “You should get back to your clan, before someone misses you.”

He wanted to disagree, to walk her to her door, but she was right. “Goodnight, Lethallan.”

He bowed as he said goodbye, ever chivalrous, then patted Fenton on the head who gave him an approving yelp. She watched him leave for a moment before resuming her hike home, wondering if she would ever see him again after her morbid revelation. She sincerely hoped she would.

Chapter End Notes

Hope you're enjoying it so far. Smut isn't too far away.
Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

First kiss ahead.

Part-way through her bi-weekly hike through The Brecilian Forest, Fenton in-toe, she heard a number of elven voices in the distance shouting what she assumed to be a name. Attempting to avoid getting too close to the distrustful elves, she turned and began to head back to her cottage. Before she could get too far however, she heard quick footsteps approaching. She grabbed for her daggers as Fenton barred his teeth, both poised to tackle their fast approaching adversary, when her handsome elven friend suddenly appeared through the trees. She sheathed her daggers, relieved, until she registered the look of panic on his face.

"What's wrong?" She asked, worriedly.

"It's Tanithil." He exclaimed, panting from his recent exertion. "He's missing."

"And Tanithil is...one of your people?" She queried.

"Just a child. This is so unlike him. Why would he leave the camp alone this close to nightfall?!" He seemed to be talking to himself more so then to her.

"Don't panic." She said, attempting to take control of the situation. "You keep searching ahead, and I'll go this way."

He nodded, his demeanour calming slightly.

"Don't worry Oli, we'll find him." She promised, placing a hand on his shoulder and giving it a gentle squeeze.

He set off running again as she headed back towards her cottage, hoping she would be able to find some trace of the little elfling. Andraste must have smiled on her, as within less than a mile she spotted a trail of small footprints. She followed them quickly until she heard the unmistakable sobs of a frightened child. She walked slowly towards the sound until the young elf was finally in her line of
"Tanithil?" She asked sweetly, though still surprising the boy who quickly jumped to his feet.

"Don't come any closer!" He warned her. "Or I'll...I'll set you on fire!" He conjured up a pathetic little flame that smoked out in an instant.

Understanding almost immediately what had lead this scared child to flee the safety of his home, she brought herself down to his level, kneeling a few feet away. "Did you come in to your magic today, Tanithil?"

He looked at her with wide panicked eyes that began to flood with tears.

“My name's Elodie.” She told him as she offered her hand to greet him.

He eyed her hand suspiciously.

"It's okay. You can trust me." She reassured him. "I'm a friend of Olithir's."

He sniffed and wiped the tears from his eyes, calming slightly at the familiar name. "Really?"

She nodded and gave him a warm smile. "And I know a thing or two about magic."

She winked at him as she repeatedly fade stepped around him, reappearing a few seconds later in front of him.

He clapped in amazement, his tears temporarily forgotten. "Can you teach me to do that?"

"Baby steps, little one." She chuckled. "However..." She reached for the dead flower she had just spotted, holding it at arm’s length directly in front of him. "I want you to concentrate, okay?" She instructed, causing him to nod enthusiastically. "Imagine that the very air around you is imbued with magic, and that you absorb it with each breath you take." She had to stifle a smile at the look of intense concentration on his face. "Now close your eyes, and in your mind I want you to picture the
flower as it once was; colourful and radiant." He closed his eyes and she began to sense his mana
taking shape. “You're doing so well.” She encouraged. “Just keep picturing the flower as it was, and
will it to be that way again.” She watched his face intently as his expression of exaggerated
concentration changed to a serene calm, the intent of his magic finally clicking in to place. "Tanithil,
look." She urged him, excitedly.

The little elf opened his eyes and watched as the flower regained its once vibrant colour and
stretched out its now moisture rich petals. "Did I do that?" He breathed in amazement.

"You sure did." She admitted, proudly. "Magic doesn't have to be a destructive force. My father told
me that once. Remember that, and it will serve you well."

Without warning he flung his arms around her neck, embracing her as Bethany and Carver once had.
She returned the hug for a few seconds, relishing the almost forgotten feel of a warm embrace, then
held him at arm’s length to speak. "Time to take you home now, little mage. Your clan will be so
relieved to see you safe."

His bottom lip began to tremble. "Mother will be angry with me."

"Would you rather stay out here all by yourself?" She asked him. “It gets very lonely, believe me."

Defeated, he held out his hand for her to hold and lead her back towards his camp. Darkness had
completely fallen by the time they reached the perimeter of the Dalish camp. She heard the familiar
sound of tightening bowstrings as they approached, causing the hair on the back of her neck to stand
on end.

"Tanithil!" Came a distraught woman's voice as she sped towards them, dropping to one knee to
embrace the child. “Ma serannas!” The boy’s mother sincerely thanked her, despite the look of
cautions in her eyes.

She watched the woman lead the boy back in to their camp as he waved to her over his shoulder.

“Time for you to leave, shem.” Came a cold voice from the canopy above. “No sudden movements.”
Came another. “Just turn around and leave.” A final voice commanded before a familiar face came
rushing to her aid.
"Lower your weapons!" He demanded of his kin. "This human is no threat to us."

She heard the bowstrings eventually relax, when they realised Olithir was not going to back down.

“Thanks.” She whispered, neither relaxing nor looking at him.

“Walk with me.” He instructed, without emotion.

They walked for at least half a mile in complete silence, until she could no longer bare the quiet. “You haven't told anyone about me, have you?” She asked him, unable to mask the sadness in her voice.

“I...” He began to speak but couldn't find the right words, selecting an audible exhale instead.

“It's fine. I get it” She reassured him with a friendly jab to his arm, though her smile did not reach her eyes. “They wouldn't approve of you wasting time with a revolting shemlen.” She crinkled up her nose to insinuate a look of disgust for the last two words.

He stopped in his tracks, seemingly angered. When she realised he was no longer moving she turned to face him, a look of sorrow painted on her face.

“They cling to the old ways.” He whispered sadly, eyes fixed on the forest floor.

“Hey.” She stepped towards him, unable to resist the urge to place a reassuring hand on his cheek. “I really do get it.” She assured him, her heart skipping a beat when his hand reached up to cover her own.

They stood staring in to each other’s eyes, unmoving, for what seemed like an eternity. She awkwardly pulled her hand away from him when the tension finally made her too nervous to stomach the intimacy any longer.

“I'll see you around, Oli.” She said, lightly, as she made to turn away from him.
He reached out for her arm to stop her from turning, tugging her back around to face him. Just a few feet between them, he took one long stride towards her. She looked up at him, trying to decipher the look he gave her. His sword hand came up to tuck a strand of hair behind her ear, his thumb lingering on her cheek bone as he searched her eyes for...something. She became aware of his free hand lightly resting on the curve of her hip. She unconsciously licked her lips and swallowed nervously, unintentionally drawing his eye to her mouth. He returned his gaze to her eyes with a look of unmistakable intent. He slowly leaned towards her, eyes closing and lips parting. She stretched on to her tip-toes, welcoming this long awaited union.

Her heart beat so fast it felt like a butterfly was fluttering its wings in her chest, when she at long last felt his lips claim her own. It was softer than she had imagined, and she had imagined it plenty. She kissed him back, slipping her tongue past his lips in search of his own. This seemed to spur him on and she felt his hand slide from her hip to the small of her back, pulling her flush against him. She combed her fingers through his thick tresses, pulling playfully when he gently nipped her bottom lip. She eventually pulled away for air, completely breathless, staring into his eyes in disbelief.

“Do you have any idea how long I've wanted to do that?” He sighed before feathering a trail of light kisses along her jaw and down her neck.

“Do you have any idea how many times I wish you had?” She teased, pushing him away playfully when his kisses found a ticklish spot and made her giggle.

“Let me walk you home?” He asked as his fingers weaved between her own.

They walked hand-in-hand, quietly enjoying the close proximity, until they reached her cottage. She turned to plant a peck on his cheek, but he held her in place and claimed her lips with his own once more. The first kiss had been innocent and sweet, but this one was raw passion. She dug her fingers in to the back of his scalp, her mind clouded by the throbbing between her legs. With two strong hands on her back, he held her tightly against him. Her body had completely disconnected from her mind as she found herself stroking her pleasantly warm mound along the erection straining against his leather breeches.

He suddenly broke away from the kiss, though that seemed like an insufficient word for what they were doing, holding her at arm’s length as he tried to regain some control with a few deep breaths.

“Vhenan.” He began, his voice ragged with wild lust. “We shouldn't. Not like this.”

“V’nan?” She tried to repeat, butchering it as she did. “I don't know that one.”
He laughed, dispelling some of the sexual tension that had built up around them. “It is not important.” He lied. “I will take my leave.” Though his tone was authoritative, he sounded more like he was trying to convince himself.

He pressed a kiss to the back of her hand, gave her one of his breath-taking smiles, and was gone before she could even make sense of what had happened.
Chapter 5 - "NSFW"

Chapter Summary

Heartbreak and make-up sex / first time sex

An entire week went by without any sign of Olithir. She was beginning to think he'd regretted the kiss and was avoiding her altogether. Intent on not allowing herself to wallow, she broke out the alchemy gear and began to brew some potions with the herbs she had foraged. She was halfway through her second batch of health poultices when she was disturbed by a quiet knock on the door, followed by a few excited barks from Fenton. "Hush, boy!" She commanded as she willed her heart to stop pounding. She walked over to the door at a leisurely pace, not wanting to seem too eager. She took a deep breath as her hand reached the doorknob, then unlocked the door and pulled it open.

He smiled at her, unspeaking, for what seemed like minutes; though in truth it was probably less than a few seconds. She tried not to smile back at him, a little perturbed by his lack of contact over the past week, but quickly caved. "Hel..." She attempted to greet him but was cut short when his arms snaked around her waist and he claimed her lips. Her arms hung loosely at her sides as her brain tried to catch up, but he pulled away abruptly before she could respond. Her head was spinning and she had to steady herself with a hand on the door frame.

"I'm sorry." He began, apologetically "The keeper found out about you...and I couldn't sneak away until now."

He attempted to kiss her again but she placed a hand on his chest to push him away. "So I'm just, what...some dirty secret?"

He looked at the floor, guiltily. "My clan, they...don't know you like I do."

"Then what are we doing?" She interrupted.

"I..." He sighed, sadly. "I don't know."

"Then maybe you should leave." She suggested. "I don't want to cause trouble between you and your clan. Plus, it's not like you're going to be here forever. You'll move on eventually and forget all about me."
He gazed at her, thoughtfully. "Perhaps you are right." He agreed, sadly. "My apologies, vhenan."

She watched him retreat until he was out of sight, biting her tongue the entire time to stop herself from calling out to him.

*It's for the best, Elodie.*

...

She was sitting in the garden, watching the sunset, when she heard footsteps approaching. She looked towards the sound and there he was, walking sheepishly towards her. He said nothing as he took a seat next to her. She leaned her head on his shoulder as he wrapped an arm around her, and they sat in silence until the last rays of the sun had disappeared.

"I'm sorry." He eventually whispered.

Unmoving, she answered "For what?"

He hesitated for a moment, then squeezed her a little tighter. "I don't seem to be able to stay away from you."

She giggled a little then pulled away from him to look him in the eye. "Since were being honest, I'm glad you came back."

He placed a tender hand on her cheek, breaching the distance between them to deliver a soft kiss. She sighed, contentedly, as he pulled her in to a strong embrace. He nuzzled his face in to her hair and she listened as he inhaled her scent.

"Please tell me you're not leaving yet." She asked, apprehensively.

"Not for a few weeks at least, vhenan." He replied with a wary smile.
"There's that word again!" She retorted, jabbing a finger in to his ribs. "Are you ever going to tell me what it means?"

He laughed loudly, as he stood and pulled her to her feet. "Eventually...vhenan." Now he was just teasing her.

He kissed her again, passionately this time, his tongue confidently exploring her mouth. His hands rested on the small of her back, holding her tightly against him as she ran her fingers through his hair. The intensity of the kiss made her throb in places longing to be explored, until it became so obvious that he felt the need to pull away, placing a final chaste kiss on her forehead.

The disappointed moan in her head must have slipped out, as he chuckled a little in response. "I have to go now."

"Will you come back?" She asked, a little too eagerly.

"Tomorrow." He immediately promised before surprising her with another impassioned kiss, leaving her completely breathless.

She leaned back against the wall of her cottage as she watched him disappear into the forest. Her mind was awash with all of the things she would have liked to have done to him, though it seemed his self-control was a lot stronger than her own.

…

Oolithir had made the effort to visit her every-single-day for the past two months, even if just for a five minute make-out session. Sometimes he would manage to stay for a few hours, though these days tended to leave her feeling a little frustrated. He drove her wild with lust and on more than a few occasions she had felt ready to take things further. But, alas, he wouldn’t entertain the notion. He said he respected her too much to deflower her, knowing he would be leaving in the near future. She had argued that she wasn’t completely innocent. She had never lain with a man, that much was true, but she had done other things.

“I’m not some innocent maid, waiting for a husband.” She pleaded.

“You cannot know what will happen in the future, vhenan.” He countered.
“And what about what I want now? Does that not matter?” She argued.

“Do not ask this of me.” He whispered, the words clearly a struggle. “I don’t know that I would be able to leave…after.”

“I know you have to leave soon, but can we not…before you do? If I allow you to leave without…I would regret it forever.” She gazed at him with a melancholic longing.

“Allow me to consider, okay?” His tone was final as he made to leave. “I’ll see you tomorrow.”

But she didn’t, or the next day, or the day after that. She became so impatient that she went looking for him, only to find the camp deserted. He had left her…without even saying goodbye.

She wallowed in self-pity for weeks. She barely ate, rarely slept. Her heart was broken. She was alone before she had met him, but now she was devoid. She had sampled happiness, but now it was gone.

She was alone with her thoughts…and her memories. Whenever she did manage to sleep, she was hounded by demons. They replayed her father’s death over and over, trying to remind her of the power available to her in an attempt to persuade her to submit to their will. But all it did was remind her how weak she had been, strengthening her resolve to never allow another demon to influence her mind ever again.

The demons didn’t give up easily however. Once they realised the tact they were using was ineffective, they began tormenting her with falsified images. Her mother and siblings being tortured by Templar's to give up her location. Oolithir dying in various horrific ways. Even Fenton being roasted on a spit before a distorted image of herself tucked in to his flesh.

She awoke screaming, sitting violently upright and head-butting something hard. She rubbed her head as she tried to focus her eyes. Another dream, she thought. She let her head fall heavily back on to the pillow.

“Leave me, demon.” She demanded, angrily.
“Elodie?” Came a concerned voice which made her loins tremble. That was odd. The demons had mimicked him many times, but never been able to evoke the feelings that the real Oli could.

She opened her eyes and propped herself up on her elbows, blinking repeatedly at the site of him. She silently surveyed him, half expecting him to disappear in a puff of smoke.

“I’m sorry.” He eventually spoke, a pained look on his face.

“Is it really you?” She breathed, almost inaudibly, as she reached to touch his face.

“It is.” He insisted. “I’m here.”

Finally believing she was no longer dreaming, she pulled her hand away from him slightly before bringing the full force of it down across his cheek.

“I deserved that.” He admitted, sheepishly and unmoving.

She threw off the blankets and jumped out of the bed, desperate for air. Her emotions were threatening to consume her and she could already hear the demons whispering from across the veil, promising they had the power to make sure he never left her again. She raced out of the cottage, vaguely aware of his footsteps close behind. She ran down the hill towards the water, needing to be away from him. “Stay back!” She demanded. “Please.” The pleading tone of her voice made him stop…just in time. She focused all her mana on creating the largest maelstrom of lightening she could conjure, hoping it would completely drain her and silence the demons. She was wrong. The demons must have been able to affect her mind as she accessed the fade. She turned to face him, eyes black and menacing.

“Elodie?” He sounded scared and she couldn’t help but revel in the thrill this evoked.

She shot a lightning bolt at him, intentionally missing. She was toying with him. She fired a barrage of lightning bolts all around him, landing slightly closer each time.

“Vhenan.” He shouted out of the blue, beginning to close the distance between them.
She hit him with a lightning bolt square in the chest, knocking him off his feet and on to his back. By the time he opened his eyes she was crouched over him, staring at his face with a look of absolute unrecognition.

He reached his hand up to her face. “It means, my heart.”

A single tear fell down her cheek, but her eyes remained dark and her posture threatening. He put a hand on the back of her neck and pulled her face towards him, perilously kissing her. At first her lips remained stiff, but after he muttered “vhenan” a few more times she began to kiss him back.

After a few tense seconds, she pulled away, quickly realising what had just happened and what could have. She fell backwards, trying to scramble away from him. “I’m so sorry.” She pleaded, completely mortified, before beginning to sob.

He hauled himself on to his feet and made his way towards her, kneeling down on the grass in front of her. “I’m the one who should be apologising, vhenan.” He retorted, lovingly. He tucked her hair behind her ear, before caressing her cheekbone with his thumb.

“Where did you go? And why are you back?” She whispered, unable to look him in the eye just yet.

“The keeper insisted we had to leave, and that I was not permitted to see you again.” He began. “I didn’t think I had a choice.”

“And now?” She questioned, looking only at his mouth to see him speak.

“Vhenan, the last month has been unbearable.” He almost broke down. “I cannot live without you for another second.”

Her pulse was deafening, though she maintained an air of calm. “What about your clan?” She aloofly interrogated.

“I left them.” He confessed. “You are all the clan I need.”

“You’re staying?” She asked, disbelieving. “I’m still bloody dreaming aren’t I!!”
He laughed, earnestly, before pulling her in to a desperate kiss.

After a few minutes she pulled away, regaining some of her senses. “So…you’re not going to be leaving…ever?” She innocently enquired.

“Never, my heart.” He confessed, adoringly.

“Then take me to bed.” She requested.

He kissed her again for a moment, before gazing in to her eyes and examining her entire face as though he had never seen her before. “Gladly.” He eventually responded before standing and scooping her up in to his arms to carry her back inside.

He set her down on her feet as they entered the bedroom. With both hands on her hips, he slowly stroked the bare flesh underneath the material of her tunic, savouring the feel of her soft skin. She leaned up to kiss him, which he eagerly returned. His hands roamed up and down her delicately curved spine, shifting around to her ribs and then, cautiously, her breasts. They felt so warm and supple, his straining erection became ever more uncomfortable in the confines of his tight trousers. She broke away from the kiss suddenly, taking a step away from him. He worried she had changed her mind, but was soon reassured when she took a deep breath and pulled the tunic off over her head. Having been sleeping when he arrived all she had been wearing was the one garment of clothing, so now stood in front of him completely naked. His mouth gaped open for a second at the sight. She had the most perfect teardrop shaped breasts with pale pink nipples. Her skin was as pale and unblemished as milk, as though she had never spent a day in the sun in her life.

She allowed him to lead her over to the bed, coaxing her to sit on the edge while he unburdened himself of his armour down to his smalls. She eyed him hungrily, seeing almost every inch of him laid bare for the first time. He was so much larger than any of the city elves she had seen. His chest and biceps were somewhere between a rogue and a warrior, which was probably why he fought with two swords as though they were daggers. Something about the structure of his pelvis made her mouth water.

He swallowed nervously before regaining his composure and joining her on the bed. He lay beside her, on his side, then pulled her towards him. Her bare skin against his own felt like paradise. He skimmed every part of her flesh he could reach with his fingertips, as he kissed her passionately, before losing his composure and flipping her on to her back. He rested his hips between her thighs, his eager erection pressing against her hungry mound. She sighed breathlessly as she rolled her hips beneath him, causing a delectable friction. He groaned in appreciation as he gently palmed one of her faultless breasts. He broke away from her lips to feather kisses down the entire length of her body as
she writhed at the sensation.

She kept her legs pressed together nervously as he kissed her thighs before nudging her knees apart, revealing a delicate little patch of jet black curls. He kissed up and down the insides of her thighs before planting a gentle kiss on her mound. She let out a surprised gasp and he looked up at her until she nodded for him to continue. He gently kissed her lips before running his tongue between her folds. She writhed at this foreign feeling of pure pleasure as he gently sucked her tiny pink pearl until her legs twitched. He continued to kiss and lick, lightly nipping and sucking, then ever so gently inserted a finger. She gasped again then immediately moaned with approval. He carried on sucking as he repeatedly breached her until he felt able to insert a second finger, but she was so tight that it was quite some time before he was able to fit in a third; eliciting her loudest moan yet. Her back arched as she bucked wildly in to his face, the consistent rhythm of his tongue bringing forth her first orgasm. She cried out in pure ecstasy as he stretched out her satisfaction until her legs tried to clamp shut.

He wiped his face and lay down beside her, watching as she regained her focus.

She turned to him, panting slightly “That was...wow.”

He chuckled, feeling appreciated “We don't have to go any further.”

“Yes we fucking do.” She almost shouted back at him, surprising both of them. She held a shocked hand over her mouth and they both laughed. “Please.” She wrapped her arms around him and kissed him sweetly.

He wriggled out of his own briefs, revealing himself to her for the first time. Her eyes widened a little but she quickly regained her composure, likely afraid he would stop.

Knowing how tight she was, he knew this would hurt her before it felt good. He once again rolled her on to her back and settled his hips between her thighs. He could feel her sumptuously wet entrance against the tip of his length and it took all of his self-control not to thrust in to her, roughly.

“You're sure?” He asked her, sweetly.

“I am.” She replied, honestly.
He kissed her as he began to fill her up to the point of resistance, before pulling out slightly and repeating. She winced a little, unintentionally digging her fingernails in to his flanks. Eventually he felt the resistance rupture and was buried up to the hilt. He commenced long gentle thrusts until she started to roll her own hips up to meet him, encouraging him to increase the intensity.

She had always assumed her first time would be a regrettable fumble, which would be quickly over and quickly forgotten, but this was something else. She had worried he wouldn’t fit when she first caught sight of him, but each gentle thrust hurt a little less; adequately stretching her out to accommodate him more comfortably, the pain transforming in to an intense pleasure.

He wanted to tell her how good she felt, how exquisite she tasted, but was too unsure as to how she would react to such a confession. He picked up the pace slightly and put more power into his thrusts. Not only was she no longer wincing but she was beginning to moan, the sound of which inadvertently caused him to thrust a little harder. She removed her hands from his hips, stretching her arms out above her head and arching her back, pushing her chest up and causing her breasts to bounce.

She had never felt a sensation such as this. She felt full, complete, in more than just the physical sense. She began to meet his thrusts with earnest, tilting her pelvis and revelling in the noises he made in response to each of her movements.

His arousal intensified significantly and he began to thrust even harder in to her, almost completely out then all the way back in. He could feel his own release on the verge of erupting as he bit down on her neck and growled like a wolf. She moaned loudly as her sheath constricted around him, telling him he had delivered another powerful orgasm. Not wanting to spill his seed inside of her, he pulled out at the last minute, releasing his load on to her stomach with a satisfied cry.

He remained on top of her, supporting most of his weight on his elbows, as he panted and waited for his vision to return. He adoringly showered her neck and face with kisses, before settling on her mouth.

She ran her fingers through his hair, breaking away from the kiss to gaze in to his eyes.

They spoke at the same time: “Ar lath ma.” / “I love you.”

She bit her lip nervously as she began to redden under his gaze. “Does that mean?”
“Yes.” He abruptly admitted before feathering more kisses along her neck and whispering “I love you” in to her ear.
Chapter 6 - "NSFW"

Chapter Summary

9.30 Dragon. Hawke and Oli have been living happily together for 2+ years. I wanted a little smut (okay a lot) before the dreaded blight.

28.11.18: Now with artwork, courtesy of pookyhuntress of Tumblr!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

The last two-something years had been carefree, harmonious bliss. She had never dreamed happiness like this could exist, especially considering the circumstance which led her here. She had learned much from her elven lover. He taught her how to hunt, despite her reservations, and how to use her daggers more effectively. They explored the forest together - or rather he gave her a tour – as he regaled her with tales of ancient Arlathan. He taught her his language and his beliefs. She felt like she knew more of his culture than she did her own, so much so that she’d even developed the habit of invoking his gods whenever the situation called for it. She had even earned the trust of his hart, which he had liberated when leaving his clan. Similarly, Fenton had also warmed to Oli somewhat. He hadn’t quite gotten the hang of interpreting all of the hounds many faces, but they understood each other well enough.

Their desire for each other had not waned during their time together, rarely a night – or morning – passed by when they did not end up intertwined as one; becoming the proverbial beast with two back’s. Even when her moon blood came, desire occasional won over. Luckily for her, Oli knew of a simple herb which would prevent procreation. The last thing either of them wanted was a child to distract their attention from one another.

All-in-all, life seemed pretty perfect.

It was another beautiful day in the Brecilian Forest. She awoke from a rare night of blissful slumber to the earthy smell of herbal tea and the familiar sound of an axe chopping wood. She slowly stretched, yawning loudly, then rose from her cosy bed to investigate. She left her bedroom in nothing but the tunic he had given her the first day they met. Content with the warm air wafting through the open windows, she opted against slipping in to her robe.

She entered the main room of the little cottage, which tripled as a living / dining / kitchen space, noticing a steaming cup of tea sitting on the counter. She thirstily claimed it and began sipping as she
sauntered over to the open front door.

She stood silently in the doorway, lustfully appreciating the site that awaited. An astonishingly handsome elf, naked torso glistening in the sunlight as he worked up a sweat chopping firewood. She bit her lip and sighed as she remembered the events of the previous night. Those strong arms carrying her to bed, those ethereal black eyes leering down at her, that mouth doing sinful things...

_Breathe Elodie._

He was unlike any elf, or man, she had ever encountered. He looked up at her with an ardent smile as he effortlessly brought down his axe to split a log in two without so much as glancing at it.

“Enjoying the show?” He said with a cheeky wink, his faint Elven accent forever giving her goosebumps. He discarded his axe and glided towards her in elegant strides. He placed one hand on her hip and the other behind her head as he pulled her in to an affectionate kiss.

She sighed contentedly, resting her free hand on the swell of his backside as the other loosened its grip on her mug; spilling tea on to the grass at her feet. He pulled away from her with a devilish smile and abruptly scooped her up, knocking the mug from her hand, and carried her outside at a fast pace.

“Oli, don’t you dare!” She yelled as she realised he was headed for the river.

He merely laughed and broke out in to a run before she could wriggle out of his arms, throwing her as far out in to the deep-water as he could then diving in after her.

She emerged from the cold depths with a dramatic hair flip before assaulting him with every elven curse he had taught her. He continued to laugh as he swam towards her, hungrily grabbing at her flesh as he fervidly kissed her.

She wrapped her legs around his waist then pulled away from the kiss to push the soaked tendrils of chestnut brown hair from his face, noticing that it had grown much longer then her own. It was also incredibly thick, despite still being shaved down both sides.

“Is that an elf thing?” She wondered out loud, to which he raised a questioning eyebrow. “Does it grow faster on your head because you don't have it anywhere else?”
He casually shrugged his shoulders in a disinterested way as he began to kiss her neck and nibble on her earlobe.

Noticing just how cold the water was, she broke away from him and began to swim to shore. Just as her feet touched semi-dry land, he tackled her to the ground. She landed on her front, though his technique ensured she was unharmed.

“Hey…” She attempted to chastise him, but the gentle sweep of his hands up the backs of her bare thighs cut her off.

He kissed her neck and shoulder as his hands explored her, eventually coming to rest between her legs. One hand concentrated on her pearl, while the other focused on her opening. His clever fingers quickly found the right spots and had her panting in seconds.

Face down in the muddy river bank, she wondered where this was going. “Here? Really?”

He chuckled but did not cease.

One hand left her for a moment, she realised later to free himself from the confines of his breeches, then both moved to her hips and forced them to tilt upwards.

Her pulse was racing, she found her lack of control in this situation highly arousing. Then she felt him, rock hard and pressing in to her from behind. He propped himself up on his elbows at either side of her, then began to vigorously thrust. She dug her fingers in to the muddy ground beneath her, trying to find enough purchase to push back against his assault. She felt every inch of him, the smooth texture and the intoxicating warmth.

The excitement of taking her this way, her relinquishing all control, had him very aroused very quickly. It was only a few minutes before he felt his sac tightening, right on the verge of emptying.

 Fluent in the sounds of his pleasure, she knew he was close. She reached a hand down to play with herself, intent on joining him in his bliss.

He noticed her hand move between her legs, which he found highly pleasing. He slowed his thrusts
ever so slightly, waiting for her moans to tell him he could resume his fast pace.

She quickly found her rhythm, thrusting back up to meet him in time with her own ministrations. He replied in kind, roughly taking them both to completion. She cried out his name, followed a few seconds later by a grunt muffled by a bite to her neck. He always did love to bite her when he crested.

He rolled off of her, both of them laughing. Then pulled her up and walked her back in to the water to rid themselves of the mud they had collected.

Hand-in-hand they made their way back in to their cottage, dripping wet from the river. He led her in to the bedroom and, before she could protest, pulled her wet tunic off exposing her naked flesh. He kissed her uninterruptedly as he unfastened and stepped out of his own soaked trousers.

“I have a gift for you.” He proclaimed as he finally broke away from the kiss.

She raised a suspicious eyebrow at him, assuming it would be the sort of gift that involved the two of them being naked.

He guffawed, knowing exactly what she was thinking, then presented her with a little wooden box. It was made from ironbark and as she took it from him she marvelled at how beautiful it was. Her name had been carved in to the lid, framed by intricate vines of elfroot.

“It's beautiful.” She breathed in awe. “Did you make this?”

“The gift is inside, vhenan.” He said, lightly chuckling.

She bit her lip as she nudged open the clasp, before pulling up the lid. Resting on a pillow of fragrant wild flowers was a beautiful silverite pendant in the shape of a heart, attached to a long silverite chain. She picked up the necklace, placing the box on her dresser to thoroughly examine the pendant, and discovered an engraving on the back: Ma vhenan.

“Do you like it?” He asked, nervously, as he watched her pull it on over her head.
“I love it.” She insisted, stretching on to her tiptoes to kiss him again.

The chain was so long that the pendent sat directly between her bare breasts. She looked down at it dotingly, then looked up to find that he was clearly more interest in the large mounds of flesh that framed it.

“I have something else, too.” He chanced, a devilish grin on his face.

Before she could protest - not that she would - he gently cupped her buttocks and effortlessly lifted her up as she wrapped her legs around his waist. He carried her over to the bed and gently laid her down on her back, pressing himself lustfully on top of her.

He began to worship her entire body with kisses, starting at her neck and making his way down to her hips. He gently parted her legs, trailing kisses along the inside of her thighs, before settling on her already pulsating mound. She writhed at his touch, moaning with appreciation as he licked and sucked, working her in to a frenzy as his slid two fingers in to her now drenched opening.

Delving his fingers in and out of her in an exquisitely fluid motion, he rubbed his flattened tongue on her jewel in calculated strokes; causing her legs to twitch in anticipation of what she knew was just moments away. Perfectly attuned to her body, he applied more force at just the right time as her orgasm poured forth; prolonging the sensation until she couldn't bare it any longer.

By the time she came too, he was already by her side and gazing at her with a proud grin on his face. She put a hand over her mouth to stifle an embarrassed giggle. “How are you always able to do that so quickly?” She asked, both remarkably satisfied and utterly astounded. She rolled on to her side to face him, biting her lip as she returned his hungry gaze, unable to resist her compulsion to kiss him. He returned her intent excitedly, grabbing a handful of her pert derrière. She felt his rock hard member pressed against her stomach. “Would be a shame to waste that.” She teased as she reached down to give it a gentle stroke.

His hand skimmed down her thigh to her knee, encouraging her leg to cradle his hip. He grasped his length to guide himself inside, deriving contented sighs from the both of them. With his forehead nestled on her shoulder he stilled, buried deep, savouring the feel of her. “You feel…ah”

Before he could finish she clenched her pelvic muscles around him, causing him to completely lose his train of though and bite down on her shoulder. Hard. He quickly withdrew then torturously slowly filed her back up.
Not content with being teased, she sunk her nails in to the flesh of his buttocks and pulled him
towards her as she tilted her pelvis to grind against him.

Also now decidedly done with teasing, he allowed her to set the pace. They met each other’s thrusts
with equal enthusiasm, holding each other tightly as he nibbled on her bare shoulder. Knowing how
much he loved a bit of earplay, she licked it from lobe to tip causing him to thrust wildly out of sync.

She giggled, then quickly rolled him on to his back to straddle him. He eagerly followed her lead as
she coaxed his hands from her hips over her stomach and on to her bouncing breasts. She rolled her
hips furiously, causing him to bite down on his lip to stem an early end. Sensing his urgency she
began to roll her hips back and forth, slower now but with increased pressure, concentrating
primarily on her own release.

His hands had slipped from her breasts back to her hips which he was gripping almost painfully,
clearly intent on allowing her to reach her destination. Heat began to flow though her like lava until
she felt like a volcano on the verge or erupting. Her remaining senses disappeared, no longer aware
of herself or her surroundings; only the explosion between her thighs.

She was vaguely aware of him moaning loudly at his own fulfilment as her brain fog cleared. She
fell forward on to his chest and he kissed the top of her head. He held her tightly against him. It was
a tenderness she had become accustomed to and she silently thanked the maker, and the creators, for
bringing this man in to her life.

“Ar lath ma...” He whispered as he caressed her back.

“Vhenan.” She finished, lovingly.

Three orgasms in one morning was pretty standard in their little slice of the beyond.
Chapter End Notes

Up next...heartbreak :(
Chapter 7 - "Mildly NSFW"

Chapter Summary

A sudden end to Hawke's life of domestic bliss.

Not entirely happy with this chapter if I'm honest, but I wanted to move things along and get to Kirkwall already!

She was awoken by the sounds of fighting, clashing steel and grotesque moans. She reflexively sprung to action, quickly tying on a robe and quietly opening the bedroom door. The house was empty, but the noise was coming from just outside. She kicked open the front door, immediately discovering the source of the commotion. Although she had never seen darkspawn before, the creatures were unmistakable.

“Elodie, get back inside!” Olithir shouted to her as he battled three of the blighted monsters, another two lay dead at his feet.

Distracted by her presence, two of the beasts turned their attention to her. Olithir took the reprieve to cleave the head off the one that remained within reach, then gave chase to the two headed her way.

She cleared her mind and reached for the Fade, conjuring powerful bolts of lightning. They hit both darkspawn, temporarily disabling one and splitting the other completely in half. The one remaining monster began to charge as she created a giant Fade fist which pummelled the creature to the floor with so much force that its bones fractured and punctured through its skin.

“Impressive.” Her love breathed before collapsing to the ground.

“Oli!” She yelled as she ran towards him in a panic.

“I'm fine.” He tried to reassure her. “Just a little drained.”

She helped him to his feet and back in to the cottage, sitting him down at the dining table to look him over. He had taken some hits, a few lacerations here and there, but nothing too deep. She washed the darkspawn blood off of him before placing a palm over his wounds, one-by-one, pouring her healing aura in to him.
“Why did you go out alone?” She chastised him once the bulk of his wounds were healed.

“I wasn't expecting to be greeted by darkspawn, vhenan.” He japed.

“What were they even doing here?” She questioned, curiously. “You don't think it's a blight, do you?”

“Darkspawn are always around.” He tried to reassure her. “A group that size does not necessarily mean a blight is coming.”

Despite his calm reassurances, she couldn’t shake the feeling that this was the beginning of something.

“I'm fine, vhenan.” His words pulled her from her trance. “Let's go back to bed.”

“I'll be right there.” She shouted after him as he made his way to the bedroom.

Feeling just a little too freaked out to simply leave five darkspawn corpses so close to their home, she headed outside to deal with them. She passed Fenton on the way, still loudly snoring. That damn dog could sleep through an explosion. Using her magic, she piled the darkspawn together and set them aflame. The smell made her stomach churn, but at least they would be gone by morning.

Satisfied with her progress, she headed back to bed where Oli was already fast asleep. She observed him for a while, appreciating the sight that lay before her. He was everything to her; best friend, love, saviour even. Her smile faded as she wondered what her life would have been like had she not met him, alone in this cottage with only her Mabari for company for almost 3 years. She shook her head, trying to rid herself of these dark thoughts, then gently lifted his arm around herself to nuzzle beside him. Even in sleep he instinctively held her close, tightening his arm around her. With her head on his chest, she listened to the steady beat of his heart and slowly drifted off to sleep.

“Sister.” Came an almost indecipherable whisper. “Sister!” Her sister's voice broke through the torturous scene the Fade had concocted. What new horror was this? The demons had never used her sisters voice before. “I finally found you.” Her sister cried, awash with relief.
She stared at the image of her sister in disbelief. "Is it really you, Beth?"

Her sister ran towards her, flinging her arms around her neck and pulling her in to a fierce embrace.

"How...you took off your bracelet, didn't you!" She accused, angrily.

"I had to find you, sister." She pleaded. "I had to warn you...make sure you were safe."

"Warn me?" She questioned. "About what?"

"The blight, sister. You have to come home."

"But the Templar's..." She began.

"Are otherwise occupied." Her sister impatiently interrupted. "Please, El. We need you."

"If it's truly a blight, then we're - I'm - not safe here." She quickly corrected herself. Now did not seem like the ideal time to tell her sister she was happier that she ever thought possible; in love with the most amazing man to have ever lived.

"I'll leave at first light." She promised. "Now wake-up, and put your damn bracelet back on!"

As if her words had actually worked, her sister disappeared from view and was quickly replaced by the usual nightmarish visions.

She quickly jerked back to reality at the sound of Oli's barking cough beside her. She placed a hand on his forehead, noting his slightly raised temperature.

He gently pulled her hand from his head down to his lips, placing a gentle kiss on her knuckles in an attempt to erase the concern from her face.
“Don't worry, vhenan. I'll be fine in a day or two - but that face isn't just about me is it?” He asked, quickly realising there was more to her demeanour.

“We need to leave, my love.” She told him, an adoring hand cupping his cheek. “My sister came to me in a dream. She said...” She looked away, unable to actually say it out loud.

“Elodie, you're scaring me.” He confessed, sitting up and guiding her face back towards him with two strong hands, thumbs grazing her cheekbones as he gazed lovingly in to her eyes.

“They need me.” She eventually managed. “It is a blight.”

“Fenedhis!” He cursed. “And here I hoped we’d stay here forever.”

“Me too.” She confessed, sadly, a single tear falling down her cheek as she closed her eyes and kissed him.

She pulled back and simply gazed at him, her brow eventually worrying beyond containment.

“What is it?” He asked, tentatively.

“You will...come with me...won't you?” She eventually asked, so close to losing what little composure remained.

“Vhenan.” He breathed, distinct disbelief in his voice. “Do you truly need to ask?”

She kissed him, fiercely, as she shimmied closer under the thin sheet and snaked an arm around his waist to hold him tightly. She had to stop when he began coughing again, but instead of pulling away completely she began to worship his bare flesh with kisses. Starting with his neck then hungrily moving down his chest and stomach.

“Elodie.” He half-heartedly protested.

“Hush.” She breathed over his pelvis as she cupped and began to massage his sac, quickly inciting a
keen erection.

She feathered kisses over the very tops of his thighs and along his pelvis, teasingly grazing his length with each movement. When she felt him fully relax, she swirled her tongue around the smooth head of his shaft. He sighed, contentedly, as she proceeded to take the length of him in to her eager mouth. His hands fistied into the sheets beside him as she skilfully alternated between sucking and burying him deep within her throat and holding him there to savour the tightness. Adding her hand to the mix, she jerked him vigorously in to her mouth. One of his own hands, now on the back of her head, gripped her hair tightly to signal his fast-approaching end. Intent on having all of him, she tightly grasped his hips and used only her mouth to coax his seed from him. He groaned in appreciation, setting off another coughing fit.

…

Though she worried he was too ill for the long journey to Lothering, prolonging their departure until he was well enough simply wasn’t an option. She allowed him to sleep a while longer, having drifted off again after her morning ministrations, and loaded his hart with only what they needed. She looked over the cottage, wondering if it would survive the blight and hoping that it might provide refuge for another such as she in the future.

Once fully packed and ready to go, she gently woke her love and helped him to dress. She led him outside and helped him on to his hart. She took one last longing look at the cottage, before guiding the hart away. With all the luggage she felt it kinder to walk beside rather than burden it with their combined weight.

After many hours of travelling in silence, she decided to take a break. She helped Oli dismount and sat him down propped up against a tree.

“Oli, you don't look so good.” She told him “How are you feeling?”

“I'm fine, vhenan.” He lied with an air of finality, effectively ending her line of enquiry.

After some food and water, he quickly dropped off. Although the sun was fading fast, she didn’t have the heart to wake him. She tended to the hart and played fetch with Fenton, who clearly had too much energy, before eventually waking him up and resuming their journey.

They rode for another hour before he passed out and fell from his hart. She rushed to his aid, to
check his vitals. His skin felt like it was on fire and had a sickly grey tinge to it.

“We need to get you to a healer.” She insisted, frantically. “Ostagar isn't too far away. Can you stand?” Physical wounds she could deal with, but she had no experience with curing illnesses.

With a little effort she managed to get him back on his hart, but this time sat behind him to make sure he didn't fall. As soon as they made it to the town, she dismounted and had to immediately catch Olihir but buckled under his weight. At that same moment, a moustached man in armour passed by.

“Please. My friend is sick.” She pleaded. “He needs a healer”

The man looked at her sympathetically. “No healer can fix what has been done to your man, Serah.”

“What are you talking about?!” She demanded, tears forming in her eyes. She took a proper look at the man, now noticing the griffon on his chest plate.

“I sense the taint in him.” He confessed. “He doesn't have long.”

Her entire world came to a complete stand still. She looked down at her love, cradled in her arms just as her father had once been. They stared in to each other’s eyes, unblinking. She stroked his cheek, trying to memorize every single aspect of him. It wasn't fare. She wasn't ready to lose him.

“There...might be a way.”

She looked up at the grey warden, who for some reason had chosen to linger after delivering that devastating news.

“I'll do anything.” She desperately pleaded, unabated tears running down her cheeks.

“Becoming a grey warden is the only way to save him.” He insisted. “But he would have to swear his loyalty to the order, and forgo his old life.”

“I'm not leaving you, vhenan.” He insisted.
“You will.” She demanded. “And I will be content to know that you are alive.”

“Vhenan...” He sighed.

“Please, my love. I cannot watch you die.”

With great effort he lifted a hand to wipe the tears from her face, skimming her lips with his thumb. She kissed it as she closed her eyes, awash with a cold sense of hopelessness.

“Then say your goodbye's.” He hurried them. “Time is not on our side.”

Their final kiss was chaste and salty, but she savoured it nonetheless.

“I will never forget you.” She promised.

“Ar lath ma, vhenan.” Where the last words he spoke to her.

She helped him to his feet with the aid of the grey warden, who shouldered his weight and lead him out of her life.

She cried for at least an hour, before getting back on his hart and ridding rapidly back to Lothering.

…

The last couple of weeks had gone by in a blur. The pit of her emotions had been pushed so deep that even she no longer recognised them. She was completely numb, guided only be her sense of duty. She had assumed her father’s roll as provider and protector, but the reports of darkspawn activity were on the rise. Half the village had already fled to Kirkwall, and she feared she had made a mistake for staying this long.

Just as she began to realise they had to leave, now, Carver rushed in with a panicked look on his
“Carver, what's wrong?” She asked, trying to contain her own panic.

“Fucking traitor!” He seethed. “Logain...he...he betrayed the King!”

“Carver, what are you taking about?”

“Ostagar is gone, sister!” He replied. “The king is dead, as are the Grey Wardens.”

Her heart stopped beating. The Grey Wardens where...dead? No. Now wasn't the time to fall apart. She would seal off her emotions and focus on getting her family to safety.

“We'll head to Gwaran, then sail to Kirkwal.” She confidently voiced her decision. “We have family there, right mother?”

And so it was settled, they would leave for Kirkwall immediately.
Elodie and Carver Hawke casually strolled into The Hanged Man. They had often heard of this so-called diamond in the rough, but during their first year in Kirkwall, getting drunk was way down on their list of priorities. Since their debt to Athenril was finally paid, they decided a night of care-free drinking was in order.

“Two pints of your finest ale, my good man.” She politely requested of the red haired barman, her perfect dimpled smile stretching from ear to ear.

“Celebrating are we?” He asked, curiously, as he poured.

“You can say that again.” Carver interrupted. “We are finally free of that bloody...”

She shot her brother a look that silenced him: the majority of the work they had done for Athenril hadn't exactly been legal.

“...mine.” He concluded, flatly, his head tilting to one side. “We've been mining.”

The barman raised an eyebrow, recognising the obvious lie. Carver grabbed his pint and hastily made his way to the furthest vacant table. She smiled at the barman, paid for the drinks and followed suit.

She took the seat opposite her brother and raised her tankard. “To us.”

Carver raised his own tankard, clinking hers in response. “To freedom.”
They drank in silence for a while as she surveyed their surroundings. The place was undeniably a dive. How anybody could refer to it as a diamond she had no clue, but she felt oddly at ease here. She began to imagine Bethany sitting there beside them. She could practically see the wrinkle in her nose as she tasted the terrible ale. She was such a delicate little flower. How her sister hadn't been swept off her feet by some handsome noble during her three year absence, she would never know.

“What are you smiling about?” Her brother asked, exaggeratedly mimicking her expression.

Her smile widened slightly as she looked at her brother. “Just picturing how much our dear sister would have loved it here.” She joked.

“I think there'd be a Bethany shaped hole in that door right about now.” He replied, pointing a calloused finger towards the door.

They laughed for a moment, before their melancholy eventually caught up to them.

“Another?” He asked, clearing his throat and waving his empty tankard at her.

“Abso-fucking-lutely!” She shot back, attempting to mask her sorrow.

Her brother made his way over to the bar as she quickly finished her own drink. Waiting for him to return, she discretely looked around the room at the other patrons. As much as she hated the fact that people judged her by the way she looked, she was never able to stop herself from doing the same. She did however have a pretty good track record for judging people accurately. She’d always had a sixth sense about a person’s character, particularly men.

Her brother returned to the table with a tray of four pints and four whiskey chasers, telling her the bar was far too busy to order just one at a time. She considered protesting for a split second before deciding that they deserved to let their hair down after the year they’d had.

They fit in well with the locals, everyone seeming to regress in to the same drunken stupor at an almost identical rate. They chatted with almost everyone in the place at some point or other, swapping blight stories with the other Ferelden refugees.

Another tray of drinks later and her brother was busy chatting up some busty piece while she was left staring at her fingernails.
“You look Ferelden.” Slurred a vaguely coherent voice from beside her. “May I join you?”

She looked up to see a handsome, though clearly drunken, man who could barely keep his eyes open let alone stand still. Taking pity on him, she gestured for him to take a seat opposite her.

He filled an empty glass with brown liquor and slid it towards her before refilling his own.

“To our gracious Queen Anora.” She toasted before knocking back what she discovered was a pleasantly spiced rum.

She was surprised to hear what sounded like. “Fuck that bitch...and her stupid hero husband.”

“You have a problem with the Warden who ended the blight?” She asked, completely flabbergasted.

He opened his mouth as if to speak, but seemed to think better of it and simply took a deep breath instead. “Nope. Not talking about that tonight.”

“Who are you, stranger?” She asked, curiously. This man was fast becoming far more interesting that she had anticipated.

“Names Alistair.” He replied as he refilled their glasses.

“Hawke.” She countered, not quite sure why she didn't offer her first name.

As they chatted about Ferelden and happier times, she suddenly recognised the energy she felt from his peculiar aura.

“You're a Grey Warden, aren't you?” She asked, excitedly.

He did not seem to appreciate this little revelation however, and rather hastily excused himself back to his room for the night, regrettably taking his bottle of rum with him.
Her mind now completely unoccupied, and her hands without a drink, her senses suddenly tingled with the feeling that somebody was watching her. She slowly scanned the room, eventually noticing a lone hooded figure sitting in the corner behind her. She allowed her gaze to linger over her shoulder, only a mouth and tattooed chin visible beneath the shadow of his hood. Her heart began to thump as her rum addled brain attempted to assess the chances of trouble. She was about to stand when her brother spoke, causing her to knock over her empty glass in surprise.

“Fuck, Carver!” She shouted, hand on her heart as if to stop it from bursting through her ribcage.

“You can leave if you like, sister.” He informed her. “Isabella has a room.”

“And what do you think mother will do to me if I return home without you, dear brother?” She retorted, calming slightly as she watched the hooded figure exiting the building.

He shifted nervously on the spot as she registered what he was about to ask. They had covered for each other like this many times back in Ferelden, waiting for the other to finish whatever secret or sordid thing they were up to in order to arrive back home as though they had never been apart. Most people tended to assume that she and Carver were the twins, for all the time they spent together.

She sighed, heavily. “Fine.” She accepted, utterly defeated. “But since I'll be wandering the streets until you're done, I expect you out within the hour!”

She stood as the bell rang to signal last orders, the full force of her drunkenness revealing itself: she had to place a hand on the table in an attempt to steady her legs. Fearing that one more drink would surely tip her over the edge from pleasantly buzzed to completely unable to stand, she told her brother to have fun while she headed out for some sobering air.

She meandered through the Lowtown streets like a vagabond, no particular destination in mind, until she found herself being drawn towards the sounds of a struggle. She rounded the corner in to an alleyway, where she saw a group of men rounding up a number of defenceless elves.

_Fucking slavers._
“I'm certain this is all just a simple misunderstanding.” She mocked, drawing their attention. “But slavery is actually illegal here in Kirkwall. So if you wouldn't mind just letting the elves go...nobody needs to get hurt.”

“Quiet, bitch!” Retorted the one she deduced was in charge of this little operation.

“Well that wasn't very nice now, was it?” She japed. “Do you kiss your mother with that mouth?”

One of the other men began to ready his bow, but before he could aim his arrow she grabbed a throwing knife from her belt and launched it towards him, deftly penetrating his shoulder. He cried out in pain as he dropped his bow, shocking the others in to relinquishing their hold on the elves.

“Run!” She commanded, seizing the opportunity. They listened and sped past her towards the Alienage. It bothered her that they wouldn't think of going to the guard first to report this: even here elves were second class citizens.

She re-focused her attention on the group of men. There were four of them, including the injured archer. They rushed her in unison, but Oli had taught her well and even in her drunken state they were no match for her; even refusing to use her magic as she was. They got in a few cheap punches, splitting her lip and possibly cracking a rib or two, but she broke a couple of noses and blacked a few eyes in response.

Beginning to tire slightly, she didn't quit manage to dodge the hilt of a sword as it was thrust in to her temple; the impact made her surroundings spin as opposed to knocking her out cold. It was, however, enough for two men to grab her by the arms and force her against the cold wall. She tried to struggle free but stopped when she felt the cold metal of a blade pressed against her neck.

“Feisty.” The man at her back whispered in her ear. “You'll fetch us a pretty penny.”

“I thought we were only supposed to take the elves?” Questioned one of the men who was holding one of her arms.

Completely ignoring his comrade, he continued to whisper to her, his hot breath against her face making her skin crawl. “Or maybe I'll keep you for myself. Let's have a taste shall we.” His sinister tone coupled with the sound of his belt unbuckling caused her eyes to widen as she struggled to escape in vain.
As she had feared everyday of her life for the past four years, she once again began to hear those deadly whispers from across the veil that came each time her emotions became frantic.

*Not again.*

Completely oblivious to what was happening around her, she concentrated solely on blocking out the demons influence.

“Look. She isn’t even struggling.” One of the men declared, laughing. “You picked a right one boss!”

The pressure of the blade at her throat tightened slightly as the man behind her hiked up her leather skirt and ripped off her smalls. She closed her eyes and focused all her energy on denying the demons control over her. She had promised herself she would never succumb again. She didn’t trust herself to use any kind of magic, for fear she would lose control. Even if it meant...

She heard a wet sound before his hand came between her legs, smearing her entrance with what she deduced was saliva. She felt the tip of him graze past her thigh as a short cry of pain escaped him and the men at her side released her. She turned to see what had caused them to stop, almost retching at the site of her attacker now split in two.

“It’s him!” She heard one of the men shout. “Get him!”

Within seconds the other three men were also dismembered and left scattered around the place. She watched as her saviour strode towards her, recognising him as the hooded man from the tavern.

“What the fuck, Elodie? You were almost just raped! Try to control your ovaries woman!”

“I’ll be fine.” She shrugged, nonchalantly. “Thanks though. I owe you one.”

“Nothing less than they deserved.” He spat.
“You know I would have been fine if not for the rum...and the ale...and the whiskey.” She didn't want to seem like some defenceless damsel.

He chuckled, earnestly. “I know.” He agreed. “I may have watched for while...before I realised you needed help.”

She blushed as she wondered how inelegant she must have looked in her drunken state.

“You helped those elves.” He abruptly stated, interrupting her thoughts. “Why?”

“Why not?” She retorted, without having to think about it. “Why did you help me?”

He started at her intently, as if trying to read her thoughts. “I need to leave.” He declared. “Will you be okay?”

She wasn't sure if he even heard her respond, he left so quickly.

“No, you go.” She shouted after him, sarcastically. “I’ll be fine…with all of these body parts and entrails.”

Deciding it would be wise not to linger here, beside a group of dismembered slavers, she left the alleyway and headed back towards the tavern. Hopefully Carver would be done rutting by now.

She reached the Tavern and let out an audible sigh of relief, almost immediately followed by a startled shriek as the door swung open and her brother appeared. His ridiculously smug smile disappeared when he clocked his sisters split lip and bruised temple.

“What happened?” He demanded, full of concern, his eyes wildly scanning their surroundings.

“You should see the others guy's.” She reassured him with a smirk and a wink. “They’ll be piecing themselves back together for some time.” She laughed, dryly.
“Honestly, sister. I leave you alone for five minutes.” He mocked, earning him a punch to the gut.

“Home. Now.” She instructed. He didn't need to know what had happened.

Their mother was pretending to sleep as they climbed in to their separate bunks. No doubt too worried about them to simply drift off, but also too respectful of their freedom to allow them to see her fretting.

“Goodnight, sister.” Her brother loudly whispered, clearly drunk.

“Goodnight, brother.” She replied, now a little less so.

As soon as her head hit the pillow, she was quickly transported to the fade. It only took her a moment to realise it was a dream, and although she knew she would soon wake in a cold sweat, it didn't make the scene any less traumatic.

Her sister bravely ran towards a giant ogre, without thought for her own safety. She tried to call out to her, to warn her, but she had no voice. She was rooted in place, only able to watch as the ogre reached down and squeezed the life out of her sister before discarding her like a used tissue.

“Bethany!” She shouted as she sat violently upright, no longer in the fade. Carver was still steadily snoring and if she had woken her mother, the woman made no indication of it. The sun had not yet fully risen, but there was no way she wanted to return to that dream tonight.

She heaved herself out of bed and busied herself with chores, but not before casting a glyph of silence on the room so as not to wake anyone. The daylight now in full splendour, she erased the glyph and began preparing breakfast, knowing her family would soon be up.

They rose one by one until all four of them sat together eating. Her mother needed to get some supplies from the market, and she insisted Gamlen accompany her. She and Carver finished their breakfast in silence before he offered to clear the table.

Once the table was clear she suggested they head out to look for work. Now that they were no longer in Athenril's employ, they had no income. After handing over most of her earnings from the last year to both her uncle and mother, she was left with only a modest sum; just enough to last until she and Carver found more work, or so she hoped. They decided to head to Hightown: she'd heard
tale of a Dwarf who was planning an expedition in to the Deep Roads. She knew this would be a dangerous venture and hoped he would be in need of some hired protection for the journey.

Bartrand Tethras was his name and he was a perfect arsehole. He wasn't the first man to underestimate her, and was unlikely to be the last. She had become accustomed to this type of reaction from people. Usually she would try to prove herself, but after the sixth or seventh insult, she decided no amount of coin was worth enduring this man. She bowed, courteously, thanked him for his time and headed back towards Lowtown.

Deep in conversation with her brother, she didn't notice the pickpocket until it was too late. She turned just in time to see the arrow flying toward him. Whoever fired it was a damn good shot; missing any vital organs but effectively immobilising him. She turned to see who had loosed the arrow and recognised the same handsome dwarf she had noticed in The Hanged Man the previous night.

She watched with a curious interest as he casually strode toward the pickpocket, retrieved both her coin purse and his arrow and headed back towards her. He stopped in front of her, handed over her stolen property and introduced himself “Varric Tethras, at your service”.

Tethras?

She eyed him cautiously “Not much like the other Tethras.” She mused to herself out loud.

He apologised for his brother and went on to tell her that although they don't need any more hirelings, they could use a partner with her particular skill set. He admitted that he had heard of her and the work she’d done for Athenril, and seen first-hand how much she could drink without falling down, and was impressed. After a lot of chatting about Deep Roads maps and hidden entrances, not to mention the additional coin they would need to get up and running, she happily agreed to help him in exchange for a cut of the profits.

She had a good feeling about this Dwarf, even if he did insist on addressing her as Dimples, a name Oli had once used for her. He had a wicked sense of humour and she knew, without a doubt, that they would be fast friends. She didn't easily trust, but for some inexplicable reason she felt like she had known him for years. Perhaps they were kindred spirits, she thought to herself.
Chapter 9 - "NSFW"

Chapter Summary

Not one, not two, but three smutty scenes! Really enjoyed writing this one.

First on the to-do list was finding the Grey Warden in Darktown who might be able to help them find an entrance to, and navigate, the Deep Roads. She asked Varric how it was that he was always so exceedingly well informed, but all he offered in response was “If I told you, Dimples, I'd have to kill you”.

The grey warden apostate wasn't hard to find, and it made her wonder how the Templar's hadn't gotten to him yet. His one condition for handing over his Deep Roads maps was that they help him break a friend out of the circle. Sure. No big deal. It wasn't going to be easy, but she couldn't imagine the pain of losing someone she cared about to the circle and so agreed to his terms.

Unfortunately they did not arrive in time. The Templar's had discovered what Anders and his friend were planning and had already performed the rite of tranquillity before they could rescue him. This was when they found out that Anders wasn’t just your average AWOL grey warden apostate; he had also allowed a spirit of Justice to inhabit his body, so that it might survive outside of the Fade.

Back at his clinic she couldn't help but try to comfort him. Having to kill your best friend to save them from a soulless life of tranquillity couldn't have been easy for him, but she knew she would have done it in a heartbeat if it had been Bethany or her Father; tranquillity was worse than death. He was still grateful for her help, however, and had offered his maps, as well as his skills as a grey warden and a healer, to assist with the expedition. He may have also openly flirted with her, which she didn’t hate.

In the weeks that followed, Anders became an integral part of the group as a healer and was also a more than capable fighter. They flirted easily, though she was unsure if she was truly attracted to him. Sure he was nice to look at, and even had that sexy tortured soul thing going for him, but he wasn't Oli. She had found herself thinking of her lost elven lover a lot recently, particularly when she was alone; furiously trying to pleasure herself to the memory of him buried between her thighs, but without managing to achieve adequate relief.

It wasn't until Isabella had commented that the best way to get over a man was to get under - or on top / in front of - another, that she had truly considered Anders as a viable option. She couldn't deny that her sexual frustration was the cause of some pretty questionable mood swings, but one-nighters with random strangers just wasn't her style. Having said that though, she had no desire to rush into
another serious relationship. Perhaps seeking comfort from a trusted friend might be the answer.

The lantern had been extinguished, indicating that the clinic was closed. She took a deep breath, knocked on his door and waited. She was about to knock again when she heard lazy footsteps approaching from the other side. He opened the door in nothing but a blanket, wrapped haphazardly around his waist. His body was impressive; broad shoulders and strong arms with dark blonde hair covering his firm chest and trailing tidily over his muscular stomach.

He rubbed the tiredness from his eyes as he blinked her in to focus. “Hawke?”

She said nothing as she nudged past him and in to his home.

“Please, come in.” He said, sarcastically, closing the door behind her.

She walked to the back of the room and stood silently, watching him as he settled on a nearby chair.

He yawned as he rubbed the back of his neck, his bicep bulging enticingly, before looking up at her. “Well?”

After a few seconds of silence, the tension slowly beginning to build, she remembered why she had come. Pushing away any lingering self-doubts, she slowly untied the belt of her robe, opening the front to expose her flawless milky-white flesh. She slid the loose fabric down her arms, letting the whole thing fall to the floor.

“You've heard the term, friends with benefits, yes?”

His eyes widened, shocked and surprised, as he swallowed nervously at the sight of her completely naked body and, presumably, the connotations of the word benefits.

She slowly sauntered towards him and pulled open the blanket that covered his lower half to reveal his tantalizingly obvious interest. She straddled him on the chair as his hands instinctively reached around to cup the smooth flesh of her buttocks.

He moved in for a kiss, but she put a hand on his chest to push him back. This was just sex for her,
kissing wasn't permitted. She lazily trailed a finger down his chest and stomach, before grasping his length to guide him in.

“Hawke...” he breathed, seconds away from being enveloped by her. She put a finger to his lips, and slowly impaled herself, eyes locked in an intense gaze as his impressive length stretched and filled her.

His eyes closed and his grip tightened. She rolled her pelvis back and forth as he remained deep inside, creating friction against that little bundle of nerves that demanded appeasement. He pulled her closer to bury his face in her chest. Removing one hand from her bottom he palmed her supple breast, teasing the nipple with his thumb before guiding it into his mouth. The extra pleasure sensation spurred her movements, encouraging her to grind against him with the intensity of a desire demon.

She felt the first wave of bliss hit without warning, moaning wildly. She continued her forceful pace, drawing it out for as long as she could sustain it, knuckles turning white with the strength of her grip on the chair behind him.

As soon as she began to slow he abruptly stood, holding her lithe body firmly in place to remain sheathed inside of her. He moved the few small steps to his desk and slammed her down onto it, vigorously delving in and out of her depths.

She fell backwards, arms bent upwards to grip the desk above her head. Her breasts bounced wildly with the force of his assault. This new angle allowed for a much deeper penetration, each strong thrust hammering against the entrance of her womb.

He reached one hand down between her legs and let out a spark of lightening, causing her to buck fiercely in return. A second orgasm was fast approaching and she praised herself for making the decision to come here. Taking his lead she concentrated on conjuring her own maelstrom of electricity, but instead of her hands she let it ripple out of her core to tantalise his length and sack.

He lasted longer than she'd expected, but after a few minutes of an almost constant barrage of electricity he eventually lost himself, gushing unrestrainedly into her just as her second orgasm hit. He thrust a couple more times, savouring the feel of her contracting around him before stumbling backwards and falling heavily in to the chair behind him. She remained supine, panting, savouring the high.

Once her breathing evened out she sat upright, leaning back slightly, supporting her weight with her hands. Her legs dangled off the desk, which she boldly spread wider when she noticed him watching
his seed seeping out of her.

He shifted his gaze to her eyes with a lascivious expression. She teasingly closed her legs, a sultry look on her face, then got back on her feet. She walked over to him, touched his cheek for a few seconds then turned away to fetch her robe off the floor.

“Leaving so soon?” He tried to sound nonchalant but couldn’t quite mask his eagerness.

She smiled at him silently as she casually re-dressed. She walked over to the front door, giving him a quick wink over her shoulder, then quietly disappearing in to the night.

…

She was a little nervous about seeing him after their wild night of almost completely speechless sex. She didn’t want things to be weird, but even more so she didn’t want him to think they were a thing now. She was, however, surprisingly relieved to find that he was his usually flirty self, as though nothing had ever happened between them.

At the end of the day, once they had cashed in on all completed jobs, they stopped by The Hanged Man for a nightcap. After only a couple of drinks, Varric excused himself and Carver and Isabella basically dry humped each other all the way to her room; leaving she and Anders alone.

“Another?” He asked, nervously.

“No thanks.” She replied, after a tense silence.

“Right.” He retorted, embarrassed by the presumed rejection.

“I was thinking, maybe we could...go back to your place?” She offered, as he was halfway to standing.

His face lit up for a second before almost successfully feigning impassivity. He continued to stand and held out his hand, which she took with a coy smile.
They talked, candidly, as they walked back to his clinic. He confessed he was concerned their dalliance may be a bad idea; that he would undoubtedly end up breaking her heart. She told him to get over himself and that she was only interested in his body. They laughed together for a while, until his clinic came in to view.

“Seriously though, Anders.” She began, all of a sudden very grim. “I'm not sure I'm even capable of anything…more.”

“Then maybe we should just, keep this to ourselves...for now.” He offered.

Relaxing at his apparent intent for this to be as casual as she had hoped for, she allowed him to pin her against his front door, and did not protest when he leaned in to kiss her. His lips were careful and soft. He cupped her jaw with one hand, the other resting on the curve of her hip. He eventually pulled away from the kiss to look quizzically in her eyes.

“Wow.” He whispered, which caused her to laugh hysterically.

He looked aghast, until she managed to quiet herself. “I'm sorry.” She insisted “It was a good kiss, I swear.”

“Then why the laughter?” He pleaded, his pride clearly wounded.

“It was just...a little...too intimate?” She asked, genuinely curious for his opinion.

“Right then.” He declared, a little sternly. “Get your divine behind in there, right now!” He shoved her through the now open door, roughly, making her giggle all over again.

“Take off your clothes.” He instructed, unemotionally.

She quickly stopped giggling, her desires beginning to percolate. She kicked off her boots then unbuckled her belt and slid her pants down her legs, stepping out one leg at a time. Next she unfastened her armour, placing it carefully on the floor beside her. Finally she pulled her tunic off over her head. He watched her with an almost disinterested expression, the darkness of his eyes the only thing to betray his hunger. She now stood barely 5 feet away, in nothing but her underwear.
“Face the desk.” He commanded, before adding “And bend over.” Slightly more excited than he intended.

She walked slowly over to the desk, until her thighs touched the edge, then bent over pressing her chest to the surface and gripping the opposite edge with her hands.

Without warning she felt him pull down her smalls in one fluid movement, exposing her bare ass.

“Spread your legs.” He demanded.

She did as instructed then gasped, a mixture of shock and excitement, as he dropped to his knees and greedily tasted her from front to back.

She gripped the table tightly as he thrust two fingers in to her core and another in to her tight hole. She pushed back towards him, wildly, surprised at how good his fingers felt filling every crevice. After a few minutes of teasing, she let out a disappointed sigh at the sudden withdrawal of his clever fingers but moaned loudly when the head of his shaft found her slick entrance.

“Please.” She whispered, not even aware the word had left her lips.

He swiftly penetrated her as deep as he could possibly go. The pleasurable pain eliciting a primal moan from deep within her throat. He forcefully ravaged her, his flesh slapping loudly against her own. With each deep thrust she moaned wildly, so close to losing herself.

Pulling her hips upwards slightly, he worked one hand around to her swollen nub, rubbing intently with his unbelievably talented fingers. She heard him spit and felt the resulting fluid land on her backside, which he quickly used to tease her tight hole before gradually inserting a finger.

She met his thrusts with vigour as he continued to tantalise her with his fingers and his shaft. She might have been embarrassed by the noises she was making if she were able to focus on anything other than her imminent orgasm.

Sweat began to pool in the elegant curve of her spine as he abruptly stopped playing with her rear and roughly gripped her hip, warning her that he was close. His fingers on her pearl soon evoked the
first of her orgasms, his solid length almost immediately extracting a second from deep within. She cried out in ecstasy as the intense pleasure completely extinguished all of her senses, Anders almost matching her in volume.

By the time she came around, Anders was no longer inside of her, but was gently washing away her perspiration and their delicious mixture of fluids with a wet cloth.

She started to giggle again, before pushing herself off the desk and too her feet. She wobbled slightly but he caught her from falling, his chest pressed against her back with one arm snaked around her front and a hand gently resting on her breast.

His chin resting on one shoulder, he audibly inhaled her scent as he rubbed his nose behind her ear. She span around, confident that her legs were working again, and looked him in the eyes. He had such warm, welcoming eyes. She smiled but realised at that very moment what she had always feared; that this, whatever it was, would never be more. As appealing as she found him, and as amazing as the sex was, he just didn't give her that feeling.

“I didn't hurt you, did I?” He asked, a little apprehensive at her sudden quietness.

“Oh yes.” She answered, seductively. “But I liked it very much.”

He leaned in for a kiss, but she only allowed a quick peck before pulling away and redressing.

“I should probably go.” She said with a pout, attempting to feign disappointment at having to leave. “Carver will be waiting.”

“Let me walk you?” He asked, hopefully.

“It's probably best if you don't.” She answered, apologetically. “I don't want Carver asking questions. Sorry”

He kissed the back of her hand before allowing her to leave.

“See you tomorrow.” She called over her shoulder as she closed the door behind her.
The next day they went looking for some jerks missing wife, ending up in an eerie Lowtown foundry. They had been set upon by demons, shades and abominations, only to find what they assumed to be the missing woman’s remains.

During the fight, a desire demon had tried its hardest to worm its way into her mind. Though it had mostly failed, it had managed to latch on to her most basic desires, amplifying them tenfold until almost all she could think about was fucking... anyone!

As soon as they were finished in the foundry, she practically ran to Anders’s clinic. She was glad he hadn’t accompanied them, for fear she may have tried to jump him in full view of their companions.

The door of his clinic was still open, so she didn’t need to knock. It looked as though he had finished with his last patient, but was engaged in a friendly chat.

He turned his head to the sound of her arrival, smiling warmly until he noticed the agitated look on her face and the way she held herself. He quickly made his excuses to the man he had been speaking with, seeing him out and locking up behind him.

He worriedly turned to face her. “Hawke, is everything oka...?”

She practically jumped on him, cutting him off with an almost violent kiss, biting his bottom lip and pulling his hair.

With strong hands on her shoulders, he pushed her away and held her at arm’s length. “What happened?” He demanded.

“Desire demon.” She spat back, struggling against his grip to get closer to him.

Realisation hitting, he flashed her a mischievous grin. “You must be gagging for it.” He seductively teased, refusing to relinquish his hold on her. “Might I suggest something? I promise you won’t regret it.”

Noticing the hint of promised pleasure, she stilled slightly then stared at him expectantly.
“Instead of racing ahead.” He began, teasingly quiet. “Allow me to take my time.”

She furrowed her brow to show her annoyance at his suggestion.

“I promise, this will be one of – if not the most - intense orgasms of your life. Don’t let it go to waste.” He raised an inquisitive eyebrow, waiting for her response.

She looked at him for a moment, her breathing heavy with arousal and anticipation, then rolled her eyes and folded her arms over her chest to assume a stubborn but defeated pose.

“Good choice.” He practically purred in her ear as he walked past her and towards the bed. “Take off your cloth…” He turned his head to look at her mid-sentence, only to find she had already unburdened herself of her clothes and was currently stepping out of her pants and smalls.

He chuckled as he reached out to take her hand, guiding her to sit on the edge of the bed in front of him. She was practically vibrating with desire, unsure how much longer she could remain at this unbearable pace.

She took a seat on the edge of the bed, pulling him towards her by the hand she still held. Instead of crawling on top of her as she had expected, he sank to his knees in front of her. He dug his fingers in to the hair at the back of her head, pulling her face towards him to claim her mouth with his own. She reached down to try to relieve some of the pressure between her legs, but he noticed her movement and caught her by the wrist, denying her access.

“Patience.” He whispered, breaking away from the kiss and feathering his lips over her collarbone. She slowly fell backwards as he continued his southernly descent, trailing kisses over her chest and stomach.

Seemingly ignoring the part of her that craved his mouth the most, he moved to her knee then worshipped the smooth skin of her inner thigh, swapping to the other knee when he was just shy of her mound. When he again reached the junction of her thighs, she felt his breath ghost over her extraordinarily sensitive skin.

“May I?” He innocently asked, knowing full well the anticipation was driving her crazy.
“ANDERS! FUCK!” She seethed, through gritted teeth.

He laughed a deep throaty chuckle, before finally clamping his mouth around her over-sensitive mound, sliding his tongue over and between her folds.

Her moans would have given the whores at The Blooming Rose a run for their money, as she thrust wildly against his mouth. His tongue and teeth elicited pleasure she hadn’t known she was capable of feeling. Her eager thrusts were slowly pulling her off the bed, both legs now hooked over his shoulders with his hands holding on to her backside. Her hands fisted in to the blankets above her head as she continued to loudly moan.

“PANTS!” She managed to annunciate between cries of pleasure.

Once she heard the buckle of his belt hit the floor, she allowed her thrusts to take her off the bed, flowing like water off the edge and in to his lap. She removed her legs from his shoulders, resting her heels on the floor behind him.

She looked in to his eyes with an almost delirious appreciation. His mouth and chin glistened with the evidence of her arousal, which for the life of her she couldn’t resist licking off of him. She kissed him greedily, assaulting his tongue with her own and relishing the taste of herself on him.

She sighed a sound of pure lust that made him twitch with anticipation as she yearningly engulfed him. Her heightened arousal and excessive slickness bypassed the usual requirement to stretch her out a little, immediately allowing her to ride him furiously.

Her throat was raw with the unbidden moans of ecstasy that escaped her. She was in a complete state of euphoria. From the moment he had first touched her she felt as though her orgasm hadn’t once stopped.

He held her tightly against him, one side of his face pressed against her heaving breasts, both arms snaked around her delicate waist. A pleasant perspiration blanketed them both as they mindlessly rutted. With her convulsive grinding and his proficient thrusts, she was soon gushing from multiple orgasms.

He flipped her over on to her back, still on the floor, hoisting up her legs to rest both feet over one shoulder. He remained slightly upright as he pounded in to her, not too fast but with a delicious amount of power. He was sweating profusely, presumably from trying to delay his own climax. His
own moans of pleasure were now matching hers in intensity, which turned her on immensely.

Her legs eventually drifted off his shoulder, coming to rest on the floor beside him and pulling her opposite shoulder of the floor slightly. His forceful thrusts beginning to tire him, he collapsed on to his side behind her. He laced one arm under her neck to support her, encouraging her to lean backwards in to him. She hooked one leg around his waist behind her, then guided his free hand to her core which was not quite yet fully sated.

She marvelled at his genius as he applied a mixture of elements to her with his clever fingers; cold, heat, electricity. She was rapidly running out of air as she could do nought but moan at the intense pleasure.

Crying out at her umpteenth orgasm, her walls once again clenching around him finally broke his resolve. He thrust in to her one final time with so much force that he pulled yet another orgasm from her before filling her with enough seed to surely fill a bucket. The sound of their united ear-splitting climax could almost certainly be heard from the cliffs of the wounded coast.

They did not move for some time, both seemingly in a state of catatonic bliss. Once their breathing had returned to normal, and she realised her mind was free from the rampant desire to fornicate, she began to chuckle. Anders soon joined in, both of them tangled together on the floor and laughing hysterically.

“Thanks.” She whispered as she pulled away from his embrace and attempted to stand.

He pulled her back down to the floor, stubbornly refusing to relinquish their closeness. “Stay.” He pleaded, nuzzling in to the crook of her neck, both arms wrapped around her waist with his chest pressed to her back.

She laughed for a moment, then let out a quiet sigh. “Anders…”

“I know, I know.” He quickly interrupted. “You don’t want to spend the night.”

She turned her head to look at him with sad, sympathetic eyes. She didn’t want to hurt him, but she also didn’t want to lead him on.

“I am pretty tired.” She admitted, causing him to look at her with eager disbelief. “It doesn’t mean
anything though.” She cautioned him.

“Of course.” He reassured her. “It’s late, it just makes sense for you to stay.”

He allowed her to stand then and offered her a damp cloth with which to clean herself. She grabbed her smalls from the pile of clothes she had hastily discarded, stepping back in to them and sliding them up her legs. Something about sleeping completely naked with him didn’t sit well with her. She was glad to see that he had followed suit and was putting his own underwear back on, especially as she knew he tended to sleep naked.

She, slightly nervously, made her way back to the bed and slipped under the sheet. She lay on her side, facing the front door of the clinic. Anders enthusiastically slid under the sheets behind her, wrapping a warm arm around her waist and pressing his chest to her back. She could feel his nose graze the tip of her ear and felt his breath on her neck as he contentedly exhaled. Although it gave her goosebumps and stirred something deep inside her, she couldn’t help but long for the solitude of her own bed.

“Night.” He whispered, now settled in to a comfortable position.

“Night.” She quietly replied. She was glad he could not see her face, as he would undoubtedly have seen an expression that screamed *I DON’T WANT TO BE HERE*.

She willed her brain to shut off, to fall asleep quickly then get out of there as fast as her legs would carry her.

…

She awoke feeling anxious and unrested. It had taken her hours to drift off. On more than one occasion she had attempted to sneak away, but his vice like grip around her waist had tightened each time she tried to free herself.

She felt him stir behind her, snuggling his face in to her hair. "Good morning." He practically sighed, obviously elated by her presence. "That was the best night’s sleep I’ve had in ages."

"Desire demon fuelled sex will do that to you." She tried to keep her tone light, but also wanted to be sure he knew she didn’t consider this to be a set-up conducive to a good night’s rest for her.

If the speed with which he set her free was anything to go by, he had taken the hint.
"It's still pretty early." She audibly observed. "If I leave now I might just get home in time for everyone to believe I slept on the couch."

She quickly redressed, ignoring the frustrated exhales from Anders, and practically ran for the door.

"Aren't you forgetting something?" He questioned in a somewhat mocking tone.

What now!? 

She turned around and flashed him a fake smile, raised eyebrows urging him to explain. Quickly noticing what he was referring to, she looked down at herself to see how obvious it was she was not wearing a breast band...pretty obvious. In her haste to leave she had completely forgotten to put it back on.

She held her hands out towards him, gesturing for him to throw it to her. Anders however had other ideas. He span it around his finger, teasingly prolonging her departure.

"You know what." She eventually retorted. "Keep it."

She stomped out of his clinic, slamming the door behind her, muffling the sounds of his satisfied laughter.
Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

Fenris and Hawke officially meet, though this does not adhere to the story of DA2.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

It had only been a month since they had teamed up with Varric, but the dwarf had become a dear friend. They worked together all day and drank together all night. She had discovered he was an accomplished storyteller, having published a number of novels, and was quite possibly the funniest person she had ever met. He also had a knack for knowing everyone’s business and on more than one occasion she was convinced he could actually read minds. He told her it was about reading body language and facial expressions, and that he could probably give her a few tips on how to both read and avoid being read.

It was ladies night at The Hanged Man, which meant she drank twice as much as usual. Drinking with Varric meant they got the good stuff too. He didn’t own the place – exactly – but the staff treated him as though he did. He had the best room in the tavern, where he seemed to live despite his family owning an estate in Hightown, and even the patrons treated him with the utmost respect.

Pleasantly under the influence, and her brother excusing himself to seek out Isabella, the dwarf seemed to take advantage of the opportunity to get to know her better. She told him about the blight forcing them to leave their home, and even that it hadn’t actually been her home for almost 3 years. Speaking his name aloud for the first time, she told her new friend about the love she’d lost. She hadn’t even told her family about him; if she was being honest with herself, she felt guilty for having been so happy.

She even confessed she was a mage, though he did not seem surprised by this, and also what happened the day her father died. The voice in her head told her she shouldn’t be telling anyone these things, but when she looked in to his eyes she just knew he would never breath a word to anyone.

“Why the fuck did I just tell you all of that?” She asked herself, aloud.

“Because I’m your friend, Hawke.” He answered, honestly.
“Tell anyone and I will wax that magnificent chest of yours while you sleep!” She mockingly threatened.

He roared with laughter and signalled for another round.

“No Anders tonight?” He asked, a little too innocently.

She blushed a little as he looked for her reaction. “Of course you know.”

He chuckled to himself. “Honestly, I would have missed it if not for the way he looks at you.”

“And how is that, exactly?” She uneasily inquired.

“Like he’s already seen you naked.” He admitted.

She giggled hysterically. “Oh, Varric.” She eventually sighed. “I’m not even sure I like him that way.”

“Then you definitely don’t.” He corrected her. “If you did, you’d know.”

“It’s not that simple.” She countered, solemnly. “After Oli, I think I might be…broken.”

“You’ve never had that feeling since?” He queried, nosily.

She looked away from her friend and pondered his question.

“You have!” He interrupted, with a surprising eagerness.

“Not exactly.” She protested. “It was…fleeting. And the situation was less than ideal.”
“Well now I’m intrigued.” He confessed with that all-knowing grin of his.

She proceeded to tell him of hers and Carvers first night at The Hanged Man, how she had drunkenly rescued a group of elves from some slaver bastards, only to be almost-raped then saved by an insanely strong and mysterious man with a sexy velvet voice.

“I didn’t even see his face properly, Varric.” She exclaimed, exasperated by her sudden girlish immaturity.

“But surely that proves you’re not broken, Hawke.” He tried to reassure her. “Maybe Anders just isn’t the guy for you.”

“Shit.” She conceded. “You’re right. Of course you’re right. Are you ever wrong?”

“It’s happened once or twice.” He joked, trying to stifle his laughter.

“Thanks Varric.” She sincerely declared, becoming serious all of a sudden. “I don’t think I realised how much I needed to talk to someone about, well...everything.”

“Happy to help.” He admitted, honestly. “But now my bed is calling. You want to crash?”

“No, that’s okay. I think I’ve sobered up enough to get myself home.” She assured him. “If you see Carver, tell him to stay and enjoy himself. I’ll cover for him.”

She gave him a friendly kiss on the cheek before exiting the tavern and taking a deep breath of the fresh-ish Lowtown air.

Half-way home, and not paying attention to where she was going, she bumped in to a hooded figure. She looked up from her feet, but it was too dark to clearly see their face. All she could make out were a set of intense emerald eyes and a feeling of...immense power.

“Hello again.” She greeted him with an easy smile, quickly recognising him.
“Apologies.” Was all he said, before gliding past her and out of view.

“Hey, wait!” She shouted after him, quickly noticing the trail of blood left in his wake. “Are you bleeding?”

He only managed a few more steps before collapsing to his knees. She quickly raced over to him, gripping his arms to stop him from falling further.

“I can help.” She reassured, realising she was still geared up from the day’s work. “Do you live nearby?”

With a little help, she managed to get him back on his feet and let him lead her to some hovel in the Alienage. He collapsed in to a nearby chair as she locked the door behind them. When she turned around he had unburdened himself of his cloak, revealing his full face for the first time.

And he’s an elf…

He was tall for an elf, easily taller than she. His olive skin contrasted beautifully with his snow-white hair and his eyes were like huge glittering emeralds. She felt herself literally swoon.

So it seems I have a type.

Her pulse quickened as she continued to examine him. He wore blue/black armour, with angsty looking spikes here and there. His upper arms were exposed slightly and she noticed decorative white lines. She looked back at his face and noticed more of the same lines on his chin trailing down his neck and disappearing beneath his chestplate.

Remembering the urgency of the situation she hurried towards him and set about unbuckling the straps of his armour to properly examine him for injuries. Once the angsty looking stuff was off, she tugged at his under-shirt and gestured for him to lift up his arms while she pulled it off.

Whoa!

She tried to suppress the blush that threatened her cheeks. His body was captivating. His biceps
looked strong, his torso exquisitely chiselled and even his back was muscular. On top of that, and most notably, was the expanse of intricate tattoos etched in to his skin. It was so “Beautiful.”

_Shit. Did I say that out loud?_

She noticed he was smirking ever so slightly, despite the obvious pain he was in.

She immediately spotted the deep gash in his abdomen, and the matching one at his back. The blood seemed to be gushing out of both sides now that his armour was no longer providing any pressure, so much so that he eventually passed out.

As he began to slide off the chair, she managed to guide him down gently to lie flat on the floor. She removed her cape, bunching it up and placing it under his head, then focused on his wound. She would never typically use her magic in-front of a stranger, but he was unconscious and in desperate need of healing.

She rubbed her palms together to prepare for the flow of mana, then held them just a fraction of an inch above the wound on his stomach. She closed her eyes and poured her energy in to him, almost feeling the sensation of his wounds healing as if they were her own.

A bright light illuminated the room, even from behind her closed lids she was aware of it. She opened her eyes and almost gasped. The lines on his unconscious body were _glowing_. With her healing almost complete, she couldn’t resist the urge to touch him. She kept one hand hovering above him, continuing the healing spell, while the other ever so gently traced his abdomen with one finger.

His skin was unnaturally warm, which only added to its appeal. The glow intensified under her touch then faded in its wake. She knew almost immediately what it was. He had been branded with _lyrium_. Her amazement however was quickly chased away as she thought about how this could have possibly happened. It was then that she finally pieced together everything she knew of him: killing slavers, branded in a way that would have no doubt been excruciatingly painful; he was a slave.

She inhaled a startled breath at the horrific realisation, her compassion for him – for any slave really – causing her to lay an open palm on his chest as though it might soothe his pain. Then another startled breath left her as his hand shot up to grip her wrist, halting her movements. She looked at his face only to find him silently staring at her. She had no idea what he was thinking. His face was completely expressionless.
“Sorry.” She muttered, yanking her hand from his vice-like grip. “You passed out.”

He tried to sit up, but she placed a strong hand on his shoulder to pin him down. “Oh no you don’t. You’ve lost a lot of blood, you need to rest.”

She grabbed a cloth and some water from her pack and began to clean the blood off of him.

“That’s not necessary…” He tried to object.

“The forgotten ones make work for idle hands.” She quipped. “And I’m not leaving just so you can go and overexert yourself.”

He responded with an annoyed exhale, but did not protest further.

“I’m Elodie, by the way.” She pleasantly offered as she continued to wash the blood from him.

“Fenris.” He grumbled.

“Sorry for groping you, Fenris.” She offered, blushing slightly. “It’s lyrium isn’t it?”

He stared at her suspiciously, causing her pulse to quicken. “That’s quite the eye you have.”

“Oh I’m all kinds of impressive.” She jested, stealing a line from Varric and laughing at herself.

He chuckled, a deeply seductive sound that quite frankly left her a little aroused.

“Are you in trouble, Fenris?” She ventured, not looking at his face.

“Why do you want to know?” He quizzed, sceptically.
“Perhaps I could help.” She offered, genuinely.

“I have no coin to pay you with.” He stated, as though she couldn’t possibly have any other reason for offering to help him.

“I don’t remember asking.” She responded, a little curtly.

He stared at her with a questioning eyebrow, clearly unsure of her or her intentions.

“Oh come on.” She exclaimed. “We’ve saved each other twice now. Maybe the universe is trying to tell us something?”

He continued to stare at her, silently pondering her words.

“What’s in it for you?” He demanded, sounding way more annoyed than she thought he had any right to be.

She opened her mouth to speak, to scold his cold and suspicious demeanour, but quickly changed her mind in favour of a more tactfully caring approach.

“You we’re a slave…weren’t you?” She whispered, an obvious sadness to her tone.

He bristled at the word, the clenched muscles of his jaw evident as he looked away from her.

“I’m sorry.” She didn’t know what else to say.

“I don’t need your pity.” He spat back in retaliation.

She kept her mouth shut as he continued to direct his annoyed scowl at her, until after an intense stretch of silence he surprised her with a quiet sorry.
They continued to stare at each other, his expression softening slightly with each second that passed.

“I meant what I said.” She began, unable to bear the silence any longer. “If you need – want – my help, you need only ask.”

He looked like he was about to smile, but then his brow furrowed and a look of panic dominated his eyes as he reached for the wound on his stomach. When he didn’t feel it, he sat up, ignoring her pleas to be still. He frantically examined his abdomen and its distinct lack of even so much as a scar, then fixed her with an intimidating stare full of rage and contempt.

“You’re a mage?!” He practically shouted in her face before rising to his feet.

Panic stricken and feeling slightly threatened, she slowly stood, trying to avoid any sudden movements.

“Get. Out.” He enunciated, equal parts fear and rage in his eyes.

“I’m getting the distinct impression you have no love for mages.” She began, quietly so as not to appear confrontational. “Would you believe me if I said we weren’t all bad?”

“Leave.” He seethed through clenched teeth before stomping in to another room and slamming the door behind him.

“You’re welcome, by the way…for saving your life.” She shouted as she collected her things, forcibly slamming the front door as she left.

…

The encounter with Fenris had clouded her mind all day. She’d gone from annoyed to hurt, to apathetic and back to annoyed. It was completely unfair of him to judge her based on his experiences of others, no matter how bad they were. She had only ever been kind to him.

Shooting back her fourth whiskey chaser of the evening, Varric eyed her suspiciously.
“Alright. Spill. What’s got you’re panties in a bunch?”

“I’m going to need more of these.” She retorted, wiggling her empty glass in front of him.

After two more shots and with another two in-front of her, she told him about her brief encounter with the infuriating elf. She spared no detail and, with the whiskey clouding her judgement, even intimately describing what his velvety voice did to her.

“What did you say he looked like again?” Her dwarven friend abruptly interrupted.

She stared in to space as she tried to remember, her addled brain conjuring up the half-naked image of him. “Well he’s an elf, tall though – really tall actually – white hair, olive skin, green eyes. Handsome, though not in the classical sense, more sort of…intense and otherworldly - haunting even.”

Her eyes widened and her mouth clamped shut when she turned back to look at Varric, catching the glint in his eyes and the shit-eating smirk on his face, noticing he was no longer looking at her but rather over her shoulder. “He’s behind me, isn’t he?”

His chuckle was admission enough. She slowly turned her head, both lips clamped between her teeth and wincing slightly, until she came eye-to-eye with him.

“Any chance you didn’t hear any of that?” She asked, hopefully, though his immediate blush informed her she had not been so lucky.

She turned back around to look at Varric, wide-eyes pleading for help.

“Varric Tethras.” He offered extending his hand to the elf. “Heard a lot about you.”

“Not helping, Varric.” She silently mouthed, hoping the elf wouldn’t notice.

“I was just headed to the bar, care to join us?” He was obviously trying his hardest not to laugh as he
stood and gestured for Fenris to take his seat.

Varric was gone for a few seconds before she heard the elf take a deep breath, stepping in to view and sitting in Varric’s now vacant chair. She tapped her fingers on the table nervously, refusing to break the silence. She was still annoyed at his outburst and didn’t feel like making it easy for him.

“Elodie…”

“Call me Hawke.” She quickly corrected. “Only my family call me Elodie.”

He obviously wanted to ask why she had introduced herself as such if she didn’t want him to use her first name, which would have been a valid question, but she wouldn’t have had an answer so was glad that he didn’t.

“Hawke.”

Damn, his voice is something else.

“I owe you an apology.”

She could feel his eyes on her face, but couldn’t bring herself to look at him.

“You had every chance to do…whatever you wanted, when I was unconscious.” He continued. “Though all you did was help me – probably saved my life, in-fact.”

She granted him a sideways glance, though offered no smile. He took the hint and continued to speak.

“You were right…about what I am – was – and that my previous experiences of magic have been… unpleasant.” His nostrils flared as he tried to suppress his anger at even speaking the word.

Decidedly done with torturing him, she placed a reassuring hand on his knee. “Fenris, I meant what I said. If you want my help, it’s yours.”
“It…will be dangerous.” He eventually responded with a grave tone, seemingly now prepared to admit that he needed all the help he could get.

“Who doesn’t love a bit of danger?” She playfully teased.

“I will find a way to repay you, I swear it.” The conviction in his voice left no doubt that he intended to keep his word.

“But first, tell me everything.” She requested, with as much kindness and apathy as she could muster.

A tray of drinks found its way to the table, though there was no sign of Varric. After draining a full tankard, Fenris began to tell her his story. He told her about Danarius and his life before he escaped, as much as he could remember anyway. He explained that the marks on his skin were somewhat of a mystery to him, and that they had robbed him of his memories from before. Her heart ached for him.

“That’s awful, Fenris.” She eventually offered, swallowing back the sick feeling his former master had conjured.

They downed a few more drinks, loosening up and eventually talk turned to more palatable subjects. Once he was comfortable though, he couldn’t seem to resist bringing the conversation back to magic.

“Tell me, then: What manner of mage are you? What is it that you seek?”

Caught slightly off-guard by the swift change of subject, she carefully considered her response. A pointless endeavour really, she knew she would choose her usual deflective humour in such a situation. “You want me to tell you and spoil all the fun?” She gave him a cheeky wink, which earned her a half smile and a head shake.

“Why don’t you carry a staff?” He enquired, suddenly very interested in her.

She took a long sip of ale…then a shot of whiskey, followed by a deep breath. “Honestly? I don’t need one.”
He looked at her questioningly, encouraging her to elaborate.

“I was never taught to use one. My father said it was simply the Chantry’s way of identifying us and that they were completely unnecessary.”

“Then why do Magister’s carry them?” He countered, a little argumentatively.

“Surely they like to be known as mage’s in Tevinter, no?” She offered.

“Huh.” Was his simple response as he gazed off in to space, pondering her observation.

Suddenly becoming personal again, he continued to probe her about her own magic. “So your father taught you how to use magic? He was a mage too I take it?” He was on the verge of babbling.

“Fenris.” She began, dryly. “Why don’t you just ask me exactly what it is you want to know?”

He coyly smiled at being caught out. “Can you control it?”

“You want to know how skilled I am?” She wanted him to say it.

“Yes.” He eventually confirmed, apprehension evident in his voice.

“Quite.” She confidently professed, never breaking eye contact.

He swallowed nervously.

“Though, as you’ve seen, I am rather at home with a pair of daggers. I don’t use magic in public… ever.”

“Well that answers my next question.” He admitted.
“About why I didn’t use magic that first night we met?” She ventured, to which he nodded.

Not using magic in public wasn’t the whole truth on that particular occasion, though she wasn’t about to tell the mage-hater she had once succumbed to demons and the call of blood magic and had been worried it was going to happen again.

The silence stretched on, tensely, until she couldn’t take it any longer. “So, what’s the plan? Who do we need to kill to set you free?”

“So eager to kill for me?” He teased. “How sweet.”

She girlishly giggled, fluttering her eyelashes with a playful shove of his chest. They locked eyes for a moment too long, causing her pulse to quicken again.

He cleared his throat, seemingly uncomfortable with the growing tension. “I believe my former master is staying at a mansion in Hightown. If you would agree to accompany me, I would like to pay him a visit.”

“You want to take the fight to him?” She mused, comically rubbing her chin. “I like it.”

“Under the cover of night would be best.” He continued. “The sooner the better.”

“Tomorrow then.” She agreed.

Chapter End Notes

Comments welcome. Would love to hear what you think so far. Many more chapters to come, up to the events of Inquisition at least. Thanks for reading!
Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

Some Fenris/Hawke development.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Unfortunately, after victoriously exhausting themselves in yet another battle, they found that Fenris' former master was not in Kirkwall. They had swept the mansion but found only slavers and demons. Fenris was disappointed, to say the least. He had hoped to deal with his master – Danarius – once and for all, in the hopes of beginning his life anew, though he would have to wait a little while longer.

After clearing out the bodies – discreetly – Fenris resolved to stay put. He said he was done with running, that Danarius eventually finding him was inevitable, so why not save him the trouble of looking and just be ready for him whenever he did.

She had allowed him a few days reprieve, to process his new surroundings and the options now available to him, but felt that a reasonable amount of time had passed and worked up the nerve to pay him a visit.

She knocked on the door, which opened slightly at her touch. “Hello?” She shouted, but no response came. She began to worry that something may have happened to him. She drew her blades and tip-toed in to the foyer. The place was falling apart; the stone tiles covered in dried blood and grime, the carpets threadbare and curtains frayed. Despite the poor condition, they were still doing a pretty good job at blocking out the days light. Without hesitating, she strolled over to the each of the windows and opened the curtains. She turned to survey the room once more, now basked in the golden glow of sunlight, and sighed. The additional light only succeeded in making the place look even more dismal. Even Gamlen's place wasn't this bad, she thought.

Suddenly distracted, she turned her gaze to the landing above and found him silently watching. How long had he been there, she wondered. She opened her mouth, to explain herself and apologise for the intrusion, but he quickly spoke over her.

“Come.” He said, one hand beckoning her before retreating back in to the master bedroom.
She ascended the stairs and entered the room, finding it much cleaner and cosier than the rest of the mansion. It looked as though this was the only room he'd inhabited; containing everything one might need. He was standing by the fireplace, drinking from a bottle of what she figured was wine.

She took a seat, and a deep breath. “Just wanted to see how you were doing.”

He took one last swig from the bottle then threw it at the wall, causing it to loudly shatter.

“That good?” She responded with a chuckle.

He looked despondent as he stared out of the window.

“You really think he’ll come for you?” She sympathetically questioned, already knowing the answer from the far-away gaze in his eyes.

“He always does.” He admitted, grimly, seemingly transfixed by the clear blue sky.

“I – we – won’t let him take you, Fenris.” She blushed slightly when he turned his gaze on her. “You’re one of us now, and we take care of our own.” She tried to make it seem like more of a group decision and less about her own feelings.

He smiled at her, unspeaking, but only for a moment. “I said I would repay you. What would you have of me?”

She proceeded to tell him of her and Varric’s business venture and how they were taking every job they could find in order to raise enough coin to get the expedition on the road. She also insisted that he shouldn’t feel obliged to repay her, that he didn’t owe her anything. She had simply performed a favour for a friend.

He did however insist that if she planned to help him with Danarius then he needed to repay her kindness, and so agreed to accompany her to Sundermount the following day.

“Well I should probably go.” She declared when the tense silence once again became too much to bear.
He almost looked disappointed as he stood to see her out.

“Or…you could come with me…if you like?” She ventured, more uncertain of herself than she could ever remember being. “Drinks at The Hanged Man?”

He looked nervous as he pondered her invitation.

“Might be good to meet the rest of the team.” She encouraged, not wanting him to think it was a date or anything.

“I’ll meet you there.” He eventually retorted.

She descended the stairs and made her way to the front door, waving at him over her shoulder, feeling utterly fobbed off. She did not believe for a second that he would show up.

But he did.

It was at least three hours later and she was way drunker than she would have liked to have been if she’d known he was going to show up. Her rum addled brain had even made her cosy up to Anders, which she never did in public.

When she saw Fenris standing in the doorway, she quickly stood and beckoned for him to join them, shooing Anders down the bench to make room next to her. He disappeared to the bar in a huff as Fenris took his seat.

“I’m so glad you came.” She admitted, a little too eagerly, visibly grimacing at herself.

His expression did not change but she thought she saw a slight blush on the tips of his ears.

She introduced him to everyone around the table who greeted him kindly, all except her brother when he saw the way Isabella was devouring the elf with her eyes. He wrapped his arm around the sailor, possessively, causing her to roll her eyes at the obvious display.
Fenris and Varric seemed to get along really well. She sat listening to the two of them talk for ages, both of their voices entrancing, until Anders tugged on her elbow to distract her. She turned and found his face only inches away from her own.

“I was thinking of leaving soon.” He said, with a suggestive expression on his face.

She remained silent for a little too long as she tried to think of a way to politely decline his offer.

“But it seems you’re busy.” He stated, jealously, as he rose to his feet and stalked out of the tavern.

“Anders…” She called out with an annoyed breath.

Unbeknownst to her, Varric and Fenris had stopped talking to watch her brief interaction with Anders.

“What’s going on there?” Fenris asked Varric.

“Interested in Dimples, are we?” Varric replied.

“Just curious.” Fenris nonchalantly stated, before resuming their previous conversation.

Her mind was awash with the mess she had gotten herself into. It was supposed to be no-strings-attached fun, why was he acting so jealous. Her drunken brain convinced her she had to find out.

She stood abruptly, knocking an empty tankard over in the process. “I’m leaving.” She drunkenly declared. “I’ll see you handsome fella’s tomorrow.” She winked in their general direction and clumsily exited the building.

“Should we help her?” Fenris worried aloud.

“If I know Hawke as well as I think I do, she needs to be alone for what she’s about to do.”
Although she’d usually end up back at Anders' place most evenings, she had only once spent the night. She wanted to keep the boundaries of their arrangement clear. She couldn’t deny that the sex was amazing, she was thoroughly satisfied in that department, she just had no desire for it to be anything more than that. Somewhere along the way however, he had apparently fallen for her. He clearly worshipped the ground she walked on, and she cared about him enough to want him to be happy.

Meeting Fenris had proven to her that she still had the capacity for more. She felt giddy around him, blushing whenever he looked at her with those intense emerald eyes or swooning over his velvety rich voice. It wasn't because she wanted to be with him that she knew she had to end things with Anders. For all she knew he hadn't the faintest interest in her. It was just knowing that Anders would never be able to make her as happy as she was still capable of being with someone else.

She arrived at his clinic in record time, considering her drunken state. He quickly answered the door after she’d knocked lightly, then immediately snaked his arms around her waist, pulling her towards him.

She placed a hand on his chest and gently pushed him away. “We need to talk.”

He stepped backwards, letting his arms fall limply to his sides. “Well that's never good.”

“I'm sorry, Anders.” She began.

“But you're ending it.” He concluded, unemotionally.

“I just think it's time we went back to being friends...without benefits.” She tried to laugh but it died in her throat.

“Is there someone else?” He asked, rashly. “It's that elf isn't it?”

She exhaled loudly. “Of course not, but we both knew what this was. It was never going to last forever. Plus you clearly want more than I'm offering and you deserve to have that...I'm just not the
He looked at her open mouthed for a moment, no doubt trying to think of some way to change her mind. He seemed to almost speak several times, but the words wouldn't come. After an intense silence, he eventually spoke. “And to think, I was worried I’d be the one breaking your heart.” He tried to make it a joke, but the emotion behind his words was clear.

“All right.” She sighed, her lip trembling and tears threatening to overflow her welling eyes.

“It's fine, Hawke. You're right, we both knew what this was.” He reassured her. “Justice didn’t approve anyway.”

He was the one hurting, but he still found the strength to comfort her. Why couldn't she have loved this man?

“You should probably get going.” He encouraged, trying his best to smile.

She embraced him in a fierce hug, his hesitance quickly dissipating and a muffled sigh escaping him as he buried his face in her hair.

“I really am sorry.” She insisted, pulling away from the embrace to look him in the eyes. “I hope we can still be friends.”

“Of course we can.” He promised, stroking the back of her head before letting her go completely. “Now go. Honestly, I'm fine.”

“We had fun, didn't we?” She reflected, smiling fondly.

“The stuff of masturbatory fantasies.” He joked, earning him a slap on the chest and a fit of giggles.

She smiled at him, happy to see his humour intact, then let herself out. She leaned her back against the door for a moment, saddened by the sorrowful exhale she had not intended to hear. She took a deep breath then made her way out of Darktown.
Soon after entering Lowtown, which was pouring rain, she once again found herself interrupting a group of slavers.

“For the love of Andruil!” She yelled in annoyance. “Just once I’d like to be able to walk home without having to deal with this shit.”

She began launching her throwing knives with a precision she should not have been capable of in her inebriated state, connecting with several eye sockets. The remaining few slavers scattered in various directions, so she set about retrieving her blades.

“What happened?” Came a velvety smooth, though slightly concerned, voice from behind her. Apparently he had only just left The Hanged Man.

“Nothing - I couldn’t - handle.” She stammered as she put all of her strength in to attempting to pry a deeply wedged dagger from a dead man’s skull, eventually giving up when it wouldn’t budge. “Fenedhis!”

She stood, turning to face him, then a searing pain in her side knocked the wind out of her. She almost fell to the floor but managed to steady herself with a hand on the wall. She looked down and saw the arrow which had skewered through the side of her abdomen, then back up to Fenris with a panicked look.

He quickly figured out where the archer must have been, disappearing to end them then reappearing in a flash. It was enough time however for her to have snapped the arrow head off and as he came back in to view she was pulling out the last inch of its shaft.

“MYTHAL FUCKER!” She yelled as she collapsed on to all fours in pain. She managed to sit back against the wall, the rain furiously lashing at her face. She knew she should heal herself, but she couldn’t seem to muster the energy. She clutched the gaping wound, trying to stem the bleeding, but she’d already lost too much blood. She couldn't think straight, her breathing began to slow and with each blink she found it harder to open her eyes. She saw a dark figure looming over her and felt like she was being lifted. Then nothing.

…

She awoke screaming, as she so often did. Just a dream she reminded herself. Once her breathing
settled she realised where she was, recognising the interior of Danarius’s decrepit mansion. She was lying on a couch wearing nothing but a man's tunic and her smalls. She could see from the window that it was still dark out. She looked around for her clothes but saw no sign of them. She sat up quickly wincing at the pain in her side. She lifted the shirt to examine her wound, which had been stitched and dressed. She tried to heal herself, but nothing happened.

“What the fuck?”

“The arrow was poisoned.” Came an entrancing voice from behind her. “You should be able to heal yourself in a few hours. Luckily the arrow didn’t hit anything important.”

She looked over her shoulder as he walked towards her with cautious steps, handing her a hot drink as soon as he was within reach.

“Thank you.” She wanted to sound more grateful but couldn’t help being preoccupied with her current attire.

He must have read her mind as she looked down at the shirt she was wearing. “I couldn’t get to the wound with that infernal thing on.” He pointed at her corset, clearly annoyed, the laces of which lay in tatters “I may have had to cut it off.” He blushed. “The rest of your things are drying off from the rain.”

“So, you...saw?” She gestured toward her chest. Her breast band was completely unnecessary under the trustworthy confines of her battle corset, so she hadn’t bothered to wear one.

“Only as much as I needed to, I promise.” He bowed as he said it and she couldn't help but believe his sincerity.

“May I?” He was asking for permission to sit on the couch beside her, to which she simply nodded.

She turned her head to look at him, green eyes fixed on her face. Eventually she laughed at the growing tension. “I should go.”

“Could I ask a favour before you do?” He said, all of a sudden very serious.
“You very likely just saved my life, so...name it.” She replied.

“How’s your needle work?” He asked as he turned to show her the ever growing blood stains on his back.

“Andraste's shitting tits! Why didn't you say something sooner?!?”

He winced as she slid his shirt up to examine his wounds. “That's quite the mouth you have.”

She thought of several suggestive innuendos, but decided now wasn't the time.

“This does not look good.” She surmised, tutting as she assessed. “Do you have a needle and thread?”

He handed her a tray with everything she needed and pulled his shirt off over his head.

“How did this even happen?” She asked him, curiously, as she began to stitch his wounds.

“After you passed out.” He hissed as she began the first stitch. “They regrouped.”

“Sorry about that.” She apologised, timidly.

“I’m alive.” He offered. “That’s more than I can say for them.”

“This one might sting a little.” She warned him.

He grunted in pain as his hand reached out to grab on to something, which just so happened to be her bare thigh dangling off the couch beside him. She continued to knit his wounds in silence, trying hard to ignore the strong hand which remained just above her knee, until the task was complete.

“I have some healing potions at home that would probably help these...” She glanced at the first
wound she’d stitched as she spoke, noticing that it had already begun to heal “...though on second thoughts I don’t actually think you’ll need it.”

“That's not necessary. I'm a fast healer.” He told her.

“You're telling me. That's extraordinary.” She gently traced his wounds with her fingers and he shuddered at her touch. “Shit. Fuck. Sorry, did I hurt you?”

“There's that mouth again.” He mocked. “It's rather unbecoming of a lady, such a yourself.”

“And who told you I was a lady, pray tell?”

He chuckled that seductive laugh again as he stood to grab a clean shirt.

“Wait!” She insisted. “Do you have any button downs? Lifting a shirt over your head is likely to bust open those stitches”

He simply shrugged and sat back down beside her, closing his eyes as his head lolled back.

“It's late. I should go.” She began as she made her way towards her clothes which were almost completely dry. “Thanks for patching me up and everything”. She attempted to step in to her trousers, a little too quickly and without considering her wound, the pain that came with the movement causing her to lose balance and trip.

Lightening quick, he was on his feet and rescuing her from the impact of the hard stone floor. One arm snaked around her waist as his other hand caught her by the hip. Her own arms instinctively wound around his neck clinging to him for dear life.

Almost completely lost in his eyes, she eventually noticed how close they were. Each intake of breath causing their chests to rise and lightly touch. She felt the stirrings of arousal as she imagined him leaning in to kiss her. But, alas, he did not appear to share her thoughts.

“Perhaps you should wait until the poison wares of?” He sensibly suggested as he cautiously released her from his grip and lead her back to the couch.
“You're probably right.” She tried to laugh, ignoring the bitter sting of rejection.

They sat in a comfortable silence, listening to the sounds of the rain outside. Curiosity eventually got the better of her and she imperceptibly turned her head to look at him. His eyes were closed and he was so still she was almost certain he was sleeping. She eagerly seized the opportunity to thoroughly examine his face, marvelling at the smoothness of his skin and the thickness of his hair. His ears were particularly beautiful, and she had to ball her hands in to fists to resist the urge to reach out and touch them.

“Stop staring.” Came a gruff voice.

She clasped a hand over her mouth, too late to catch the startled gasp that escaped, as she rapidly returned her gaze to the fireplace. When he did not speak again, she peered at him from the corner of her eye and, though his eyes remained closed, he was smirking. She decided not to push it, opting to behave herself and remain silent.

Her whole body began to tingle, a tell-tale sign her mana had finally been restored. She couldn't help but feel a little disappointed that she was now able to patch herself up and leave. She focused her mana and willed her wound to heal, not requiring the use of her hands for her own body.

She stood and, for a second time, attempted to step back in to her trousers. Aware that he was not so discreetly watching, she tried to look as elegant and alluring as possible, bending over more than was necessary so that the wide neck of his tunic hung low enough to afford him a peak of her bare breasts.

“Any chance I can return this later.” She asked, pinching the tunic, only just catching him snap his gaze away from her chest.

“Of course.” He reassured her, after clearing his throat and giving her yet another look she couldn't decipher.

“Thanks again. And take it easy until those stitches are ready to come out okay.” She demanded, pointing a stern finger at him.

She gave him one last glance over her shoulder before she left. He was staring at the fire with an almost disappointed look on his face.
Up next: The Deep Roads, and a visitor from Hawke's past...
After another 6 weeks of hard graft, and recruiting an adorable elven mage, they had finally scraped together enough coin to begin the expedition. They met Bartrand in Hightown to go over the details. He was in high spirits, which somehow made him even more unbearable. He was crude and vulgar with his metaphors. She glanced over at Varric, grateful that he couldn't possibly be any less similar to his older brother. She looked back at Bartrand when she heard him asking who had invited the old lady. She turned around to see her mother waving her and Carver over. She looked at her Brother uneasily and jerked her head for him to follow her.

“Mother!” Demanded Carver “What are you doing here?”

Her mother looked at her, ignoring Carver completely “Please don’t do this.” She pleaded. “I can't lose you again.”

“Mother.” She soothed, sweetly. “It'll be fine. I promise.”

“You can't both go.” She demanded, tears threatening to spill down her face. “I won't allow it.”

“Mother, I promised myself I would get us out of that Hovel we call home and give you the life you deserve. I have to do this.” She turned to her brother, cautiously. “…but perhaps it would be best if you remained here with mother.”

“WHAT!” He was furious.

“Think about it Carver.” She tried to stay calm “If this goes wrong, mother will be left a childless widow.”
He looked like he wanted to slap her. Thankfully, instead he simply stormed out of the square in a silent rage. Her mother thanked her sincerely, assured her that Carver would eventually understand, then hugged her fiercely before leaving to chase after him.

She returned to her friends, who were pretending they hadn't been eavesdropping, and tried to decide who to bring. She had already asked Anders; he was after all uniquely qualified. His grey warden abilities would alert them to the presence of any nearby Darkspawn. Varric was also a given, it being his expedition and all.

There was just one more place to fill. She couldn't bear the thought of Merrill in the Deep Roads; she should be running through meadows not the blighted underground. Isabella had no interest in joining them, she hadn't even come to see them off. Aveline had responsibilities now and she couldn't ask her to jeopardise her position with the guard. That left Fenris. Deep down she had always known she'd end up asking him to come. The thought of something happening to him whilst she was away made her feel very uneasy. She had grown protective of him over the last month and a half. He wasn't as receptive to her flirting as Anders had been, but she couldn't help but feel as though there were something there, some attraction to her he infuriatingly tried to hide.

“Well...if nobody objects, I was hoping Fenris would join us?” He exhaled as though he had been holding his breath in anticipation. She wasn't sure, but he seemed relieved. He was probably just looking forward to being so far out of his old masters clutches.

She hugged each of her companions and bade them farewell, promising she would be careful and return in one piece. She watched them leave with a huge smile on her face, thankful for their friendship and loyalty. She noticed Fenris in her peripherals, his eyes fixed on her face, no doubt trying to figure her out. She had come to learn this of him, he would analyse everyone and everything within his surroundings. It was likely something his master had expected of him.

Not wanting him to realise she was aware of his gaze, she began to speak before turning to face him. “All set?”

He cleared his throat “Ready as I'll ever be.”

They loaded their supplies on to the carriage, careful to leave enough space for two to sit. The others would sit up front in the driver’s seat. Varric was the only one who had driven a carriage before so they all agreed he would take the reins. Anders, in a bid to appear chivalrous, had suggested the lady take the passenger seat up-front. She had protested of course, claiming she had no desire to play the role of damsel.
She immediately regretted this though; as much as she'd desired to travel with Fenris, she realised she was now just as likely to end up with Anders, who she had been avoiding being alone with since the whole not-really-a-break-up break-up. Luckily for her, her trusty Dwarf with his impeccable timing chimed in to save the day. “Actually Blondie, I was hoping you could tell me some more warden tales.” Anders looked from Varric to her and back again, then sighed in defeat.

She had some difficulty manoeuvring around the luggage to take her seat. Her foot caught on something and she tripped forwards. She covered her face and closed her eyes, bracing for impact. But instead of landing on the floor, she remained upright. She opened her eyes to discover that Fenris had caught her from falling, the backs of her arms pressed against his chest. Their faces were just inches apart. She could feel the warmth of his breath on her face as they looked in to each other’s eyes. She swallowed nervously and couldn't help but think about how easy it would be to just lean over and kiss him.

The vibrations of his deep voice reverberated through his chest and in to her arms, making her tingle. “Not a damsel, you say?”

“Git.” She retorted, playfully pushing him away.

They both sat, making themselves as comfortable as was possible. There wasn't much room, so one of her knees lightly touched his. Fenris knocked on the wood to let Varric know it was safe to depart and the carriage sprung in to action. She remembered how sleepy carts had always made her, something about the movement and the repetitive sounds of hooves. Her eyelids became heavy and her head fell forwards a few times. She tried to resist but the call to the fade was too strong.

She was in an opulent copper tub, filled to the brim with hot soapy water. Fenris was kneeling down on the floor beside her, one hand slowly gliding down her inner thigh. She tilted her head back and spread her legs wide as his fingers reached her arousal, rubbing in slow circles as she moaned his name.

A deep crater in the road caused the cart to dip violently, pulling her from the fade. A strong arm was wrapped around her and she realised she was nestled in to Fenris’s side. He smelled so good; like sandalwood and juniper. An unnatural but satisfying heat radiated from him. Just as she began to worry he might have noticed she’d awakened, he spoke.

“You snore.” His tone was flat but he sounded like he was smiling. She couldn't help noticing that he hadn't relinquished his hold on her.

Without breaking their embrace, she tilted her head upwards to look at him. She'd heard right, he was
They looked at each other for what seemed like an eternity, until finally she lost her nerve and pulled away from him, uttering her apologies for having fallen asleep on him. She tucked her hair behind her ears nervously when he refused to take his eyes off her. She cleared her throat to prepare for the inevitable onslaught of verbal diarrhoea.

She opened her mouth to speak, but before she could he interrupted. “And you talk”.

She opened her mouth in shock for a second, then swallowed loudly before squirming uncomfortably. “What did I say?”

He looked away from her grinning and she shoved him to answer her.

“You said my name.” He informed her with a smug grin.

She blushed uncontrollably as he laughed out loud. She struggled to organise her thoughts as she suddenly remembered the dream, blushing heavily at the realisation of the context in which she had said his name.

She frantically tried to think of a plausible reason, before settling on teasing.

“Oh that? That was just someone asking who my broody friend was.” She knew he hated the nickname Varric's had bestowed upon him.

He raised an eyebrow and smirked, not at all looking as though he believed her. “Is that so?”

They smiled at each other, laughing for a moment, but the smiles quickly faded and their expressions became serious. Her gaze fell to his lips, then back up to his eyes. She noticed he was doing the same. He slowly began to lean towards her, and without thinking she found she was doing the same. With barely three inches between them, they both became completely still. Her heart was racing. She felt like a teenage girl.

He reached up with one hand and softly tucked her hair behind her ear, allowing his fingers to linger on her jaw. He hooked a finger underneath her chin, applying a little pressure to coax her face towards his own. They were just a hair-width apart. She held her breath in anticipation and just as their lips were about to meet, the cart came to an abrupt stop propelling them away from each other.
“We're here!” She was startled by the shrillness of her own voice, shaking her head with closed eyes at the awkward tone. He seemed amused by this.

He got to his feet and climbed over the luggage, turning to offer her a hand. “My lady?”

She stuck out her tongue before accepting the offer and he pulled her to her feet. He climbed off the back of the cart, then turned to help her down. Instead of offering a hand, he grabbed her by the waist and lifted her off the cart with ease. He gracefully set her down in front of him, his hands maintaining a tight grip on her hips and effectively trapping her. He leaned in quicker this time, pressing his entire body against hers. She was completely breathless. Just as his lips brushed hers they heard a forced cough from beside them and turned to see Anders staring in disbelief.

“Give us a hand with this lot will you.” She said, spinning back around toward the cart in an attempt to break the tension.

Fenris and Anders were glowering at each other, but she pretended not to notice. She caught Anders's eye. “Think fast.” She threw a bedroll towards him, which he just about managed to catch before it hit the floor.

When they finally stopped eye-balling each other, they busied themselves with unloading the cart and preparing for the descent.

…

They had been travelling the Deep Roads for five days now, cave in after cave in had forced them to split up to cover more ground in the hopes of finding a clear path. She spotted an ornate looking door, which was slightly ajar. Most of the doors she had come across were locked, so naturally she headed inside.

She slowly entered what was a large cavernous room. The ceiling was covered in crystals, which littered the place with hundreds of beams of light and the walls were painted with erotic art. There were no other doors and the place appeared empty, save for a large rock pool built in to the far wall. She focused on this, now noticing steam rising from the water.

A hot spring!
Without even thinking she began to remove her clothes. She couldn't even remember the last time she felt clean. In her excitement she had left a trail of clothes from the door to the water’s edge. She carefully dipped a toe in, testing the heat. It was glorious. She stepped in and sat down leaning her back against the smooth stone. She closed her eyes and emptied her mind of all thought.

“Well nobody told me it was spa day.” She jumped so violently that water sloshed over the sides of the rock. Fenris stood in the door way, obviously pleased with himself.

The rock was high enough that he would only be able to see her head, but she felt exposed none the less. “Fenris!” She protested.

He chuckled to himself. “I apologise. Though it is a shame I did not realise you were in such a state of vulnerability until it was too late”.

“Too late for what exactly?” She asked, suspiciously.

“To quietly spy on you, of course.” He mocked.

She rolled her eyes at him. “Do you think you could give me some privacy while I finish up?” She couldn't understand why she was so shy, she’d never been bothered about being naked around anyone before. Even Varric had seen her in various stages of undress.

“Well I was hoping to join you.” He joked.

“Turn around!” She insisted.

He turned around laughing to himself. She stood and stepped out of the pool when it suddenly dawned on her that she hadn't considered needing something with which to dry herself. She drew upon the energy of the fade, using mind blast to cleverly propel the water from her skin. She grabbed her smalls and hastily redressed.

Where the fuck is my shirt?
She spotted it on the floor by Fenris's feet, which she noticed he was looking at. “Do you mind?” she asked.

He knelt to pick it up, but instead of simply throwing it over his shoulder he turned to face her. He looked her up and down in her breeches and breast band, smirking and nodding in appreciation. She stomped over to him, yanked the shirt from his hands and turned away from him to pull it on over her head. She tucked her hands under her hair at the nape of her neck to free it from her clothing then turned to leave, but was surprised by how close he had remained, bumping in to his chest. He gripped her by the arms to stop her from ricocheting off of him, and stared in to her eyes with a desire she had not seen before.

He looked like a hungry wolf intent on devouring his prey. Without warning his lips came crashing in to hers, kissing her hard. His hands released her arms and swept around to her back; one open palm splayed at the base of her spine and the other between her shoulder blades. She moved her own hands from his chest to wrap her arms around his neck, pulling him tighter as their tongues became acquainted. Just as their breathing was becoming erratic, and her thoughts turning carnal, a darkspawn-esq noise erupted from outside the room.

“Saved by the Darkspawn.” She breathlessly teased, pulling away from him.

She swiftly exited the room, closely followed by a blue blur.

... 

Another three days had passed, and what a three days they had been. Bartrand betrayed them, they fought endless hordes of darkspawn, demons and even a few golems. They were offered a deal by a hunger demon to kill a dastardly rock wraith, but decided killing them both would be a better idea. Then found a shit-ton of treasure. Provided they could find their way out of this hell-hole, the trip may have just been worth it.

But every tunnel looked the same. Yes they had Anders' map's, but they had not been updated in some time and there had been many cave-ins since. They would need a miracle if they were going to find the surface before running out of water.


She turned her head to glance at him, questioningly.
“Grey wardens.” He announced. “Three of them.”

They turned a corner as the grey wardens came in to view and her heart stopped beating. She stared open-mouthed as the trio approached. Never taking her eyes off the elf with chestnut hair and impossibly dark eyes, as their leader addressed Anders. It was him, her “Oli.”

Everyone was staring at her now. She hadn't meant to say it out loud, or like a teenage girl with a crush.

“Hello Elodie.” His tone conveyed equal measures of happiness and sorrow.

“You two know each other?” Anders quizzed, a tone of jealousy if she wasn’t mistaken.

“In another life.” Olithir quickly answered, before she had time to respond.

Her heart was pounding now. Why wasn't he happy to see her? Even after all this time she so desperately wanted to feel the warmth of his touch, the taste of his kiss. She wished he would drag her around a corner and have his way with her against a wall. But he maintained an aloof distance, glancing at each of her companions in turn as opposed to returning her hungry stare. She noticed he was eyeing Fenris up the most, and also that Fenris was staring back with a slight snarl on his face. She wondered if it was an elf thing.

Whilst she was busy ogling her ex-beau, Anders was asking the wardens if they might be so kind as to point them towards the surface, after explaining the specifics of their current predicament. As the wardens had apparently concluded their top-secret business in the Deep Roads, they kindly suggested they all head for the surface together.

It wasn't until an hour or so later that she found herself at the back of the group, when a familiar voice whispered in her ear. “Are you well?”

Why was he whispering? “I'm alive.” She retorted, a little sharper than she intended.

He looked pensive for a moment, before responding. “That was not what I asked.”
“What do you want me to say? I never thought I’d see you again, then by some unbelievable twist of fate I find you in the Deep Roads, of all places, and you act like...” She fell silent.

The rest of the group had rounded a corner ahead and just as they disappeared from view he grabbed her by the wrist to halt her movement. He pushed her up against the wall and claimed her lips as his hands framed her face. She lost herself to the kiss, revelling in the familiar comfort as she pulled his body closer. He pulled away repeatedly only to declare his undying love before continuing to kiss her passionately.

“Ar lath ma.”

Tears fell from her eyes as she realised this was merely a brief encounter. A bitter-sweet respite along the road to their separate lives. But she needed him to know she still loved him. That she would always love him.

“Vhenan.”

He set her free from his embrace and quickly pulled her around the corner before anyone came looking for them. He kept enough of a distance so as not to arouse suspicion, but close enough that they could quietly converse.

“Does he make you happy?” He asked, with an expression that told her he truly hoped she was.

“Who?” She replied, completely confused.

He chuckled to himself “It is clear that both the elf and the mage harbour feelings for you.” He started. “But I'm guessing the elf is more to your taste?”

If only he knew.

“I have no idea what you're talking about.” She said flatly. She wasn't about to tell the one that got away about the one whose gaze turned her brain to mush.”
“Are you happy?” She countered, quietly, wondering how guilty she would feel at his answer.

“It is not an easy life, vhenan.” He started. “But I am a part of something bigger than myself now. I am glad you saved me. Truly.”

She smiled at him, appreciating the sincerity of his answer.

...

They made camp in a large cavernous room. The Wardens had told them they were at least another half day from the surface and that they would need their rest before continuing.

Everyone bedded down, except her who insisted on taking first watch. There was no way she would be able to sleep in his presence. After about an hour, knowing that everyone was sleeping soundly, and against her better judgement, she tiptoed over to him.

She placed a finger over his lips, simultaneously waking and silencing him, then straddled him beneath his blanket. She replaced her finger on his lips with her own, greedily devouring him as she unlaced his breeches and freed her old friend. She brought her hand up to her mouth and licked it, before returning it to his already throbbing length and thoroughly lubricating him.

“Sa malena.” She whispered in his ear.

She shoved her smalls to one side, then silently impaled herself. Her eyes closed and she bit her lip, desperately trying to stifle her moans as she slowly rode him. A contended sigh slipped out and he immediately clasped a hand over her mouth. She placed a hand on top of his, intent on finishing this before being discovered. She quickened her pace and watched his eyes close tightly, a quiet groan escaping his lips. She covered his mouth with her free hand, roughly, as he dug the fingers of his free hand in to her thigh.

She ground herself against him furiously until they quickly climaxed as one. Their mouths now free from each other’s hands, she leaned down to kiss him, tears spilling down her cheeks. He wiped away her tears with his thumbs then kissed her again, much softer now.

Unaware of the green eyes upon her, which her sobs had inadvertently awoken, she desperately declared her love for the Warden.
“I will never forget you.” She whispered, almost too quietly for the broody elf to hear. “Goodbye Olithir.”

Then he watched as she removed herself from the Wardens blankets and resumed her watch over the camp, tears streaming down her face the entire time. He ventured a look at the Warden, who was lying on his back staring at the ceiling, a constant glistening line running over his temple.

He was surprised that they didn’t so much as look at each the following day. They acted like strangers, but he still couldn’t help the feeling of intense jealousy in the pit of his stomach. So much so that he too had completely ignored Hawke for the rest of the journey.

When they eventually breached the surface, the Wardens had to rush off leaving no time to speak further. As they went their separate ways he watched Hawke venture one last look over her shoulder, smiling when she noticed the elven warden returning her gaze. He watched the warden mouth the word vhenan, then turned back to see Hawke silently crying.

Who the hell was this man to her? He felt a pang of guilt in his chest; for all his insistences that she couldn’t possibly understand the past pain he had endured, he had not thought to think about the hurt she herself might have experienced.

He walked behind her as they made their way back to Kirkwall - on foot since Bartrand had apparently taken all the carriages with him - noticing one hand almost constantly wiping her face while the other clutched a pendent around her neck. Varric kept Anders occupied, presumably sparing Hawke from his idle chit-chat. The dwarf was always protecting her in subtle ways, though not so subtle that he didn’t notice. It was, after all, what he had been trained to do. Danarius’s little pet, always watching for potential threats to his masters safety.

His curiosity became uncontrollable and he quickly closed the distance between himself and Hawke.

“May I ask you something?” He questioned, startling her from her quiet contemplation.

“What?” She responded, a little more irritated than she had intended.

“What does vhenan mean?” He gently probed.
She looked at him quizzically for a moment. “You heard that did you?”

“Is it elven?” He asked, softly.

“It is.” She admitted, but offered nothing further.

The silence stretched on as they walked side-by-side, Anders casting concerned glances back at them from a distance.

“It means, my heart.” She eventually volunteered, a tear falling down her cheek and a single sob escaping her.

“It was not my intention to upset you.” He tried to reassure her, panicking slightly.

She laughed as she wiped her tears away. “I’m fine.” She turned to present her dimpled smile to him. “I never really got the chance to say goodbye the first time.” She admitted. “But I have now.”

He wasn’t entirely sure why, but it seemed as though she was trying to reassure him that she and the warden were over.

“He was important to you?” He asked, feeling as though she may be ready to share.

“He found me when I needed him the most, when I was truly alone. He gave my life meaning. And then I lost him.” She answered calmly, but he could sense her emotions stirring under the surface.

“Was he a warden when you met?”

“No.” She answered, sadly. “He contracted the taint after we fought a group of Darkspawn. It was death or the Wardens...and I insisted on the later.”

“How long were you together?”
“We lived together, happily, for over two years.” She said wistfully. “But we were friends for longer. His clan didn’t exactly approve of me. Eventually he left them.”

“He must have cared for you a great deal.”

“And I him.” She admitted, forlorn. “He was my world. Everything I needed exactly when I needed it. My first love. My first…you know. He taught me how to survive and how to be happy, despite my past.” She looked at him intensely. “But that was another life. Honestly, I assumed he’d fallen at Ostagar.” She stopped him in his tracks and grasped his wrist. “Please don’t tell anyone about him. I never did tell my family. The timing was…just wrong. Varric’s the only one knows about him.”

Of course the dwarf knew, what didn’t he know about her.

“Of course.” He assured her.

He wanted to stroke her cheek, comfort her in some way, but he sensed now was not the time. She needed time to forget her Warden. So he would give her space.

She eventually released his wrist, thanked him for listening, then caught up to the rest of the party with a renewed sense of purpose.

Chapter End Notes

Sa malena = One more time (I think).

Next up: possibly cute Hawke/Fenris...maybe.
Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

A bit of light-hearted fun, and Fenris and Hawke get a lot closer.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It had been an interesting few months, to say the least. With their well earned wealth, her mother had been working tirelessly to reclaim the deed to her old family home. Her mother was a formidable presence, a trait Varric claimed she had most certainly inherited from the woman, and pending some formal paperwork it appeared they would soon be moving to Hightown.

Carver, in her absence, had joined the sodding Templar's. That one hurt. They had always been so close as children and well in to young adulthood. She didn't understand why he had chosen to adopt such an opposing position at first, until he claimed he did it for her. What better way to keep the Templar's off her scent than to become one of them, he had said. After a long sceptical look at him, he did admit his first thought had been to punish her for leaving him behind, but cooler heads prevailed and he soon came to the conclusion that it would actually be a good way to watch out for his older sister.

Hawke's new found wealth had also garnered the attention of the viscount, who was already aware of her after she had returned his son to him in one piece. Seamus had spoken highly of her and this coupled with her impending rise in status had him interested. She was being watched...rather closely.

She was on her way to check in with Hubert when Varric caught-up to her, a mischievous grin on his face. “There you are!” He exclaimed, clearly relieved to have found her. “Come on, we have a job.” He gestured for her to follow and took off at a fast pace.

She followed him to the docks, struggling to keep up and trying in vain to get more information from him, where the rest of the group were already waiting.

“What's going on?” She asked, confusedly, as she looked at each of her companions.

“Boat trip!” Shouted Isabella, rather excitedly. “She's ours for the entire day!” She proudly announced, gesturing to the small merchant ship that awaited them as though it were a fine piece of art.
“I thought we had a job?” She confusedly questioned, turning to look at Varric.

“Getting you to take a day off is a job!” He retorted, causing a few of the others to laugh.

“I'm confused.” She stared blankly at the ship.

“Did you really think we wouldn't know it was your birthday, Dimples?”

“Who...” She began, but was soon interrupted as a familiar face appeared from a crowd.

“I told them, sister.”

“Junior! You made it!”

“I'm going to kill you.” She whispered to her brother as he assaulted her with a bone crushing bear hug. “Maferath's balls, Carver, what are they feeding you?” She jested as she attempted to wrestle free of his surprisingly strong embrace. “How did you manage to get the day off?” She asked, noticing now that she was free that he wasn't wearing his Templar armour.

“Knight Captain Cullen said I should take a day to be with my family.” He shrugged. “I'm just as surprised as you.”

“So, what's the plan?” She queried, turning once again to Varric. He was undoubtedly the mastermind behind this little ambush.

“Sun, sea & the finest selection of rum you'll ever taste.” He laughed, brushing past her and dragging her on to the ship.

They sailed until kirkwal was no longer visible. Isabella was overjoyed to be captaining a ship again, even if it wasn't hers. She had never seen the pirate quite so happy. She was even being nice to Carver, who she had all-but shunned since he'd joined the Templar's.
Merril and Aveline were lazily sunning themselves while Anders lectured them on the dangers of sun exposure and insisted that everyone apply some of the strange salve he’d brought along with him – a concoction of his own making. Varric was trying his best to ignore Sebastian and Fenris was...staring – at least until she noticed anyway.

By the time they had reached their destination and dropped anchor, all but Sebastian had stripped down to their smalls. The day was unbearably hot and humid and clothes were intolerable. Poor Sebastion looked like her was suffering in his white armour, but insisted he was fine and stayed in the shade drinking copious amounts of water.

“Come on!” Shouted Isabella as she took a running jump off the ship. “What are you waiting for?”

The sound of her impact against the water was surprisingly tempting, and in a rather disorderly fashion each of them followed – aside from Sebastion of course.

Hawke dove with the intent of a gannet, breaching the surface and diving deep in to the clear refreshing water before changing direction and heading back to the surface for a breath of air. The salt water stung her eyes and it took her a few seconds of rubbing before she could focus on her surroundings. When she finally opened her eyes, unobstructed, she found a smiling Fenris not five feet away.

“Hi.” She shyly greeted him when it appeared he was content to silently stare.

“Hi.” He replied, his grin widening somewhat as he swam a little closer. “Happy birthday, Hawke.”

This was the first time they had been remotely alone since the Deep Roads and, like every time before, her brain function began to diminish.

“The water feels great doesn't it?” She began. “I can't remember the last time the sun was this hot.” Her tone was turning frantic and she feared she would start tripping over her own words soon. “Thanks for tagging along by the way...who did Isabella borrow the ship from, do you know?”

“Hawke.” He interrupted as he came closer still, his grin wider than she had ever seen. “Shut up.”

He closed the remaining distance, never taking his eyes off her mouth. Just as they were about to make contact, Carver shouted for them to follow and effectively ruined the moment.
“Coming!” She angrily retorted through gritted teeth, rolling her eyes and grumbling something unintelligible to herself.

“Come on – Broody.” She teased when she saw the look of disappointment on the elven warriors face.

She heard him chuckle behind her as she swam towards the private beach the rest of the group had occupied.

She laughed as her feet felt the ocean floor, noticing the look of impatience on Isabella's face as she sat atop Carver's shoulders who was still waist deep in the water, apparently waiting.

“What did I miss?” She laughed at the pair.

“We're going to wrestle.” Isabella replied, seductively, with a wiggle of her eyebrows.

“What?” She asked. “As in, me and you?”

“You'll need someone to sit on first.” They both looked towards the beach and spotted Anders, who seemed like he was about to volunteer. She screamed, rather embarrassingly, when she felt something on the back of her thighs and was propelled upwards and out of the water.

As soon as she looked down, she recognised the white hair that breached the surface between her legs and realised Fenris had hoisted her on to his shoulders. No sooner had she realised this that she prayed he could not feel the intense spike in temperature at the back of his neck.

“So how does this work, exactly?” She giggled as she tried to focus on Isabella and not the object of her desire pressed against her core; so close yet so far.

“Simple.” The pirate replied. “Last one in the water wins.”

And with that simple explanation, Carver charged towards them. They had clearly formulated a plan
of attack before she and Fenris had arrived. Her warrior had obviously anticipated this and, fast as he
could with the resistance of the water, side-stepped out of their line of attack. Unfortunately they
were still close enough that Isabella could reach out and grab her elbow. Isabella yanked her arm but
she was able to pull free and launch an attack of her own when Fenris turned her to a more
accommodating position. She reached for Isabella's shoulders, but instead of pulling she pushed with
all her mite. She would have landed back-first in the water had carver not reached up to grab her
hands and pull her back. Playing dirty, Isabella then kicked Fenris square in the chest with so much
force that everyone ended up falling backwards in to the water.

“Cheat!” Hawke shouted, giggling and coughing as the harsh sea water burned her throat.

“Well, what did you expect?” Isabella replied with a smug grin and a tone that suggested she simply
couldn't help herself.

They exited the water and collapsed on to the soft, sandy shore. The beach was beautifully isolated,
accessible only by boat. She lay their for a while, not a care in the world, until the sunshine became
too unbearable and she had to seek out the cool embrace of the ocean. She caught Fenris' eye on the
way in and gave an almost imperceptible jerk of her head for him to follow.

Without looking back to see if he had understood or obliged, she swam away from the beach and
around the cliff edge in to a small alcove. It was truly beautiful, brightly coloured coral could be seen
at the bottom of the crystal clear water and various crustaceans were embedded in the walls. The
floor was uneven, some parts close enough to stand on and others not. She opted for the shallower
end, the surface of the water just below her shoulders.

She nervously turned, hoping to see that he had followed, and was not disappointed. She didn't take
her eyes off him as he swam towards her and was both shocked and excited when he stopped only
an inch from her face.

“Glad you made it...” She began, but was quickly silenced when his hand found the back of her neck
and pulled her in to an urgent kiss. She couldn't help the whimper that escaped her as his free hand
sought the small of her back and pulled her flush against him. Finally catching up to the situation at
hand, she wound her arms around his neck and pulled him closer still. His hands slid down her sides
and around to her ass, which he playfully squeezed before continuing down the backs of her thighs
and coaxing her legs up to wrap around his waist.

She pulled away to look at him, equal parts disbelief and arousal evident on both their faces. “Best
birthday present ever.” She exhaled before descending on his lips again.
They spent a good half-hour thoroughly exploring each others mouths in that cave, and though she may not have stopped him if he had tried to take things further, she found she was glad he seemed content to keep things innocent.

“We should probably get back to the ship.” She breathlessly reasoned as he trailed kisses along her jaw and down her neck. “Poor Sebastian is all alone.”

He suddenly froze, incorrectly assuming she had lost interest.

“Don't get me wrong.” She quickly tried to reassure him, holding his face with both hands and looking intently in to his eyes. “I'd gladly stay here all day if we could.”

She practically melted at his warm smile and leaned in to kiss the tip of his nose.

“You're right.” He finally responded, a little hoarsely. “I would...prefer that we take things slowly.”

She couldn't help the look of surprise on her face. To hear him refer to things as though he intended for more than just a fun birthday make-out session.

“Did I say something wrong?” He nervously asked, noticing the perplexed look on her face.

“No!” She shot back at him. “I'm just...pleasantly surprised.”

He tucked a stray lock of partially dried beach hair behind her ear and kissed her sweetly, before pulling her back in to the deeper water and leading them back to the ship.

…”

After they docked, the party continued at The Hanged Man. They had plied her with so much alcohol that she had lost the ability to walk. When she tried, unsuccessfully, to stand and head to the room she had been renting since returning from the Deep Roads, almost face-planting the floor, Varric insisted that Fenris help her.
He gently lifted and held her arm around his neck. “Come on you.”

She looked at him through heavy eyelids. “I wish I had pretty ears like yours.”

He laughed out loud, not responding, but continuing to support her slowly to her room with an arm around her waist.

“Can I touch one?” She asked, seductively, as her hand reached out for his closest ear.

He intercepted her hand before she could touch him. “Oh no you don’t.” His ears were supper sensitive and he wasn't sure if he would be able to stifle his arousal.

She pouted, adorably, then tried again to reach for his ear.

“Right.” He loudly declared, picking her up and throwing her over his shoulder.

“Hey! – hey.” She initially yelled but quickly shifted to a sultry tone as she took in the view. “Very nice.” She loudly commented as she playfully slapped his backside before giving it a gentle squeeze, giggling hysterically.

When he reached her room, he set her down on her feet but had to wedge her between himself and the wall to stop her from falling. He managed to retrieve the key from her pocket, at which she feigned ticklishness and giggled dramatically, then unlocked the door to her room.

She turned to thank him and bid him goodnight, assuming she could get herself in to bed, but he immediately had to catch her from falling again. “Not so fast you.”

He helped her to the bed, sitting her down on the edge while he pulled off her boots. She took the opportunity to gently slide a finger down his ear from tip to lobe.

He immediately froze, eyes wide and desperately trying to suppress his stimulated whimper.

“Pretty.” Was all she managed to say before closing her eyes and falling backwards on to the bed.
Deciding it was safe to continue, he removed her cumbersome belt and set it down on the table beside her. Without warning she wriggled out of her trousers and threw them on to the floor beside the bed.

After a little hesitation, trying not to notice how good she looked in just a tunic, he helped manoeuvre her head to the pillow and pulled a thin blanket over her. He sat on the edge of the bed and stroked her hair out of her face. She smiled at him but her eyes remained closed. He stood to leave but she reached out for his arm.

“Please don't go.” She innocently pleaded. “I don't want to be alone.”

He took a deep breath and exhaled loudly, before submitting. He spotted a chair in the corner of the room and tried to stand to make his way over to it. Again she reached out for his arm, preventing him from moving away from her.

“This bed is much too big for little me.” Her eyes did not open. “Climb aboard.” She tapped the mattress beside her.

He thought about protesting for a second, then remembered there really was no reasoning with a drunken Hawke. He removed his weaponised gauntlets, chestplate and tunic, exposing his chiselled torso, and took his place on the free side of the bed.

She immediately rolled over, draping an arm across his stomach and resting her head on his chest. His whole body tensed, imagining how mortified she was going to be when she woke up tomorrow.

“You can touch my ears if you like.” She said, half asleep.

When he didn't respond she nudged him playfully in encouragement.

He rolled his eyes and tutted loudly before lifting his hand up to brush her hair out of the way, exposing her ear. They were so dainty compared to his – compared to most humans even. It made him smile for some reason. He lightly began to stroke the outline of her ear, eliciting an appreciative moan from her.
He suddenly stopped, worried that more of this noise was liable to restrict the space in his trousers.

She nudged him again, demanding that he continue with an annoyed growl.

He tried to think about off-putting things - the signature smell of The Hanged Man, darkspawn and the abomination - before continuing to stroke her ear. She moaned again and tightened her grip around his stomach, snuggling in to him.

He felt his trousers begin to tighten and hoped that she would fall asleep soon. He continued to stroke her ear, hoping this would encourage her to drift off. Sure enough, within a few minutes she was lightly snoring.

He listened as she whimpered in her sleep, repeatedly murmuring her sister's name. He'd heard her dream before, but had never had the opportunity to try to soothe her. He gently stroked her cheek with his thumb, trying to calm her. Eventually she quieted and resumed her breathy snoring. He couldn't stop himself from planting a delicate kiss on the top of her head, rolling his eyes at himself and how soft he'd become. He stroked her wavy mane of beach hair, breathing in her signature scent of violet and jasmine, until he himself drifted in to a peaceful slumber.

... 

She slowly opened her eyes, blinking in to focus. She stretched her arm out in front of her, realising she wasn't alone. She quickly remembered that Fenris had helped her to bed and that she had insisted he stay. She grimaced to herself, hoping she hadn't come on too strong or made him feel uncomfortable.

It was still dark out, she always tended to wake early, trying to escape her dreams. He didn't move, obviously deep in sleep. She untangled herself from him, turning back to face him as she stood. She looked at him sleeping peacefully, the sight made her smile. She allowed her eyes to wander over his naked upper half, greedily. She shook her head to free herself from his spell and readjusted the sheets over him, noticing a chill in the air.

She moved over to her wash basin, realising to her horror that she smelled like stale ale. She conjured a glyph of silence, so as not to wake him, and began to wash herself. She turned to make sure he was still sleeping then pulled her old tunic off over her head.

She cleaned herself as quickly as she could, while trying to decide what to wear. She couldn't
remember what day it was so was unsure if armour would be appropriate or not. She ran a comb through her hair, untangling the course salt coated knots, then dabbed some of her favourite fragrance on to her neck.

Just as she'd decided which robe to wear, she began to turn but felt a hand on her shoulder. She gasped, spinning around in a panic to face him. His mouth was moving but she couldn't hear him. *The Glyph* she suddenly remembered. She waved her hand and the glyph disappeared, just in time for her to catch his voice speaking the end of her name.

He towered over her, standing a little too close for comfort. She was still only wearing her undergarments after all. She slowly stepped backwards, trying to explain about the glyph and waking up early. He mimicked her movements, closing in on the space between them. The wall at her back eventually halted her movements and he lifted his hands to rest at either side of her, boxing her in.

He grinned, smugly, watching her squirm. He enjoyed how easily she went to pieces under his gaze. She was always so confident and in control. Seeing the effect he had on her made him feel...special.

“Fenris...” Her voice was merely a whisper but he shushed her all the same, placing a gentle finger on her lips.

He lightly traced her bottom lip, while nervously biting his own. Excruciatingly slowly, he leaned in towards her.

Without even realising, she had rested a hand on his back and was now pulling his body closer. His skin was so warm and taught. She could feel his breath on her face now, which caused her to swallow loudly.

He looked deep into her eyes, allowing her time to protest, before pressing his full lips to hers. He kissed her oh-so-slowly, drawing in her bottom lip then pulling away slightly. He looked in to her eyes, hungrily, silently asking for permission to continue.

She buried a hand in his hair and pulled him back to her, returning his kiss with an intense desire. He moved a little closer, pressing his thigh against the heat between her legs, causing her to moan wantonly. She ground herself against him slightly, a slave to her own carnal hunger.

He grasped her voluptuous buttocks and lifted her upwards. She wrapped her legs around his waist as he walked her over to the bed, never breaking the kiss. He leant one knee on the mattress and
placed her down gently, crawling on top of her to correct the brief parting of lips. His hands greedily explored her bare skin as she passionately raked her fingers over the skin of his back.

Without warning she rolled them over so that she was sat atop of him, legs straddling his waist, back vertical. He looked up at her as his hand caressed her face, pushing her tumbling waves over her shoulders.

She looked down at him mischievously, reaching her hands around her back to unfasten her breast band. She watched his expression with delight as he took in the sight of her naked breasts, heavy yet pert and supple with pale pink nipples hardening under his gaze.

He sat up abruptly, kissing her intently. One hand on her bare back, another exploring the firmness of one of her breasts. She ran her fingers through his hair, then pulled him away to gaze in to his eyes while biting her bottom lip.

He jumped at the opportunity to guide her tempting bosom in to his mouth, grazing his teeth on her nipple and making her squirm against the ever hardening bulge in his trousers.

He rolled them over again, resting his hips between her legs and grinding his impressive package against her exquisitely warm mound. He kissed her again, both of them becoming feral, biting each other as hard as they could stand.

He broke away from her lips and began to worship her neck with kisses and gentle nips, working his way along her collarbone then between her heaving bosom, paying equal attention to her erect nipples. He lowered his kisses to her ribcage, which had always been a sensitive spot of hers, and made her moan embarrassingly loudly. They both chuckled as he lifted his eyes to look upon her face.

With his fingers beneath the waist band of her smalls, seconds away from pulling them off, they were rudely interrupted by a knock at the door, followed by Varric's voice. “You awake Hawke? I got breakfast ready and waiting....figured you'd need it.”

He always took such good care of her, but she found herself in that moment wishing he didn't.

Fenris rested his forehead against her stomach, smiling helplessly at the situation. She lifted a hand to trace a finger down his ear and along his jaw, at which he shuddered, before cupping his cheek and pulling him back up to her level.
“We did agree to take things slowly.” She offered, hoping to convince both him and herself that the interruption was necessary.

He turned in to her hand and pressed a kiss to her palm with a defeated sigh. With a deep breath he rolled off of her and got to his feet.

“Be right there, Varric.” She called out.

He didn't take his eyes off her as she dressed, causing her to blush. He cleared his throat, announcing his intention to speak. “Should I...sneak out?”

She looked at him with a furrowed brow. “Why would you do that?”

“People will talk...” He replied with uncertainly.

It was her turn to shush him. She strode towards him and silenced him with a kiss, both hands gripping the hair behind his head.

“Let them talk.” Her tone was sincere but the look she gave him was positively ravenous. “Now put your shirt on before I change my mind about letting you leave at all.”

He chuckled to himself as he re-dressed.

They eventually turned to face each other, nervously, ready to leave.

“Shall we?” She held out her hand, which he apprehensively accepted.

She confidently lead him out of her room, down the corridor and in to Varric's where his table was laden with far more food than just the two of them would have been able to manage, as though he'd anticipated an extra mouth. He was such an insufferable smart arse.
They took seats opposite each other, ignoring the look Varric was giving them and tucked in to the food.

“Seriously?” Varric questioned with a chuckle. “Nobody's going to say anything?”

“I'm not quite sure what you mean, Varric.” She fanned her lashes at him innocently as Fenris chuckled.

“Fine.” He replied. “But just know that whatever I make up will be way more incriminating.”

They ate breakfast in silence, catching each other’s gaze frequently. She couldn't help but smile, realising this was the happiest she had been in a very long time.

Chapter End Notes

Up next - Fenris and Hawke get physical.
Chapter 14 - "Mildly NSFW"

Chapter Summary

A bit of fluff as Hawke & Fenris get better acquainted.

Chapter Notes

As always, your comments and kudos are much appreciated.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Her mothers incessant hounding of the viscounts office had finally bore fruit. They were now the proud owners of the old Amell estate, and the joy it brought to Leandra was enough to keep Hawke smiling for days. In a less than pleasing turn of events, however, their well-earned fortune, coupled with their Hightown property ownership, meant that they were now considered an influential family – not quite nobles but certainly upper-class. It wasn't long before the various gala invites came pouring in, and with each of those came a plethora of marriage proposals. Hawke found it all rather hilarious, much to her mothers dismay, and flat-out declined them all without a second thought.

Due to their now seemingly privileged life, Leandra begged Hawke to curb the more dangerous work, insisting they had no need of the additional coin, but she quickly ceased her pleadings when Hawke made her see that it was about more than just the money; there were many in the city in need of help, help which Hawke had the time and skill to provide. She had no desire to sit on her backside all day, being waited on and growing fat and lazy. Although her search for work had been born of necessity, she had grown to love it. She may have been unable to save her father or sister, but during her strange career as an odd-job refugee, she had saved countless others. It didn't make up for the loss of her family, but it was something.

She couldn't deny that their new home was a palace compared to Gamlen's hovel, yet she missed her room at The Hanged Man. She had never been the type of girl who longed for luxury, though she did enjoy the now close proximity of a certain elf. Her relationship with said elf was moving painfully slowly, however. Each time it seemed they were headed towards real physical intimacy, he would pull back and devise some spurious reason to excuse himself. She didn't want to appear a desperate harlot, completely unable to leash the beast within, but it was becoming increasingly difficult to suppress her urges; the voice of her wanton desires growing ever louder with each of his refusals to progress past an evening of infuriatingly arousing dry-humping.

This night was no different.
They lay intertwined on his bed, passionately devouring each others lips and caressing each others all-too clothed bodies. The feel of his almost rock-like protuberance pressing against her core clouded her mind with a dense fog of desire. She rolled her hips ever so slightly, desperately seeking the friction she so craved. Fenris groaned, clearly aroused, but quickly retreated from the fiery embrace and began to mutter some excuse about how they both needed a good nights sleep to prepare for tomorrow's big job.

With her sanity apparently taking an unsanctioned vacation, she was unable to stifle the frustrated whine that slipped out at the loss of his weight upon her. Immediately on the defensive, and unwilling to hear her apology, he made a startling revelation.

“Hawke, I haven't done this before!” To the untrained ear he would have sounded angry, but Hawke was getting better at reading him and knew this to be shame.

“You're a virgin?” She began, completely astounded by both the revelation and his opinion of it, but he cut her off with a grimace.

“No.” He protested, gritting his teeth, visibly seething. “As a slave, certain services were always expected of me. But I have never chosen – never wanted – to do this...as far as I can recall anyhow.” He stared off in to the distance, desperately trying to avoid her gaze.

The weight of his confession was almost painful. She clutched at her chest as though the action might sooth her aching heart. She had wondered if his life as a slave had included such atrocities, but to hear it as fact was beyond horrifying.

“Fenris...” She reached for his shoulder, attempting to comfort him, but he recoiled as though her touch burned.

“Don't.” He viciously objected. “I'm revolting.”

“Don't you dare say that.” She insisted, swinging her legs off the side of the bed and grasping his face with both hands, forcing him to look at her. “The bastards who did this to you are the revolting ones. You are wonderful!” She asserted “...and brave, and charming, and so fucking sexy.” She punctuated each word with an adoring kiss. “And you are by far the strongest person I have ever known.” Although he no longer resisted her touch, his demeanour was still distressingly tense.

“I thought I could – I'd hoped – but it's...more difficult than I imagined.” He admitted, still unable to
look her in the eye.

“Fenris.” She took both of his hands in her own, encouraging him to look at her. When he eventually
given her request, she eyed him with a fierce determination. “We will do only what you want, and
only when you’re ready. You have all the control. No pressure.” She presented him with a warm and
sincere smile, refusing to look away until he at least unclenched his jaw.

“How are you not repulsed?” His sincerity and vulnerability was heartbreaking.

“This doesn't change how I feel about you, you magnificent man.” She adoringly comforted,
pressing her forehead against his own and caressing the back of his neck. “Not even a little bit.”

Eventually he sighed, then actually chuckled, caressing her cheek with one hand. “I do not deserve
you.”

“I plan to convince you otherwise.” She confidently assured, placing a kiss on his forehead then
pulling him in to a tight embrace.

With her head on his shoulder, she felt him pull her hair to one side to expose her ear, which he then
proceeded to lightly trace with his fingertips. She felt her pulse quicken and her breath hitch at the
intimate contact.

“Oh.” She reluctantly protested as she pried herself from his grip. “I said I'd wait, but my willpower
only extends so far.”

He chuckled, resting his forehead against hers.

“I should go.” She whispered, gazing in to his haunting emerald eyes.

With a gentle hand on the back of her neck, he guided her in to a ravenous kiss, sighing with the
effort that it took to eventually break away. “See you tomorrow?”

“Of course.” She affirmed, giving him a final subdued smooch before leaving as quickly as she could
without actually breaking in to a run.
An action packed few weeks followed. First they garnered the approval of the Arishok by tracking down a rogue faction of crazies, who had stolen their formula for saar-qamek – a deadly Qunari poison – and saving many lives in the process. After reporting back to the Arishok, he rather surprisingly admitted that he was stuck in Kirkwall; unable to return to Par Vollen until he could retrieve an item – obviously of some significant import – which had been stolen from his care. She tried to goad him in to revealing more details, but he refused to comment and eventually lost his temper. Although the meeting ended with him thanking her for her intervention, her instincts told her that something catastrophic was on the horizon. She promptly returned to inform the Viscount of her concerns, who rather disastrously revealed that a Qunari delegate and entourage who had come to visit had disappeared; missing literally from his doorstep. Obviously she offered to help, immediately suspecting Sister Petrice – now mother Petrice – who tried to blame the whole thing on her Templar handler. They eventually found the Qunari entourage, though sadly too late. Viscount Dumar actually asked for her opinion on how to handle the sordid affair, to which she recommended he not attempt to cover it up. Much to her surprise, he took her advice. The whole mess ended with her acquiring a modicum of respect from both the Viscount and the Arishok.

In addition to this, they joined forces with a senior Templar named Emeric who had been investigating a man – named Gascard DuPuis – who he suspected of being involved in the disappearance of several woman, but had exhausted all avenues of legal investigation. The team were happy to assist in taking down a possible murderer, but during their investigation of his estate it became clear he was interested in more than just kidnapping women. They found irrefutable evidence of blood magic, confirmed even by a terrified woman they were lucky enough to rescue. Gascard tried to deny it, but the evidence was overwhelming. He attempted to escape, hindering their pursuit of him by conjuring hoards of demons, but they soon ended him. Unfortunately, on heading back to the Gallows to let Emeric know his suspicions were correct, they found he had already been lured to his death, indicating that Gascard had not been working alone.

The later job lead to a perceptible change in Fenris. He didn't say as much, but Hawke knew that the blood magic and demons had reminded him of his feelings towards magic, and probably made him reconsider entering in to a romantic relationship with an apostate. Spinelessly preferring to avoid the issue for as long as possible, far too fearful that provoking a conversation may result in him breaking things off, she simply avoiding being alone with him and used Aveline whenever a job required the skills of a warrior.

She was sitting at her desk, dealing with a stack of paperwork, when she became aware of her would-be lovers scent. She placed her quill back in the inkwell then turned to face him with a huge smile on her face. “Hello you.”

He did not speak, but returned her smile and sauntered over to take a seat on the chair beside her.

“I've missed you.” She cautiously ventured, placing a gentle hand on his thigh and silently praying to the maker – and the creators – that the unexpected visit was not to simply break-up with her.
He stared at her hand for a while, before picking it up and bringing it to his lips to grace each of her knuckles with a feather-light kiss. With his free hand he cupped her face, tenderly stroking her cheek bone with his thumb. “I’ve missed you too.”

She took a deep and calming breath, exhaling a sigh of relief.

Afraid that the lustful staring would lead to Fenris becoming uncomfortable, she cleared her throat and pulled away to retrieve the book she had wanted to gift him. “I have something for you.” She shyly informed him.

“What's the occasion?” He bemusedly enquired, one dark eyebrow suspiciously arched.

“No occasion.” She nervously replied. “I just saw it and thought of you.”

As she returned to her seat she handed him the book with a warm smile.

He stared at the cover blankly for a few seconds, then back up at her face.

“Maker, you hate it.” She chastised herself. “I just assumed...well Shartan was an escaped elven slave who lead a rebellion against Tevinter and – never mind, it's stupid. I'm stupid.” She laughed at herself, nervous and full of self-loathing.

“Hawke.” He interrupted, amusedly chuckling. “It's a fine gift. It's just that...well, I was never actually taught to read.”

She gaped at his confession and her own foolishness for never having realised as much. “Dread wolf take me, I am such an idiot.” She covered her face with her hands hoping to hide her embarrassment. She wished the ground would open up and swallow her whole.

His hands circled her wrists and gently tugged to reveal her blushing face, renewing his deep and throaty chuckle. “Perhaps you could read it to me?”
She bit her lip, nervously, until she was certain she had not insulted or embarrassed him. “Or I could...teach you?”

His smile widened to one of the biggest she had ever seen from him. “You would do that?”

“Fenris.” She retorted with a chuckle of her own, playfully nudging his knee. “I'd do anything for you.”

The atmosphere suddenly became very tense, as they silently stared in to each others eyes. She swallowed nervously as he stood, pulling her from her own chair in to a passionate lip-lock. She caressed his face and neck as his hands on her back pulled her flush against him. She would suffocate if she didn't take a breath soon, but she would die happy. He permitted her the air she so desperately needed when he broke away from the kiss to feather his lips along her neck and jawline. She bit her lip to suppress the lustful sigh that tried to escape, knowing he would take it as his cue to stop.

Pulling away once again to look in to her eyes, he began to speak. “Hawke, I wanted to tell you that...well, that I don't...Fasta Vass, why is this so difficult!”

She chuckled as she moved her hands to rest on his chest. “It's okay, Fenris. You can tell me anything.”

He took a deep breath. “I know you're not like the Magister's of Tevinter.” He caressed her face with tender hands, gazing in to her eyes to ensure she believed his conviction. “I know you would never succumb to the temptation of blood magic or the call of demons and...what I'm trying to say is – rather ineloquently – I trust you.”

“Fenris...” She breathed, both touched by his words and filled with a sense of dread that he was blissfully unaware of her darkest secret. She wondered if she should she tell him what truly happened the day her father died; she had never gone in to detail, only so far as to say that he'd died at the hands of a Templar.

“Hawke, I want...”

The front door suddenly swung open and Hawke's mother appeared. “Hello Fenris dear.”
He took a step away from Hawke “My Lady – Leandra” He quickly corrected himself “It is good to see you.”

“That's better dear.” She approved, tapping him on the shoulder as she passed by. She had insisted countless times that he call her by her first name.

“Would you like to stay for dinner?” She called from the kitchen.

“Actually, I was just leaving.” He politely declined. “But thank you for the offer.”

“You're welcome any time, my dear.” She called back over the clatter of cupboards.

“You have somewhere to be?” Hawke asked, confused by the sudden end to their conversation.

“I...do.” He cagily replied. “I'll see you tomorrow, Hawke.” And after a quick peck on the cheek he was gone.

...

It was ladies night at The Hanged Man, and she was looking forward to some much needed girl talk.

Isabella: "Has he put out yet?"

Merrill: "What does that mean?"

Isabelle: "Oh, kitten. I have so much to teach you."

Aveline: "Leave her alone, you harlot."

Isabella: "Well?"
Hawke rolled her eyes, both at the invasiveness of the question and her own frustration at the answer.

Isabella: "Oh for makers sake Hawke. You're in the prime of your life. You have needs – needs which are not currently being met. If I were you, I would march over there and demand that he show you exactly what he's capable of. I bet he learned all sorts in Tevinter."

Aveline: "That's what you would do. Hawke isn't a shameless slut."

Not wanting to let slip the real reason for their distinct lack of a sex-life, she decided to play along.

Hawke: "I refuse to be the kind of woman who begs. He'll come to me when he's ready, and until then...I'll just have to scratch my own itch."

They broke out in to a chorus of drunken giggles.

Isabella: "Fuck that. When Carver joined the Templar's, I told him if he couldn't find the time to satisfy me then I would find someone else who could. He's managed to sneak out of the Gallows almost every night since."

Hawke: "Oh, I don't want to hear about you and my brother."

Isabella: "You should be proud Hawke, he knows exactly what he's doing. And he's hung like a..."

Hawke: "STOP! Maker's balls, I'm going to vomit!"

A further chorus of shrill cackles ensued.

Merrill: "Is it serious Hawke? It's so adorable the way you look at each other when you think nobody's watching."
Aveline: "She's right you know. It is adorable."

Hawke: "More drinks over here!"

As the night progressed and their rum addled brains became less and less capable of sensible conversation, they each offered their own advice – some bad and some terrible – then cruelly topped her up with enough alcohol to convince her to go pay Fenris a midnight visit.

She could just about walk, though not in a straight line. Having had to break the locks to gain entry the night they met, she had placed a barrier spell on the property so that only those who had been specifically invited by Fenris could enter.

She tiptoed comically up the stairs and across the landing to his bedroom. The door was already wide open and when she entered the room her tongue almost fell out of her mouth.

He lay on the bed on his stomach, sheet draped over his legs exposing his magnificently muscular back and bare arse. His hands were stretched up at either side of his head, one beneath the pillow and one on top. She eventually focused on his face, noticing one large and seemingly unamused emerald eye fixed on her.

She made an involuntary yummy noise “Mmmm...did I wake you?”

“Hawke, I heard you leaving The Hanged Man!” He exaggerated.

“I shouldn't have come. I'll go.” Though her words hinted at her departure, she made no gesture to leave.

“What happened to no pressure, Hawke?” He teased with a smirk.

“Bad batch of rum, I think.” She mocked, an obviously false seriousness to her tone and facial expression.

“Or perhaps one too many.” He sternly countered, one intense eye still fixed on her.
“I’m sorry.” She looked at the floor guiltily. “I’ll see myself out.” She looked up just in time to catch the change; his once solemn expression suddenly replaced by glee.

“Take off your shoes and come warm me up.” He seductively commanded as he rolled on to his side, though careful to keep his manhood contained.

She hesitated for a moment as her rum addled brain tried to assess the seriousness of his unlikely request.

“Just, try to keep your hands to yourself.” He added in jest, though she detected a hint of seriousness.

Not needing to be asked again, she quickly kicked off her shoes and stripped down to her slip. It was a full length scarlet coloured silk, edged with black lace, with a split up to her thigh to allow her the freedom to move. It had a deep V neck exposing her cleavage almost to her naval. The dress robes she’d been wearing wouldn't accommodate her usual breast band, requiring something a little more discreet. It was also completely backless. Really not the best outfit to wear when trying not to seduce an infuriatingly handsome elf.

He attempted to contain his reaction to the sight of her in such revealing attire, but the darkness in his eyes and the bob of his adams apple betrayed him. She walked over to the bed and slipped under the covers, lying on her side with her back to him. He pulled her closer, enveloping her with a strong arm, moulding himself to her. She tried not to think of just how naked he was, but couldn't help teasing him with a wiggle; which resulted in a swift bite to her neck.

“Go to sleep, Hawke!” He playfully demanded.

She revelled in the heat radiating from him, the feel of his bare skin pressed against her back, that sandalwood and juniper musk she had grown accustomed to. She smiled fondly as she slipped across the veil and in to her dreams.

She was contentedly awoken by the gentle caress of a calloused finger ghosting up and down her arm, and warm kisses feathering the bare skin of her shoulder. She stretched languidly, letting him know she was awake, pleasantly surprised by the distinct lack of a hangover. He nuzzled his nose in to her hair and kissed the back of her neck as her eyes adjusted to the morning light.

Mmmm was all she managed before he had flipped her on to her back and weighted himself on top
of her. He kissed her neck and playfully nipped at her earlobes as his hands kneaded her hips and thighs. Hypnotised by his touch, she could do nought but moan and writhe.

As the kiss deepened, tongues dancing and teeth grazing, he allowed his hands to wander. One slid down her thigh to the back of her knee, coaxing her leg to cradle his waist, while the other moved in the opposite direction. He smoothed his palm over her hip and up to her stomach, a sharp gasp escaping her at the welcome feel of his hand ghosting over her ribs (she suspected he had made a mental note of this particular preference of hers from their first encounter at The Hanged Man), instantly igniting the smouldering embers of her arousal. Seemingly satisfied with her reaction, he continued his exploration, palming a heavy breast before effortlessly coaxing the nipple to a point with just the gentlest of tweaks through her silk slip.

Completely enthralled by his sudden confidence and enslaved by her barely contained sexual desires, she unburdened herself of her attire, exposing herself to him almost completely but for her lacy Orlesian panties. He examined her naked body from head to toe, the fire in his eyes leaving a trail of red-hot lust in their wake, until she blushed and begged him to stop. He eventually managed to tear his gaze away and resettled himself between her hips, greedily claiming her lips before worshipping her milky-white flesh from head to toe. Her breathing sped up with the press of his lips to each new area of neglected flesh, while his hands gently massaged her breasts and teased her nipples.

*Makers mercy.*

He kissed her all over: the valley of her breasts, along her ribs, across her stomach and down to her pelvis, before moving on to her thighs. He worked his way down to her ankles then back up to her Orlesian lace covered mound, lavishing the area with open-mouthed kisses until the fabric was sodden; both from her puissant arousal and the wetness of his tongue. He gripped the waistband of her smalls, slowly peeling the fabric away. She arched her back off the mattress to assist with their removal, after which he re-parted her legs and audibly exhaled. She peaked up through heavy lids at the sudden sound to find him staring at the apex of her thighs, a feral gleam in his eye. His gaze flitted across her naked body until meeting her own, presenting her with a mischievous grin before settling himself into a comfortable position on the mattress and resuming his feast. He slowly teased her folds, sucking and biting, then parted her with his tongue and unearthed her needy pearl.

*Maker he's good at this.*

He rubbed his flattened tongue in circular motions over her most sensitive area, stopping each time she moaned to teasingly suck and nibble; he was deliberately drawing it out. She almost came at least four times before he finally decided he'd tormented her enough. He tried a few rhythms and chose the one that elicited the most primal moans. Faster his tongue ravished her, lapping mercilessly at her tender jewel, until finally the sensation burst forth like a tidal wave of pure euphoria. Her back arched, bearing her breasts to the maker, a litany of praise tumbling from her lips made up entirely of his name.
As her breathing began to settle to a less frantic rate, and she became capable of coherent thought, she lifted her head slightly to peer down at him – her magnificent elf – still hungrily feasting on the delicate flesh of her pale thighs.

“What happened to taking things slowly?” She breathlessly questioned. “Not that I'm complaining.”

“You said whatever I wanted.” He casually retorted, kissing his way back up her body to her mouth, which he claimed, allowing her to sample the taste of her arousal. "You taste like caramel." He purred.

She bit her lip to stifle an embarrassed giggle, her cheeks blushing furiously. “Would you...like me to return the favour?”

He swallowed nervously. “I'm...not sure.”

“It's fine if you're not ready.” She quickly reassured him with a slow kiss. “But the offer stands, should you change your mind.”

“When I change my mind.” He corrected her with a cheeky grin.

Chapter End Notes

Up next: How about some smut?
Chapter 15 - "NSFW"

Chapter Summary

Hawke & Fenris' first time isn't exactly what she had envisioned...though she is quick to correct that.

Here be smut!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Since his first taste, now weeks ago, Fenris couldn't seem to get enough. Almost every night since, he had gorged himself as though he had discovered a never ending banquet between her thighs. He never failed to satisfy her to completion, though he had to assert his control by teasing her first. He would lead her to the edge of a cliff and keep her there, denying her climax until she almost wept. Only when she begged did he allow her to plummet in to the abyss.

Although she did not hate being so sexually submissive – it had brought her many orgasms after all - she couldn't help but wonder if Fenris would ever be comfortable enough to allow her to pleasure him. She had not expected that a surprise encounter with a rather unwelcome ghost from his past would be the straw that finally broke the camels back.

Hadriana – his old master's brown-nosing apprentice – had sent slavers to ambush them on the wounded coast, but she was blissfully unaware of the fact that Fenris now had friends; friends who would do anything to prevent him from being dragged back to Tevinter. The slavers failed to capture Fenris and return him to her, but they sought her out anyway. It wasn't easy, but with a little planning and a lot of lyrium, they emerged victorious and Hawke rather enjoyed watching Fenris effortlessly reach in to her chest to tear out her wicked heart.

In the aftermath of their success, and much to Hawke's dismay who wanted only to comfort him, Fenris insisted on some alone time to process what Hadriana had revealed to him. He had a sister, if the ass-licking weasel was to be believed. Hawke could only imagine how he must be feeling; obviously he had parents, but to discover a sibling of whom you have no memory...it was terribly sad.

Almost an entire week had passed since Hadriana had justly lost her life. As Fenris's absence became increasingly difficult to bear, she found a sadistic comfort in the knowledge that Hadriana's cold corpse lay rotting and alone in the dank desolation of an abandoned slaver den. She hoped word had reached Danarius of his apprentices catastrophic failure, praying that he would reconsider his chances of success and just give up already – or be so furious that he came storming in unprepared -
but when was she ever so lucky.

Hawke tried to keep herself busy, but when she returned home each night she would find herself staring longingly at her bedroom door, willing him to walk through. She wished he would seek her out and allow her to comfort him. She felt like an utter failure that he couldn't – or wouldn't – find peace in the warmth of her embrace.

The night was still young, but she had little interest in socialising when all she could think about was Fenris brooding and all alone. Instead, she planned to have an early night. She changed in to her favourite nightgown – the tunic she had neglected to return to Fenris from the night he'd had to cut her out of her corset – then headed downstairs to grab a nightcap.

After several more glasses of Antivan red than she had intended, a persistent knock sounded at the front door. It was too early to be her mother, who had taken Orana and the boys out for supper, so she grabbed a dagger on her way to answer.

“Fenris!” She exclaimed, unable to contain her excitement. “Come in, come in.”

He followed her in without a word, heading straight for the kitchen to pour himself a glass of wine. She watched as he quickly drained his glass, then switched to drinking straight from the bottle.

“Everything okay?” She tentatively probed, obviously startling him from his thoughts.

She watched the muscles in his jaw clench as his eyes seemed to search for a way to communicate his feelings.

“Look, I don't want to be that girl who insists you share your every thought...but you can talk to me you know.”

He let out a sigh of frustration, donning sad eyes and furrowed brows, before turning on his heel to face away from her.

“I meant what I said, Fenris.” She began to close the distance between them. “We do this at your pace, you don't have to shut me out.”
She placed a cautious hand on his shoulder, though he obviously had not expected it. His markings flared to life as he span around and grasped her wrist, forcing her backwards and roughly pinning her against the wall.

She swallowed her anxieties, holding his angry gaze, stubbornly trying to communicate that she did not fear him. “I trust you.” She whispered.

After a tense few seconds, that felt more like hours, his mouth abruptly claimed hers in an almost violent display of dominance. She met his assault with almost equal enthusiasm, careful not to overpower him or threaten his control. He effortlessly lifted her off the ground, coaxing her legs around his waist, then made for the stairs, discarding clothes as they ascended. When they eventually reached her bedroom, he deposited her on to the bed and watched her remove the rest of her clothes as he did the same.

Completely naked, he nestled his hips in to the cradle of her pelvis. She tried to stifle a groan at the feel of his rocklike thickness pressing against her core. He looked in to her eyes, apprehension evident in his otherworldly emerald gaze.

“Whatever you want.” She breathed, luring him in to a heightened state of arousal.

Her submissiveness set his blood aflame. No one had ever given him the choice to do what he wanted to do, it had always been a matter of him pleasing others. In a greedy panic, he roughly flipped her on to her stomach, gripping her hips to tilt her pelvis skywards. She could feel his length – his very long and meaty length – sliding between her folds and along her pearl, coating himself in her lush arousal. The friction was welcome, but not nearly enough.

"I want you, Fenris." She desperately pleaded, casting a glance over her shoulder. “I trust you.”

Spurred on by her eagerness and her endearing confession, he grasped himself and found her opening, thrusting himself as deep as her tightness would allow. She was obscenely wet with arousal, but his girth was still difficult to house. He should have slowed down, or even retreated altogether, but the beast within could no longer be contained. He claimed her, roughly, revelling in her moans of both pain and pleasure. The sound of flesh slapping against flesh with each forceful plunge, and the delicious jiggle of her succulent derrière, brought him to his own end embarrassingly quickly. He pulled out just in time to deposit his seed on to her back, and was surprised by the satisfied grunt that escaped her. He permitted himself no time to savour the feeling, quickly releasing her and promptly apologising, ashamedly.

She breathlessly rolled on to her back to look up at him. “Stop.” She sweetly insisted. “I told you to
do whatever you wanted, and I meant it.”

“You cannot tell me you enjoyed that.” He retorted, clearly disgusted with himself.

She sat up to wrap her arms around his waste from behind, pressing her cheek to his back. “It’s not exactly how I imaged our first time.” She honestly confessed. “But I’m still glad it happened.”

He made a noise that indicated a cringe, before reluctantly turning to wrap an arm around her shoulders and pulling her in to a tight embrace. They stayed like this for a while, until he mustered up the courage to speak. “How...did you...imagine our first time?”

She pulled away from his embrace to look in to his eyes. “Do you trust me?”

He swallowed nervously, then silently nodded.

“Lay back.” She instructed.

She lay down beside him, kissing him until he relaxed a little, then slowly kissed her way down his body. She nipped and sucked the flesh of his neck, licked his collar bone and peppered his chest and stomach with soft kisses. She felt him tense when she reached the chiselled dips in his pelvis, her hair grazing his length which had rather impressively re-hardened. She unhurriedly kissed his thighs until she felt him relax again, slowly advancing on her intended target.

She placed one demure peck on his length, waiting for any indication that he wanted to stop. When he did not move she kissed him again, then slowly sampled him with her tongue from base to tip, savouring their pleasant blend of juices. His hands fist ed into the sheets beside him as he let loose an exulted whine.

Encouraged by his lack of objection, she wrapped her lips around his tip and painstakingly slowly took the length of him in to her mouth. He groaned as his hips bucked without warning, pushing his tip to the back of her throat. Luckily for Hawke, she had an impressive control over her gag reflex and so managed to maintain her composure, swallowing around him and making him moan even louder.

She alternated her attention between his length and sac, sucking them both in turn until his movements indicated an approaching climax. At his warning she took the length of him in to her
mouth once more and swallowed everything he gave her.

He called her name, covering his eyes with his arms in shame, embarrassed by the sounds she had so easily coaxed from him. She sensually kissed his thighs and stomach, until his breathing seemed to settle, then looked up at his face to find him staring at her, adoringly.

“Hawke, that was...” His head fell back, decidedly unable to finish the description.

“How are you still hard?” She marvelled, appreciating the sight with a lustful smirk. He was certainly the biggest she’d experienced, in both girth and length. “More?” She hopefully offered.

He chuckled, then gave her a surprisingly serious look. “What did you have in mind?”

She slowly crawled back up his body to kiss him, which he returned with a renewed enthusiasm. She sat upright as she grasped him, positioning herself to receive him. She lowered herself just enough to take his bulbous tip, enjoying the way his eyes rolled in to the back of his head in response to the feel of her bewitching sheath, his fingers digging almost painfully in to her hips. She slowly took a little more of him with each movement, until she was comfortably able to absorb the entirety of him.

She leaned down to nibble on his ear, which made him eagerly thrust upwards. They kissed, greedily, before she sat back up straight and began to elegantly ride him. She couldn’t tear her eyes from the hungry look he gave her, his piercing emerald eyes peering through the gaps in his now sweat-matted white locks. Her own long tresses danced around her as she moved, thick and impossibly black, concealing her otherwise bare breasts.

As she ground herself against him more intently, she could tell from the subtle movement of his jaw that he was biting the inside of his cheek. His hands had relinquished their tight grip on her hips and migrated to the globes of her ass, to which he applied pressure to enhance the magnitude of each of her movements. He tilted his pelvis ever so slightly, pushing himself deeper still and eliciting a loud moan. The combined sensation of his length hitting that magic spot deep inside, and her nub grinding against him, was unlike anything she had previously experienced.

“Fenris.” She cried, so close to achieving a monumental orgasm.

“Hawke.” He gruffly groaned, obviously close to another climax of his own.
She leaned forwards to grip the headboard, using it as an anchor to forcefully rub herself against him. “Fenris!” She screamed as her face contorted, turning away from him to bite down on the flesh of her arm.

He quickly reached up to pull her gaze back to his, intent on watching the pleasure that their mingling of bodies had wrought. They did not break eye contact as she rode the waves of her climax, the sight of his obvious arousal prolonging the sensation tenfold, until she was no longer capable of movement.

Noting her exhaustion, he swiftly flipped her on to her back and began pounding in to her, not too fast but exceptionally hard. The renewed friction against her sensitive sheath made her moan wantonly, the sublimity of his length generating an almost immediate second orgasm and completely decimating her. The clenching of her walls edged him towards his third eruption of the night, though when he tried to pull away she clamped her legs around him to hold him in place, pleading with her eyes for him to fill her.

Completely exhausted, and afraid of collapsing at any second, he rolled off of her and on to his back beside her.

“Something like that.” She eventually murmured, eyes fighting to stay open.

“How I imagined our first time.” She managed before yawning, unable to keep her eyes open any longer.

When she awoke some hours later, Fenris was gone. She took her time to gather her things, hoping he would return before she left, but he didn’t. She didn’t think much of it at the time, assuming he had some business to attend to, but when the entire day passed without any sign of him she began to panic.

“Varric, where the fuck is he?” She demanded, pacing the length of his Hanged Man suite.

“I don’t know what to tell you, Dimples. Nobody has seen or heard from him in two days.”

“Shit! You don’t think...” Before she had time to finish her morbid train of thought, the door to
Varric's room swung open and there he stood. “Where the fuck have you been!?” She yelled, utterly relieved, as she ran towards him and flung her arms around his neck. She quickly became aware of his lack of reciprocation, however, pulling away to survey him. “Fenris?”

“I need to speak to Varric...alone.” He stated without a hint of emotion. So much like the Fenris she'd first met.

“Are you fucking kidding me!?” She retorted.

“Hawke, please.” He silenced her with a cold stare.

She opened her mouth to speak, then thought better of it and stormed out, slamming the door behind her.

“You have some explaining to do, Elf.” She caught Varric's voice before continuing out of earshot.

She had been pacing her bedroom for almost an hour before she decided she couldn't wait any longer. She would march herself back to The Hanged Man and demand to know what was going on. As she span on her heel to head for the door, she bumped in to something cold and hard. In her fit of furry she had not heard him ascend the stairs and enter. He towered over her, both hands gripping her upper arms to hold her in place.

“Where were you?” She pleaded. “I was worried out of my mind. You just...disappeared.”

“I'm sorry.” He sounded cold and disingenuous. “I needed some time alone.”

“Why?” She impatiently interrogated.

“To think.”

“About?”

“About us.”
“Oh.” Realisation suddenly hit, extinguishing all of her concerned fury and replacing it with a sad disappointment. “You've changed your mind.” It wasn't a question.

He opened his mouth as though to speak, but immediately closed it in favour or remaining silent – of not correcting her.

“Did I do something wrong?” She had intended to remain composed, but she was too hurt. A single tear tumbled down her pale cheek as she blinked. She quickly wiped it away but he surely saw.

“It's...complicated.”

“Try me.” She insisted. “I deserve an explanation, Fenris.”

“You do.” He agreed. He shifted awkwardly for a moment, then walked over to the bed to sit down.

She grew impatient and self-conscious under the oppressiveness of his silence. “Was I...not good?”

“No! - I mean yes...but” He rambled, exhaling in frustration before pausing for a moment to reconsider his response. “It was incredible, Hawke. You are incredible.”

“Then what's the problem?” She said, smiling with a sigh of relief as she joined him on the bed.

He slid away from her, as though recoiling from her touch, presenting his palms to warn her not to come any closer.

“Fenris, you're scaring me.” She worriedly admitted, pleading with her eyes for him to reveal what was really going on.

“I remembered.” He eventually spoke. “My past.”

“You mean your memories?” She enquired, her concern turning to surprise. “That's...good, isn't it?”
“It all came flooding back, then just...disappeared.” He sounded so dejected, she just wanted to hug him.

“Shit.” She commented, incapable of a more expressive reaction. “I'm sorry, Fenris.”

The silence stretched for some time as she considered the implications of this new development.

“Was it...us? What we did, I mean?” The timing was too much of a coincidence for it not to be.

“I think so.” He agreed, though he sounded uncertain.

“Do you think it might help if...perhaps...we try it again?” She slid closer and placed a hand on his thigh.

Big mistake.

He furiously launched himself on to his feet and began pacing the room. “This isn't funny, Hawke!”

“I didn't mean...”

“Do you have any idea how painful it is to remember years of a life you thought lost, only to lose it all a second later!?”

“No, but...”

“You can't fix this! You can't fix me!”

“I don't want to...”
“This is too much. It's too soon.” He stopped pacing and stared in to the fire, seemingly entranced by the dancing flames.

She seriously considered the situation before forming any sort of response. Fenris was her friend before he became her lover. She promised she would help him, and that didn't mean further complicating his life. It may have been a rash decision, born only of her desire to keep him close, but she forced herself to ignore her heart. The situation called for her to be his friend, not some jilted lover.

“Okay.” She tried to sound sincere, but couldn't completely mask the sadness in her voice.

He turned to face her, confusion evident in his expression. He obviously had not expected her to say that.

“If this is too much – If you need us to not be us...” She sighed as she took in his sad expression. “Whatever you need, Fenris. If nothing else, I will always be your friend.”

He returned his gaze to the allure of the fire, before quietly giving his response. “I...think that would be for the best.”

…

It took several months to feel remotely normal, she missed him terribly but was serious when she said she would always be his friend. It wasn't always easy to see him in a platonic light, but working together helped and she was cautious to avoid being alone with him for too long. She wasn't sure if he still had feelings for her, or if he had simply been able to turn them off when he decided the relationship wouldn't work. She wished she could do the same, but she still secretly pined for him.

She arrived at The Hanged Man for their usual round of wicked grace, greeted by a very suspicious looking Varric.

“New rules tonight.” He amusedly announced to everyone, Hawke being the last to arrive. “No coin, just liquor.”

After a little more explaining, though not much, it seemed that each time one withdrew from the bet or lost, they would be forced to drink. Surprisingly, the more one lost, the drunker they became.
and...well the more they lost.

It was rather unfortunate for Fenris that his winning streak had chosen this night to end, thus he soon succumbed to inebriation. Hawke, rather surprisingly, soon followed. Her wicked grace face was third only to Varric and Fenris, and she usually did quite well. Even in her drunken state, she couldn't help but wonder if Varric had planned for the game to progress exactly as it had.

As Corff called last orders, both she and Fenris stood to announce their departure, descending in to a fit of giggles at their mirrored movements.

“Well I could use the support – and it looks like you could too.” She added with a chuckle as she watched him stumble from his chair.

With his arm around her neck, and her arm around his waste, they drunkenly supported each other back to Hightown. Insisting she drop him off, as he was slightly worse off than she, they eventually made it to his place. Once at his front door, he turned to face her, just about able to stand with the support of a wall. “I miss you, Hawke.”

“You're drunk.” She rebuffed, desperately avoiding eye contact.

“Doesn't make it any less true.” He stubbornly protested.

“Don't do this, Fenris.” She pleaded. “Ending things once was hard enough, I don't know that I could do it again.”

“I was a fool.” He confessed, though seemingly to himself.

“No. You were hurting.” She corrected, now trying to look him in the eye.

“I was a coward.” He flatly stated, meeting her gaze.

“Maybe we should talk about this some other time?” She suggested, attempting to protect her already broken heart.
“No! I need to tell you, now. I want you back, Hawke. I want to try again.” He sounded like a petulant child, it was both endearing and hysterical.

She willed the voices in her head to quiet; they were far too drunk to be trusted. “What about your memories...”

“I can't avoid them forever. And if I am to endure them then I would have you by my side.” He reached for her hand, cradling it as gently as one would a baby bird.

She didn't speak as she searched his eyes for any trace of this being more than just liquid courage. “Let's just...get you to bed, and we can discuss this in the morning. Okay?”

He rolled his eyes but relented, turning to enter his home and leaving the door ajar for her to follow.

She helped him upstairs and assisted him with undressing, fighting off several advances along the way. She deserved a fucking medal for that. She eventually got him in to bed but was unable to pull free of his grip on her wrist and so submitted, to both his will and her own exhaustion, and climbed in with him. She was relieved when he did not make any further attempt to seduce her. He seemed content to just hold her and they both quickly drifted off.

The sunlight shining through the holes in the curtains pulled her from her slumber. Her head throbbed as she attempted to move, pulling a groan from her dry throat. She placed a hand on her forehead, willing her mana to soothe her pain. She managed to tamper it down to a more bearable ache, then blinked her surroundings in to focus. She had almost forgotten where she was, startled by the sudden realisation that she lay half-naked beside her ex-lover. She also remembered his startling confession, that he wanted to try again. She closed her eyes, trying to convince herself to forget everything he had said, he would no doubt regret it now – if he remembered it at all. Just as she considered turning to wake him, he let out a long groan, clearly suffering a hang-over of his own.

“If you're not opposed to a bit of healing magic...I could probably help with that.” She cautiously proffered, not at all expecting him to take her up on the offer.

He opened one eye to briefly look at her, quickly closing it then nodding, the movement causing another pained groan. He was clearly suffering to accept the aid of magic so easily.

She placed a gentle hand on his head, channelling her mana in to a potent healing spell. It wasn't
often she got the opportunity to show him that her magic could be useful to him, and she'd be damned if he did not feel the benefit of it.

“Perhaps magic isn't all bad.” He ever so quietly confessed, looking at her with one eye.

“I'm sorry, I must have misheard you, but it sounded like you just said magic isn't all bad?” She gave him a look of joyful disbelief.

“I would never say that.” He mocked, a wolfish grin adorning his handsome face.

When they eventually stopped laughing, their eyes locked and the room suddenly became very quiet.

“About what I said last night...” He began.

“Don't worry.” She reassured him, dryly. “I took everything you said with a pinch of salt. You're still off the hook.” She made to stand but he grabbed her hand and pulled her back down, coaxing her to lay down beside him.

“You can't actually want this – want me.” He gently stroked her cheek.

“Why does what I want matter?” She unemotionally countered. “You're the one who says this can't happen.”

“And what if I've reconsidered?” He whispered, sweeping her hair back to expose her shoulder before leaning in to press his lips to it.

“Fenris.” She whispered, putting a hand on his chest and pushing him away to look at his face. “I do want this – want you. I'm willing to try, at least.”

“I...do not deserve you.” He slowly closed the distance between them to reward her with a grateful kiss. His lips were timid and gentle, a sign that passion would need to remain on the shelf for a while. When the kiss ended, he pulled away just enough to adoringly gaze in to her eyes. “You are the best thing that has ever happened to me.”
“As far as you can remember.” She corrected, unable to quell her need for humour in the face of such a serious situation, earning her a displeased scowl. “Too soon?”

It took only a moment for his scowl to transform into a smile. She kissed him this time, aiming to convince him of her ability to contain her carnal urges. He seemed to understand, permitting a languid kiss before shifting positions slightly and falling back to sleep in each other's arms.

When they both awoke a little while later, they had a long discussion about what their relationship would entail. They agreed to start fresh, but to lay off the physical side of things – for a time at least. Just to know that he had those kinds of feeling for her was enough though, she could easily survive without sex for a while...right?

Chapter End Notes

Next up: Please don't hate me.
Chapter 16 - "NSFW"

Chapter Summary

So I know I implied heartbreak was on the horizon - and it definitely is - but I just couldn't resist a little more Fenris smut.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“You know this is completely unnecessary, right?” She humorously questioned. “While I’m not opposed to any scenario which involves one of us being naked...I am quite capable of cleaning myself.”

A recent excursion to the bone pit had resulted in some pretty nasty dragonling bites, all of which had been laced with a poison she had not been able to rid herself of before the damage had been done - that being they would have to heal without the aid of magic. Fenris felt terribly guilty for having not been there to protect her, and had insisted on taking an active role in her recuperation; currently this involved bathing.

“Not to mention this is like my own personal brand of torture.” She whined.

“How do you mean?” He was so innocent at times.

“You may be able to resist me, Fenris, but I do not find it quite so easy.” She eyed him hungrily, licking her lips and winking, in jest.

His recently caring smile faltered and he looked away nervously.

“Shit. Sorry.” She guiltily apologised. “Please, just...pretend I didn't say that.”

“You honestly think this is easy for me?” He snapped.

“You certainly make it seem that way.” She muttered, childishly. It had been over three months since they were last intimate.
He abruptly stood from his crouch beside her, grabbing her hand and guiding her open palm to the solid bulge in his trousers.

She pressed both lips between her teeth to suppress her smile. It was nice to know he was just as aroused as she.

“Happy?” He teased.

“Not really.” She murmured, too quiet for him to hear.

“You have been extremely patient with me, and I appreciate that Hawke, truly I do. But do not think for a second that I don’t imagine fucking you almost constantly.”

Her eyes widened with shock and delight at his unusual crassness.

He observed her for a moment, knowing the look on her face to mean she was formulating some kind of devious plot.

“I wonder.” She began, sly and sultry, as she stood and stepped out of the bath. “It would seem intense pleasure triggers your forgotten memories...”

He eyed her curiously – or suspiciously.

“Well I just wondered if that were reason enough to deny me pleasure.” She was on the bed on all fours by this point, looking over her shoulder at him as his gaze was lost in the sight of her velvet sheath.

He licked his lips, remembering the way she tasted and wondering just how much he could do to her without seeking his own release. He had once spent weeks pleasuring her without seeking anything in return, but that was before he knew how it felt to be buried deep in her warmth. Would listening to her moan as he pleasured her not be too much for him to endure. Would he be able to resist plunging in to her, when she offered herself to him so freely.
“Do you want to touch me?” She seduced. “Or maybe watch me touch myself?”

During his short moment of contemplation, he had unconsciously closed the distance between them and was now squeezing her rear with one hand. He watched as her own hand appeared between her legs and came to rest on her pearl, rubbing in slow circles before dipping two fingers in to herself.

They were both startled by the groan that came from him, but it only confirmed he would not be able to resist. In a flash he was kneeling on the bed behind her, his talented fingers replacing her own, penetrating her tortuously slowly.

“Fuck, I've missed you.” She sighed.

Spurred on by her words of encouragement, he dipped his head to greedily feast upon her, lapping up her heavenly nectar and moaning almost deliriously.

She threw her head back, groaning with appreciation when he withdrew his fingers and pressed his tongue to her pearl. She yelped when he suddenly sunk his teeth in to the flesh of her ass, then slapped it.

“Festis bei umo canavarum.” She felt his lips graze her labia as he spoke, sending a jolt of electricity down her spine. “On your back.” He demanded.

“As you command.” She lustfully agreed, quickly flipping herself over and spreading her legs for him.

He knelt on the floor as he grabbed her hips and pulled her to the edge of the bed, hoisting both legs over his shoulders and ravaging her core. He wasn't gentle, but she didn't want him to be. He furiously sucked and nibbled, forcing at least three long fingers in and curling them up to hit her sweet spot, plucking a whorish moan from her throat.

He watched as she played with her own nipples, growling at his own intense need to plunge his aching length in to her and fuck her senseless. The noises coming from her alone were enough to coax a steady trickle from his tip.

He ravaged her with brutal fingers and harshly feasted on her saturated cunt until her moans evolved into screams as she violently ground against his mouth, desperate for the intense pleasure to last for
as long as she could possibly endure it.

She must have blacked out for a few seconds, as when she came too he had shifted her up the bed slightly and was kissing her face and angling himself to enter her.

“Are you sure? We don't have too...” She attempted to protest, suddenly overcome with guilt, but she was swiftly cut off by the sudden intrusion of his impatient and entire length in to her ravenous sheath.

Her eyes rolled to the back of her head as she savoured the feel of him stretching her once more. He felt so perfect, as though he had been made for her and no one else – a gift from the Maker and the Creators.

His pace was punishing, forceful deep thrusts eliciting loud cries of passion. This wasn't love making, her warrior was fucking her in to oblivion and she loved it. Her nails dug deep in to his back, she hadn't realised she was hurting him until he pinned her arms down roughly above her head. She lifted her knees up as high as she could, tilting her pelvis even further. He abruptly released her hands in favour of the head board, which he used for purchase to fill her even deeper. He lavished her neck with nips and kisses, biting ever harder when the spasm of her orgasm milked him for all he was worth.

Both covered in sweat and completely spent, he lay his head on her sternum and collapsed beside her. She ran her fingers through his soft hair as her breathing slowly normalised.

“I would have been happy with your mouth you know.” She cheekily confessed, earning her a deep chuckle.

“I would not have been able to resist had my very life depended on it.” He sleepily insisted, before drifting into a deep slumber.

Intent on savouring the moment, she refused to close her eyes and fall asleep, instead just focusing on his soft white hair between her fingers and the feel of his breath ghosting across her stomach. After only a few minutes of sleep, he began to stir with what seemed to be a nightmare. She continued to gently run her fingers through his hair, softly scraping her nails along his scalp, in the hopes of soothing him. After a few minutes he awoke with a start, looking around the room with a confused look on his face, until he eventually focused on her and slumped back down beside her.
“I'm sorry, Fenris. I shouldn't have...”

He captured her lips in a searing kiss, effectively silencing her. “Can I stay here tonight?”

She couldn't help the insane smile that graced her lips at his welcome request. “I would like it very much if you did.”

He wasted no time in getting comfortable, laying down on his back and pulling her in to him. He wrapped his arms around her protectively as she used his chest as a pillow, both of them quickly falling in to a deep slumber.

…

The large round room looked oddly familiar, but he couldn't quite place it. The smell of magic and lyrium filled the air, as well as something metallic...blood. In the middle of the almost empty room, was a chained and naked prisoner. For a moment he felt as though he was watching himself, but then he recognised her; his Hawke. The familiar cackle of Danarius' laughter assaulted his ears. He turned towards the sound, watching as Danarius sauntered towards the chained prisoner, chanting as he neared. Hawke began to scream as the chanting increased in intensity, a network of glowing lines on her skin flaring to life, her hair turning white with the intense trauma she endured before his eyes. He tried to protest, but he had no voice – no body – he was invisible.

…

She watched him intently as he slept, deep in the midst of what appeared to be a rather distressing dream. As he made the fifth-or-so strangled noise of panic, she decided to try to wake him.

“Fenris.” She whispered near his ear, hoping to gently coax him from sleep, but his agitated state continued.

“Fenris.” A little louder this time and accompanied by a firm shove with her hand to his chest. But again he seemed unaffected.

His movements leaned towards thrashing as his murmurs raised in volume. She couldn't stand to see him suffering any longer.
“Fenris!” She yelled, striking his cheek with an open palm.

His eyes shot wide open as his lyrium flared to life, one deadly arm moving with an unconscious precision to grasp her by the wrist, painfully so. He growled like a wild animal, until his eyes focused on hers and he began to shake loose from his dream.

“Hawke?” He groggily questioned, quickly releasing his vice like grip on her wrist and touching his cheek, which now had a faint red hand print.

“I'm sorry.” She quietly apologised. “It sounded like you were having a bad dream. I couldn't wake you.”

He dropped his head back on to the pillow and took a deep breath.

“More...memories?” She cautiously asked. Guilt ridden for having caused his pain.

With his eyes closed, he shook his head from side to side, panting slightly. “I...sometimes have nightmares.”

“I can relate.” She absent mindedly replied, stroking a soothing hand over his chest, surprised that he did not flinch as his lyrium responded to her touch. “Is it always the same thing?”

“For a long time.” He began, his voice a little hoarse. “But this one was new.”

“Want to talk about it?” She knew it was a stupid thing to ask. Fenris did not appreciate being pressured in to sharing.

He did not speak for a few pregnant breaths. She opened her mouth to explain he did not need to elaborate, but he cut her off.

“It was about you, actually.” He admitted, peeking at her with one eye as she continued to obliviously trace the lines on his torso.
“Not a nice dream though, I take it?” She sadly questioned.

A few more heartbeats passed without speech, leading her to believe he had reached his sharing quota for the day. “It’s okay. We don’t have to talk about it if you’re not comfortable.”

Both eyes snapped open at her words, piercing her own eyes with the intensity of his gaze. “It’s quite the opposite actually.” He seductively growled. “I’m finding it hard to concentrate.” He gestured to the glow of his markings in the wake of her touch, then down to the magnificent monument that had been erected in her honour.

“You like this?” She questioned, disbelief evident in her tone as she ran a teasing finger from collar bone to groin.

“Mmhmm.” Was his only response as he closed his eyes and sighed, contentedly.

“It doesn’t hurt?” She didn't quite believe him, though his purpling head was pretty hard to argue with.

“Not with you.” He gruffly responded, clearly enjoying the stimulation. “You feel...different.”

“Different?” She retorted, flatly, almost offended.

He chuckled at her tone. “In a good way, I promise.”

She continued her ministrations; over his chest, the ridges of his abs, along his arms and thighs, before grasping his length and coaxing a surprised groan from him. “We’ll have to do something about this, ma lath.”

Shiiiiit.

She could have kicked herself for that untimely attack of verbal diarrhoea. She prayed he would not ask her what it meant, but as she chanced a look at his face he was eyeing her curiously. He opened
his mouth to speak, so she sprung to action.

“What...”

“I've always wanted to try this.” She interrupted him, quickly straddling his chest with her back to him, then leaning over to take him in to her mouth.

He groaned with delight, hands fisting in to the sheets as she took him deep in to her throat and began to massage his sac. After a few lurid slurps of his length, she let him go with a loud *pop.*

“Don't leave me hanging.” She demanded, wiggling her succulent derrière in his face.

She felt his fingers against the backs of her thighs, as his thumbs spread her lips to admire the sight. She nipped him impatiently, insisting he do more then just look, and sure enough his thumbs disappeared then two fingers slowly breached her core.

She moaned around him, the vibrations in her throat causing his hips to lift off the bed. As soon as he regained his composure, she started to quicken her pace; teasing his head and sliding the entire length in to her mouth and down her throat, allowing herself little time to regain her breath.

She whined when his fingers disappeared, but a guttural moan soon followed when she heard him sucking on said fingers. Without warning, his head lifted off the pillow and he began to devour her. He sucked on her pearl until it throbbed, licking the over-sensitized swelling as he returned his fingers to the mix.

She was so distracted by her own pleasure, that she had stopped moving half way down his length. He unceremoniously thrust himself deeper in to her mouth, snapping her out of her trance. She sucked him at the same pace as his fingers thrust in to her, both moaning against the other. She could tell from the de-synchronisation of their movements that he was close, but so was she.

She put everything she had into finishing him off as quickly as possible, his seed erupting in to her mouth in hot jets just as she began to crest herself. She sat up-straight to grind herself against his mouth and chin, screaming to the heavens as a wave of euphoria washed over her.

They were lying stomach to stomach – head to groin – when she eventually returned from the carnal plane of nirvana, still twitching and quietly moaning as he continued to lap up her slick elixir. She eventually disembarked and rolled on to her back, still lightly panting from the outstanding orgasm.
“If this is a night for trying new things.” He began, rousing her from near-sleep. “There is something I’d like to try.”

“How may I please you?” She breathlessly seduced, perching herself up on her elbows to look at him.

“Come.” He instructed, sitting up to lean his back against the headboard. “Knees here.” He tapped the spaces at either side of his thighs. “Facing away from me.”

His authoritative tone left her wet and wanting, as she slowly did as instructed, only breaking eye contact when she turned to face away from him.

“You have the most beautiful back.” He reverently confessed, smoothing a hand from the base of her spine to the back of her neck, coaxing her to lean away from him. Both other men she had been with had in fact also told her this, they loved the way her spine curved and the two little dimples just above the swell of her buttocks.

When he had her angled just right, he gripped her neck gently, silently instructing her to hold still, then leaned forwards to pepper her spine with kisses. Now sitting up straight, he smoothed his hands over her hips, gripping the globes of her ass for a moment, then moved to the apex of her thighs.

She sighed as his fingers parted her lips and found her pearl, rubbing in slow circles as his thumb entered her. She leaned further forwards, giving him better access – and a better view – and earning her a devilish growl.

His hand disappeared for a moment, only to be replaced by the smooth, taught tip of his penis, which was now stroking her mound, collecting her copious slick. He positioned himself at her entrance, pushing in only half an inch, then gripped her hips and tugged her slightly. She knew exactly what he wanted.

She slowly began to lift her shoulders, bending the mid-section of her spine away from him and her bottom towards him, then began to straighten her spine and swallowed him whole. She savoured the feel of him for but a second, before using her knees to slide up and down his exquisite edifice.

He kissed her shoulder blades as he leaned closer, before pulling her flush against him and palming her heavy breasts. She moaned as he rolled each nipple between finger and thumb, reaching one hand behind her to grip the back of his neck.
As she picked up the speed, he began to enthusiastically thrust up to meet her, then smoothed one hand down her stomach to tease her clit. It wasn't long before he coaxed another orgasm from her, her walls gripping him tightly and refusing to let go.

Her legs had begun to tire and, with the exhaustion that followed an orgasm, she would surely collapse before she was able to finish him off. Determined, she allowed him to slip out of her and moved to her hands and knees.

“Fuck me!” She aggressively demanded, hungrily eyeing him over her shoulder.

It took him less then three seconds to get on his knees behind her and sink himself in to her pink and sopping wet sheath. He held on to her hips as he repeatedly thrust in to her, panting from both exertion and arousal.

“Harder!” She insisted.

He moved his hands to her shoulders as he began to vigorously fuck her, causing her breasts to bounce wildly, until his sac tightened and he buried himself as deeply as physically possible, immediately wrenching a further orgasm from her as they both gushed, profusely.

He sat back on his knees, dragging her with him, refusing to be parted. He kissed her neck and shoulders for a while, softer than before. He remained sheathed, but she could feel him softening slightly. She clenched her pelvic muscles, eliciting a hiss from him, and he immediately began to harden again.

“I'm in bed with a demon.” She breathlessly japed.

They racked up a total of twelve orgasms between them before eventually succumbing to exhaustion.

... 

The bright light of the morning sun pulled her from her blissful slumber. She had prepared herself for Fenris to be gone, so was elated to find him still sleeping beside her. She turned to face him, smiling to herself at his seemingly contented demeanour.
“Stop staring.” His sudden and unexpected speech startled a quiet gasp out of her.

She giggled when he opened his eyes to look at her. “Good morning, handsome.”

He pulled her closer, branding her with the heat of his kiss. “Yes, it is.”

They languidly kissed for a while, before remembering their responsibilities.

“What time is it?” He grumbled in question.

“Late.” She confirmed. “People will come looking for us if we don't move soon.”

Reluctantly, they both left the comfortable confines of each others arms and prepared for the day ahead. Just before excusing himself, he caressed her cheeks with both hands, kissing her lightly on the forehead, then made her promise she would stop by his mansion later.

...

She was exhausted by the end of the day, but the thought of seeing Fenris gave her a renewed sense of purpose. She quickly bathed away the events of the day, changed in to a light robe, grabbed a bottle of wine then bade farewell to her mother; telling her not to wait up.

She made it to Fenris's mansion in record timing, desperate to see him. He was like a drug to her, she simply couldn't get enough of him. She quickly ascended the stairs, stopping briefly at his door to compose herself and lightly knocked to announce her arrival.

As the door swung open, she stood leaning against the door frame, bottom lip between her teeth as she surveyed him like prey. He smirked at her from his seat behind the desk, armour already discarded, bare chest on show.

“See something you like?” He playfully teased, stepping from his seat and strolling towards her.
She tried to think of a witty come-back, but she was hypnotised by him. Before she could even attempt to open her mouth to form words, his lips claimed hers in a fiery assault of desire and passion.

“Mmhmm” She mumbled, when he eventually pulled away to look down at her.

“Thank you for coming.” He suddenly became very serious - nervous, even. “I...have something for you.”

He let her go and strolled back over to the desk to retrieve a large gift box she had not noticed before.

“What's the occasion?” She mocked, mimicking his words from the time she had gifted him.

He was not smiling when he looked up to meet her gaze, and she wondered if she had said something wrong.

“I just...wanted to show you...what you mean – how grateful I am, for your help.” He shifted nervously under her gaze.

She eyed him suspiciously as she accepted the box then cautiously opened the lid. Inside, nestled atop green velvet, lay two of the most magnificent daggers she had ever seen.

“You got these for me?” She breathed in wonder. “They're beautiful.”

Discarding the box on his desk, she gripped the handles of the duel-bladed masterpieces, spinning them artfully in her hands and marvelling at the sight of them.

“They're called Whirling Deaths. I saw them and thought of you.”

She touched a palm to her chest, an exaggerated look on her face, mockingly flattered. “You say the sweetest things.”

He looked mortified for a split second, until he realised she was joking. She carefully placed them
back in the box, with a gentleness that made them seem incredibly valuable to her, then diverted her attention to him.

“I love them.” She assured him, placing her hands on his bare chest then smoothing them up to his shoulders and around to the back of his neck, pulling him in to a grateful lip-lock. “How about I show you just how grateful I am?” She whispered in his ear as her hands moved to the waistband of his trousers.

She spent the entire night – and much of the next morning – showing him just how much she loved his gift, allowing him on occasion to show her how much he too enjoyed her gratitude.

...

In the harsh light of the mid-morning sun, she dreamily returned home, unable to rid her mind of the salacious memories she had just created. The huge grin on her face was quickly wiped away, however, when she found a panicked Gamlen searching for her mother.

Chapter End Notes

Festis bei umo canavarum = You will be the death of me
Ma lath = My love

Next up: It ain't good.
Chapter 17

Chapter Summary

Hawke spiral's out of control.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Finally returning home from what she suspected would forever be remembered as one of the greatest – and most exhausting – nights of her life, the huge grin on her face was quickly wiped away when she found a panicked Gamlen looking for her mother. She assembled her team as fast as she could – Varric, Anders and Fenris – then followed a trail of blood through Lowtown, all the way to that horrible foundry where they had found Ninette’s remains. They spotted a trap door that hadn’t been visible the last time they were there, then fought through an impressive assortment of demons before finding her mother…though too late. Some sick, twisted bastard had defiled Leandra's body, severing her head to conclude his abhorrent creation. Years of murdering women for his own perverted purpose, stealing their body parts to recreate his long-dead wife. Seconds after severing Quentin's head from his body – her own form of poetic justice – Hawke had to catch her mother from falling. As she watching the life drain from her eyes, her desperation to save her mother drove her to do something she had sworn never to attempt again.

“We're too late.” Anders whispered to himself, turning away from them to hide his grief.

“No.” Hawke seethed through gritted teeth. “I will not let his happen again.”

She retrieved a throwing knife from her belt, sliced her wrist and waited for the demons to come.

“Hawke, what are you doing!?” Came Anders' shocked voice, drawing the attention of the rest of the party.

“Saving her.” Hawke's voice responded, but it was layered with another more menacing tone.

Leandra gasped, eyes opening wide as the dark magic restored her consciousness.

“Hawke.” Came Fenris' voice, a clear warning.
She snapped her head around to look at him, eyes completely black as she slowly surveyed him from head to toe. Carefully sliding Leandra from her lap to the floor, she rose to her feet and sauntered over to him.

“What a pair you and I would make.” She spoke in a multifaceted, haunting voice as she slowly circled him with a predatory grace.

“And what makes you think I would agree to such a thing, demon?” He spat.

“You care for this vessel.” She replied. “Join me, and I will use it to bring you more pleasure than you ever dreamed possible.”

“I would rather see her dead than defiled by the likes of you.” He shot back.

She exhaled her annoyance at his lack of compliance. “Death it is then.”

The demon within drained it's host of blood, the contents of her body placing her in the centre of a crimson tornado, the power it unleashed causing a chain reaction and drawing more blood from her companions.

“Hawke, don't do this, I know you're still in there.” Anders pleaded, trying in vain to reason with his friend.

She watched with curiosity as Fenris managed, with great difficulty, to draw his blade and take a step towards her.

“Fenris, no!” Came Anders' panicked plea.

“I wont let this demon claim her!” He shouted, raising his blade above his head, preparing to swing.

Suddenly the spell abated, and as an alarmingly pale Hawke was revealed amidst the swirling blood, they found her on her knees, her mother standing in front of her, cradling her face.
“My darling.” Her mother soothed. “I knew you'd come for me.”

“I was too late.” She sobbed, blood still leaking from the wide gash in her wrist. “I failed you.”

“No.” She rebuffed. “We still have time to say goodbye.”

“But I can keep you alive.” She pleaded.

“My darling, I would rather die than live as this...creature.” Her mother calmly protested.

“Please don't leave me.” She blubbered.

“I will always be here.” She promised, placing a gentle hand over her daughters heart as she crouched to join her on the floor. “Now end this cursed spell, and let me go to your sister and father.”

“I'm so sorry.” She sobbed as she allowed the lingering dark magic to disperse, embracing her mother for what she knew to be the last time. “I love you.”

“I love you too, my brave daughter.” She replied. “You have always made me so proud.”

She sobbed uncontrollably as she felt her mother go limp in her arms, but no more demons came before she eventually blacked out from the loss of blood.

…

Her lover had kept his distance while she grieved, never once checking in on her. The rest of her friends visited almost daily – except Anders who had all but moved in to take care of her. She barely spoke, and when she did it was only to express her annoyance at being pestered in to eating or bathing. She stayed in bed all day in an almost catatonic state, the grief of this latest tragedy being the last straw, adding to her already full pool of pain and causing it to spill over, her brain shutting off all emotions in an attempt to preserve her sanity.
One night when they assumed she was sleeping, she heard Varric and Anders talking about Fenris.

“Where the fuck is he, Varric? Hawke needs him.”

“Still brooding.”

“How can he be so heartless?”

“He won’t listen, Blondie. I’ve tried, believe me. He just can’t get passed the fact that she willingly used blood magic.”

“Stubborn fool.”

“I can hear you, you know.” She suddenly announced, the first words she had spoken in almost three weeks.

“Hawke.” They both replied, voices thick with concern.

“How you feeling, Dimples?” Varric asked, relaxing in to his usual carefree demeanour.

“Like I owe you both an apology.” She winced, but continued, interrupting their objections. “I tried to kill you!”

“It wasn't you.” Anders tried to reason.

“You lost your mother, Hawke.” Varric added. “We get it.”

“I promise I will never put any of you in that kind of danger again.” She sincerely swore, shifting her gaze between them until she was satisfied they saw the conviction in her eyes.

“We believe you.” Anders answered for the two of them. “Though I'm not sure the same can be said
for that damned elf.”

“I figured as much.” She murmured. “But I’ve already wasted too much time pitying myself. It's time to re-join society.”

“I am so relieved to hear you say that.” Anders admitted. “You had me worried for a while there.”

“Thank you, Anders, for taking care of me.” She hugged him fiercely. “I don't deserve your friendship.”

She let him go and made her way over to Varric, dropping to one knee and gripping him tightly. “You too, handsome. Hanged Man in an hour?” She suggested with a half-smile.

“We'll see you there, Dimples.”

She prepared herself a magical bath, bathing as quickly as possible so that she would have time to stop off at Fenris’s place before heading to The Hanged Man. She pulled her damp hair up in to a messy bun, not wanting to waste any more time, then hastily dressed in a thin and seasonally appropriate light grey dress robe. She didn’t much care what she looked like, but caught a glimpse of her reflection in the full-length mirror as she passed by. She halted, surprised by what she saw.

Having not eaten properly for almost three weeks, her waist had clearly shrunken. Her collarbone was a little more pronounced, as were her cheekbones. Her skin was paler than usual, a little unhealthily so, likely a response to the lack of sunlight and nourishment. She smiled at herself, an attempt to see how well she could fake it. It wasn’t good. No matter how hard she tried it would not reach her eyes. She eventually gave up and headed downstairs.

She assured Bodahn she was feeling better and that she was going out for a drink with her friends. He smiled and offered his sincere condolences once again, while Sandal solemnly declared enchantment.

It was early afternoon and the streets were bustling. Several nobles stopped her to offer their well wishes, to which she dutifully thanked them then carried on walking. It wasn’t far to Fenris’ place, so when she quickly arrived she needed another minute to ready herself. She leaned her back against his door and took a few deep breaths.
You can do this.

She was nervous because she knew this might be the last conversation they would ever have. She knocked loudly on his front door before entering, the last thing she wanted was to inadvertently sneak up on him. She entered the large parlour and instinctively looked to the top bannister, where he so often greeted her. Sure enough, there he stood, an icy cold expression on his face.

She stared at him silently for a minute, working up the nerve to speak. “Can we talk?”

She saw the muscles in his jaw tense as he clenched his teeth, before he disappeared from view into his bedroom.

Taking his lack of protest as an invitation, she slowly ascended the stairs and gingerly entered the master bedroom. He was leaning against the wall, looking out of the window. She took a seat in one of the chairs and waited for him to look at her, but he didn’t.

“Fenris, I am so sorry.” She began, trying her hardest to keep her voice from breaking. “I know what you must think of me, but I need to explain.”

Silence.

“And if you never want to see me again, then...I'll leave you be. I just need you to understand.”

Silence.

She took a deep calming breath, intent on telling him everything, then began. “I was barely a woman the first time it happened, just turned 18. My father and I would train out in the woods. He was a good man, taught me everything I needed to know about magic. We lived a decent life, contributed to the community, were never a threat to anyone. The last time we went in to the woods together, I was so excited to show him what I'd learned.” She smiled, briefly, at the last happy memory of her father. “But we were distracted. We didn't hear the Templar's until it was too late. I reacted…rashly.”

“Is that what you call it?” He interrupted, angrily, though refusing to look at her.
“Please, just listen.” She exasperated. “One of the Templar's had...a personal grudge against me, so
the prick took the opportunity to exact his revenge and silenced me. They tried to take my father,
Fenris. I reacted on instinct, but I didn't intend to hurt anyone. I only wanted to protect him. That’s
when the stupid prick accidentially fired an arrow at my chest...which my father intercepted. He
knew I couldn’t shield myself, so he sacrificed himself.”

He looked at her now.

“He died in my arms...just like my mother. I couldn't save either of them.” A stray tear fell down her
cheek. “I had never experienced the loss of a loved one before. My mind was not my own.” She
admitted, audibly annoyed with herself. “Demons...whispered to me, and I couldn’t help but listen.
They took advantage of my despair. I was barely even aware of what I was doing.” She took a deep
breath. “When I came too, the carnage I had wrought made me nauseous. I have regretted that
moment every single day of my life since. It haunts my dreams.” She admitted, a further tear falling
down her cheek.

He opened his mouth to speak, but she cut him off.

“There's more.” She admitted, taking a further deep breath. “The second time was almost a year later
– though I didn’t technically use blood magic. Those demons have hounded me ever since that day.
Whenever I feel...strongly...they find me, try to offer their help.” She shook her head, help wasn’t
the word. “Oli left with his clan without so much as a goodbye. I was heartbroken.” She admitted,
solemnly. “When he returned a month later, I was so angry with him. The demons said they could
make sure he never left me again. I tried to ignore them but...my emotions were too wild. They took
over, briefly, but he talked me down. Nobody was hurt.”

“But you did it again, and willingly!” He snapped.

“Yes.” She acquiesced. “I thought I could control it. I thought if it was me who called to them, it
would be easier somehow. I made a mistake.”

“You tried to kill me! I almost...” He cut himself off as his voice broke, returning his gaze to the
window for a moment.

“It will never happen again.” She gravely promised.

He shook his head. “I trusted you...but you are just like Danarius.”
She stood, angrily. “Do you want to rethink that statement? You honestly think I’m capable of treating you – treating anyone – the way he did?”

“I have no idea what you are capable of, mage.” He spat, as though the word left a foul taste in his mouth.

She wanted to shout and yell, but she knew it was hopeless.

“Will you be leaving then?” She calmly questioned, interrupted his scowling.

“As much as it pains me to admit it, I still need your help with Danarius. Until he is dealt with...my sword is yours. Beyond that, I have no desire to see you.”

“Understood.” She whispered in response.

She left his bedroom and descended the stair case. Stopping at the parlour door, she chanced a glance over her shoulder. He was standing at the banister looking down at her.

“In case you were wondering… I’m not doing so well.” She informed him, her voice wavering slightly.

He opened his mouth to speak, but immediately closed it again.

She turned on her heel and stormed out, slamming the door behind her.

1 year later

An entire year had passed since her mother’s death – and Fenris dumping her. She’d been drinking heavily ever since, but in the run up to the anniversary she had kicked it up a notch.

Carver had promised to meet her for a drink but by the time he arrived she was already half-cut. He
yelled at her, again, for not taking better care of herself, then left her to drink alone. He retreated to the other side of the bar, drinking with the small group of Templar’s who had accompanied him. So she settled in to the familiar role of solitary barfly.

All she wanted was to wallow – alone. However, the sight of a lone woman apparently screamed *come hither*. She had politely declined the first couple of advances, but progressively became more and more irate; merely grunting her objections, until she eventually became so enraged that she menacingly buried the point of her dagger in to the bar between two fingers of a lecherous hand. He quickly scurried away and she was finally left alone with her thoughts – or lack thereof.

After a few blissful moments of uninterrupted silence, she chanced a glance at the sudden presence beside her. Cullen. They had spoken professionally a few times but she knew him best as her brothers mentor. She thought it odd that he had reached the ranks of Knight-Captain, being only the same age as her newbie brother. It appeared he was only there for more drinks, with no intention of interrupting her self-loathing, but she couldn't resist the urge to ask if Carver was okay.

“How is he?” She managed to sound slightly less inebriated than she actually was.

He looked surprised that she had addressed him, and as he turned to face her she noticed a faint blush across his cheeks. “As one might expect.” He eventually answered. “You have my sympathies.”

She returned her gaze to the wall behind the bar. “Has he ever told you how inseparable we used to be?” She laughed, dryly.

When he didn’t answer, she turned to look at him. He was clearly uncomfortable. Too much of a gentleman to just walk away when she was talking to him, but also too loyal to her brother to appear to be chatting-up his sister.

“Just go.” She exhaled, more sad than annoyed.

Instead of leaving, however, he pulled up a stool and sat beside her. He drained almost half of his tankard, then cleared his throat. “I lost my parents…a few years back.”

She looked him straight in the eye, brows knit in concern. “Do you have any advice for me?”

He hesitated for a moment, clearly trying to think of something positive to say. “The pain never goes
away – at least not completely.” He began. “Though it will lessen, given time.”

A single tear rolled down her cheek as she closed her eyes, trying to suppress her emotions and steady her breathing. It wasn't pain she felt, it was emptiness.

She was mildly startled when she felt the pad of a calloused thumb graze her cheek to wipe away her tear. She locked eyes with him again as the palm of his hand settled on her jaw, thick fingertips grazing the shell of her ear.

The deepening blush on his cheeks betrayed his next move before he even thought to do it. He was going to pull away, but it had been so long since anyone had touched her so gently. She reached up to place a hand on top of his, pressing it tightly to her cheek. She turned in to his palm, pressing her lips against it.

The sounds of scuffling distracted them from each other, hands falling to their respective sides as two Templar's appeared shouldering the weight of a somewhat squiffy and slightly incoherent Carver.

“We're off.” The taller of the two declared.

“Wait.” Carver protested, placing a hand on Cullen's chest when he attempted to stand and leave with them. “Make sure my sister gets home safely would you, Knight-Captain?”

She span around on her stool, jumping to her feet and holding her brother tightly. It took him a moment to realise what was happening but he soon returned her intent. They embraced for a time, the comfortable silence conveying everything they couldn't achieve with words, before she swiftly pulled away and returned to her seat.

Once the three of them had disappeared, Cullen turned his attention back to her. “Where were we?” She might have thought it a pick-up line had he not looked so innocent and sounded so unsure when he said it.

“No talking.” She flatly demanded. “Just drink.”

She filled a small glass with rum – which she had acquired whilst his attention was elswhere – and slid it towards him. They drank in silence, until Corff eventually cut her off.
“No more, Hawke.” He commanded. “I’ve seen people drop dead from drinking less than you.”

“Fuck off, Corff.” She shouted over her shoulder as she stumbled towards the exit, completely oblivious of the large Templar following suit.

“Goodnight, Messere.” Came Corff’s bogus attempt at hospitality, as was their usual routine.

As she stepped out in to the cold midnight air, the full effect of the copious amounts of liquor she had consumed hit with full force. She would have fallen flat on her face had a strong arm not snaked around her waist.

“Cullen?” She questioned, unable to completely focus on his face.

“I’ve got you.” He reassured her, one hand still around her waist, supporting her weight as he walked her back to Hightown. After she tripped over her feet a few dozen times, he let out a slightly annoyed huff then swooped her up, with almost no effort, to carry her the rest of the way.

She was too drunk to even protest, resting her head on his broad shoulder. He was so warm. Her brain couldn’t quite comprehend how she could possibly feel so safe in the arms of a Templar – the fucking Knight-Captain no less.

By the time they reached her mansion, with many lungfuls of fresh air, she had sobered up just enough that she was able to downplay how drunk she truly was. He set her down on her feet so that she could unlock the door, which she managed with more grace than he had expected, though quickly retreated in to the house leaving the door wide-open. Worried that she might be too drunk to simply abandon her, he cautiously entered and closed the door behind him.

He found her in the kitchen, wrestling with the cork of a wine bottle. Immediately he tried to intervene, insisting she’d already had more than enough. She was already drunk when he started drinking with her, how she was still standing he had no idea. He was actually impressed. His musings were quickly overridden, however, when she suddenly burst in to tears.

Not at all comfortable with crying women, he quickly withdrew the hand he had intended to place upon her shoulder. He felt like such an idiot, unable to decide how best to react. He settled on lighting the hearth, hoping to be of use somehow.
“I’m sorry.” She choked between sobs, grateful for the sudden rush of warmth.

“Nonsense.” He tried to reassure her as he returned to her side. “You’re hurting. I understand.”

She took him by surprise when she turned towards him and flung her arms around him, nuzzling her face in to the crook of his neck.

“I feel… nothing.” She whimpered. “How broken am I?”

He cautiously placed a hand on her back, rubbing slow circles in an attempt to soothe her.

“I just want to feel.” With her arms remaining tight around his neck, she pulled her face back to look in to his eyes. “Make me feel something, Cullen.”

Without any further warning, she set upon his mouth like a woman starved, which is exactly what she was, starved of the warmth of another body.

Too long.

When he did not reciprocate, she began to feather his neck with kisses.

“Please, Cullen.” She begged. “Just for tonight. I’m not asking for anything beyond that.”

She could feel his heart pounding underneath the palm she had placed on his chest. She ceased her temptations to stare silently in to his eyes, waiting.

“You’re drunk.” He said, weakly, clearing his throat. “I would be taking advantage. It would not be right.”

“We’re both drunk, Cullen.” She reminded him. “That’s what’s known as a loop-hole.”
His willpower was wavering, she could tell by the way he was looking at her lips, so she let her
tongue slide over them, seductively biting her bottom lip and slowly allowing it to roll back out from
between her teeth.

“Kiss me.” It was barely a whisper, but it was enough. His resolve broke.

He weaved his fingers through her hair, lightly grazing her scalp with blunt nails as he pulled her in
to an all-consuming kiss. She snaked her arms around his sides, running her palms along the
muscular expanse of his back.

Completely breathless, he pulled away - though just a fraction – too gaze upon her face.

“Maker.” He exhaled. “You are so beautiful.”

“You’re not so bad yourself.” She offered, playfully jabbing a knuckle in to his unbelievably taut
abdominals.

She wasn’t exactly sure how things escalated as quickly as they did, but before she could even
register the movement she had her legs wrapped around his waist as he carried her upstairs.

This was a bad idea, he knew it, but couldn’t quite muster up the strength to stop himself. He had
been blown away by her beauty when she yelled at him on the wounded coast, and had been
infatuated with her ever since. So much so that he had jumped at the opportunity to mentor her little
brother in the hopes of seeing her again; even though it was not a role expected of him.

Was he really about to go through with this? Maker he wanted to, more than anything, but not when
there was a risk that she would have no memory of it come the morrow. Fortunately, the decision
was taken from him when she started snoring almost as soon as he laid her down on the bed.

He chuckled to himself, unable to be anything other than in awe of her. Even snoring as she was, she
was radiant. He removed her boots, then gently tucked her in to the blankets, before filling a glass
with water from the pitcher on her nightstand and leaving it within reach.

Before leaving he sat on the edge of the bed to take one last look at her. He swept her hair from her
face with a tender hand, marvelling at the feel of her smooth skin.

“Goodnight, my lady.” He whispered before leaning down to place a delicate kiss on her temple.

Chapter End Notes

I’m a little nervous about the next chapter, so will be uploading 2 to ensure you get at least 1 good one!
Chapter 18 - "NSFW"

Chapter Summary

Hawke does some much needed heeling.

I did not write any of the songs myself, they are a few favourites of mine that simply made me think of my Hawke. I would recommend you listen, and definitely watch the video for Black Swamp Village, as it's exactly how I picture Hawke performing.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The anniversary of her mother’s death came and went in a blur, she couldn’t be sure how long it had been exactly. The embarrassing ordeal with the Knight-Captain had only furthered her inevitable spiral out of control. She wondered if her subconscious mind was actually trying to get her caught: why shouldn't she be punished for all her failures?

“Hawke, I’d like you to meet a friend of mine.” Came Varric’s confident timbre, interrupting her morbid musings.

She turned her head towards the intruder's, rolling her eyes as she took them both in. “Please tell me this isn’t a set up?”

“Would I do that to you?” He scoffed. “No, this is Klaus. He's the most talented musician you'll ever meet.”

“How do you do.” She greeted with an over-exaggerated bow – as much as she could manage without leaving her barstool.

“He's in town with his band, but they just lost their singer.” Varric continued, seemingly unaffected by her prickly demeanour.

“Has he tried looking for her?” She interrupted, laughed to herself.

“Ha ha, Hawke. What I mean is, she left to have baby – and their looking for a temporary replacement.”
She shrugged, completely disinterested, as she turned away to resume her drinking. “Don’t know any, sorry.”

“That’s not what Junior tells me.” The infuriating Dwarf did not appear to be leaving.

“Varric, when have I ever shown any interest in singing?” She scowled.

“You need an outlet, preferably one that doesn’t involve killing people, and I hear you’re actually pretty good.”

“You're not going to leave until I agree, are you?” She sighed.

“Not likely.” He humorously confirmed.

She took a deep breath, downed the last of her drink then hopped off her barstool and rounded on Klaus. “Fine. When and where?”

He immediately lead her to his rented room and once settled wasted no time in confessing that he'd been the one doing Varric a favour as opposed to the other way around. He also, rather terrifyingly, handed her a lute and demanded she give him a demonstration of her talents, so that he knew what he was working with. She thought it funny how something as simple as playing a song for someone could be more daunting than escaping the blight.

There was no way her dwarven friend could have known, but she had been mentally composing lyrics for many years. She had somewhat of an infallible memory when it came to creating songs, never actually needing to write anything down in order to remember it. She’d actually been working on something recently that portrayed her current circumstances almost perfectly, and so decided to go with that.

Each and every breath we take
A step towards death and the moon is pale
And we might have seen something
But we ain't seen nothing yet

And I may have dreamt it
Or it may have happened
When I stood right here
Waiting for a sign
For me to walk away

But I gave in so easy
And I gave up instantly
I chase what is gone
And my friends are getting tired
Of the shit that I pull

They say "Why do you let those
Who turn you in to a fool
Why do you let them get to you
You should have been running
When you chose to stay"

Now I feel so far away
From the person I once was
I thought love was enough
You can tell yourself so many things
And nothing has to be true

Did you wake up last night
Drenched in your own sweat and tears
No it's not always easy
You get lost counting the years
Since you last felt like you were home
Since you last felt like you were home
Since you last felt like you were home
Oh I thought you were home

“It appears the Dwarf was not exaggerating.” He complimented with a warm smile.

“I guess there's a first time for everything.” She quipped, blushing slightly.

“I think you'll do just fine, Lady Hawke.” He gave her shoulder a reassuring squeeze.

“Please, just Hawke is fine.” She insisted.

“Very well.” He smiled. “Now straight home, get some rest and we'll meet bright and early tomorrow morning. Ok?”
The next day he introduced her to the rest of his band; Boric – a dwarf with the blackest beard she had ever seen, Ascal – an elf who rarely spoke but made her dizzy with the speed at which he could play a lute. And Filmore – a human with a penchant for chewing tobacco.

They chatted for many hours about the various instruments Klaus had collected over the years and taught himself to play. He possessed many familiar string instruments; such as lutes and harps, and some not so familiar of the percussion and wind variety.

She’d had a miniature harp of her own back home in Lothering, though hadn’t touched one since. He handed one to her before beginning to pluck at a lute himself. *Join in when it feels right,* he’d said, as though it were so simple, though she was surprised at just how much she actually remembered.

They met three times a week to write and practice, grateful to have finally found a balm to sooth her withered soul. After a few weeks, happy with both their progress and her significant reduction of alcohol, Klaus announced they would be putting on a show at The Hanged Man.

Her mouth dried up and the blood drained from her face. Aside from these four musicians, she had not sung for anyone since Lothering. Even during her time with Oli she would only sing to herself, despite his incessant pleading.

“Are you sure I’m ready?” She questioned, all a fluster.

“I’m certain.” He confidently assured her.

“I thought my lyrics were *melancholic*?” She japed, parroting his own words back to him.

“*Beautifully* so!” He reassured her, aghast that she had misinterpreted his previous observation as a negative remark.

…

They set up as the usual patrons drank, seemingly unaware of the bands presence. She watched Klaus nod to Corff, who rang the bell to command silence then introduced them to the room.
She tried to focus on her breathing as she noticed Fenris walking in at the most inopportune time. She tried not to think about him being there, looking intently at the wall on the other side of the room.

She closed her eyes and took a deep breath, as the instruments behind her came to life. She focused solely on the music, calming slightly as it washed over her, and readied herself behind what she couldn’t help but think looked a little too much like a mage’s staff. Boric had affixed an enchantment atop a free-standing wooden pole, at face height, to amplify her voice above the music.

Her pulse quickened as her first line loomed. She hoped the room would continue to pay them little interest, but as she opened her eyes and began to sing, a profound silence fell and all eyes were glued to her.

*How can I forget your love*
*How can I never see you again*
*There is a time and place*
*For one more sweet embrace*
*And there's a time – ooh*
*When it all – ooh*
*Went wrong*

*I guess you know by now*
*That we will meet again somehow – how – ow – ow*

*Oh baby how can I begin again*
*How can I try to love someone new*
*Someone who isn't you*
*How can our love be true*
*When I'm not – ooh*
*I'm not over you*

*I guess you know by now*
*That we will meet again somehow*

*Time can come and take away the pain*
*But I just want my memories to remain*
*To hear your voice*
*To see your face*
*There's not a moment*
*I'd erase*
*You are a guest here now*

*So baby how*
*Can I forget your love*
*How can I never see you again*
*How can I ever know*
*Why I shouldn't stay, others go*
When I don't – oh
I don't want – you – to go

I guess I know by now
That we will meet again somehow.

Time can come and wash away the pain
I just want my mind to stay the same
To hear your voice
To see your face
There's not a moment
I'd erase
You are a guest here now

So baby how
Can I forget your love
How can I never see you again

The music stopped, and although only a few seconds of silence passed it felt like an eternity. She had to bite her cheek from gaping as almost every seat in the house became vacant, the patrons offering a standing ovation and more than a few wiping tears from their eyes.

“All right, all right. Who paid the crowd?” She jested, directing her question to Corff and earning a chorus of laughter. “Well don't let me have all the fun boys.” She said to her band, before turning back to address the audience. “How about we liven things up a bit?” They were hooked already.

At the end of the show, Klaus unburdened himself of his instrument, made his way over to her and forced her to join him in a quick bow. She began to smile, almost reaching her eyes, until she clocked him. She couldn't read the look he gave her, but as soon as their eyes met he quickly turned to mutter something to Varric then gracefully departed.

The night really couldn't have gone any better. With all the praise they received she hardly thought about Fenris’s sudden disappearance and they were even offered a weekly spot.

With each performance her mood improved, reflecting in the music they played, until eventually she came to think of the stage as a home-from-home. So comfortable was she that her demeanour changed, harmlessly flirting with the audience as she performed, selecting victims to dance with during the longer instrumentals. It was so much fun.

They played only a small number of songs each night, but never the same one twice. They had written so many between them that there really wasn't any need to repeat themselves.
As their last performance fell on all-hallows-eve, they concocted an appropriately spooky tune to end with.

I went to the black swamp village
Where strange people live
I saw a scrawny drunk old man
Who gave me a flask to drink

He started speaking unusually
Sounded kind of scared
He said listen to me carefully 'cause
I'll tell you something I never tell

I went to the cemetery
Where there lies my dead wife
And believe me the graves were opened
And skulls and bones raised

They said hey ho (HEY HO)
They said hey hey ho (HEY HEY HO)
They said hey hey hey hey
They were raised from the dead
Swinging their bones out of hell...

I hear hey ho (HEY HO)
I hear hey hey ho (HEY HEY HO)
I hear hey hey hey
They were raised from the dead
Swinging their bones out of hell

I tried to run I tried to hide
They’re coming after me
They grabbed my arms
They grabbed my feet
You’re going nowhere until you sing

Hey ho (HEY HO)
I hear hey hey ho (HEY HEY HO)
I hear hey hey hey
I try to run as fast as I could
But they wouldn’t let me go

I left that old peculiar man
And his crippy yarn
I walked down the gravel road
And I heard voices from the misty black swamp

Hey ho (HEY HO)
I hear hey hey ho (HEY HEY HO)
I hear hey hey hey
Whatever I hear
I get the hell away from here.

She was sad when Klaus announced he would be leaving for Nevara, and had seriously considered his offer to leave with them. He never stayed in one place for too long, and admitted he had only remained as long as he had because he enjoyed performing with her so much.

In all honesty though, the barely disguised therapy had done its job. She was no longer the sullen lush she had been for far too long. She smiled easily and began enjoying the company of her friends once more.

She didn’t allow Varric to pay for a single drink that night. It was her way of thanking him, without making a public display of her feelings. He understood it all the same though. She always was an open book to him.

“One last song, before you leave us for good?” She pleaded, fairly optimistic that none were too drunk.

Klaus gave her a hug, much like an older brother, then quickly retrieved his favourite lute. They remained seated around their usual table, this last performance being more for the band than any audience.

You’ve spent a year staring into a mirror
Another one trying to figure out what you saw
Paid so much attention to what you’re not
You have no idea who you are

But heaven knows, knows
That you’re lying
As far as heaven goes, heaven goes
I just stopped trying

Now I can hear every word you’re saying
I’m just not sure I want to know
You can play the fool and still follow the rules
If you seem like you care or you’re good

But heaven knows, knows
That you’re lying
As far as heaven goes, heaven goes
I just stopped trying

You’ve lost yourself in others’
Expectations of you
Now you prefer this caricature before being true
But you’re better than that
You’re so much better than that
I know you better than that

Now baby, tell me, what’s your story?
Do you think it’ll ever sell?
And what you’ll do if it comes down to it?
If it all goes straight to hell?

But heaven knows, knows
That you’re lying
As far as heaven goes, heaven goes
I just stopped trying
Heaven knows (heaven knows)
Heaven knows
Heaven knows (heaven knows)
Heaven knows that you’re lying

“Thank you Klaus. You’ll never truly understand what you did for me.” She confessed in awe, speaking quietly enough so that only he would hear.

With the last of the equipment packed up, and most of her friends taking their leave, she sat alone, finishing her glass of rum.

“I hear that was your last show.” Came a familiar voice from behind her that made her eyes widen with panic.

She turned her head to find the very Templar she hadn’t seen since throwing herself at then waking up with little memory of how she’d ended up in bed.

“Knight-Captain.” She greeted him, nervously. “Been a while.”

“May I join you?” He cautiously asked.

She silently nodded, then turned back around to face the table.
“You have a beautiful voice.” He complimented, as he took the seat closest to her. “I must admit, I'm a little disappointed you won't be performing any more.”

“Stop.” She swatted the air between them, blushing uncontrollably.

He chuckled, a deep and masculine rumble from his chest. “You're adorable when you're embarrassed.”

So surprised was she by the comment that she choked on her rum. Coughing away the intrusion of spicy liquid in her lungs, she took a steadying breath then held his gaze.

“I probably owe you an apology – do I?” She asked, both apprehensive and honestly unsure.

He chuckled again. “No apology necessary.”

She let out an audible exhale to show her relief, wiping her forehead in an exaggerated gesture.

“Drink?” She asked, shaking her half-full bottle at him.

He smiled, rather dashing too she noticed, never taking his eyes from her face.

They drank for a time, pleasantly conversing about Ferelden and family, until the bottle was finally empty.

“I have very much enjoyed your company tonight, Knight-Captain.” She began as she stood to leave. “But I think it's time I headed home.”

“May I escort you?” There was an eagerness to his voice which she found terribly endearing.

“You may.” Was her short response, before bidding farewell to Corff and heading for the exit.
They had talked easily in the tavern, but perhaps now that they were truly alone the atmosphere had become charged with anticipation. Was she really allowing herself to be attracted to a Templar?

They walked in almost complete silence, though it wasn’t exactly uncomfortable, until they reached her mansion.

She turned to look at him, back pressed against the door, finding him very close. She had opened her mouth to wish him goodnight, but instead settled on longingly gazing at him. She noticed, much to her surprise, that he was just as large out of his Templar armour than when wearing it. She had assumed the armour was intentionally bulky, creating the illusion of size, but now realised his slightly intimidating presence was all him. He was of a similar build to Anders, she thought, though much broader and at least a head taller.

He took a step closer, closing the distance between them. He looked in to her eyes, for any sign that she may be uncomfortable, then placed one hand on her cheek.

She closed her eyes, savouring the contact, then swiftly opened them and closed the remaining distance to steal a kiss.

His free hand found it's way to her hip, while both of hers were burying fingers in his hair.

She broke away, completely breathless. “Would you like to come in?”

“Very much so.” He eagerly responded.

She kissed him again, then turned to open the door. She lead him in by the hand, shutting the door behind them, which Cullen immediately pinned her against; devouring her with a heat she longed to feel.

He smelled of leather and oakmoss, with just a hint of orange blossom. His hands were calloused from his years of service, but his touch was gentle none the less.

With great difficulty, she pried herself away from him, taking his hand and leading him upstairs.
Once in her bedroom, she tugged at his tunic, pulling it up and over his head. She bit her lip as her eyes hungrily regarded his bare chest, broad and firm with almost as much hair as Varric. She pulled herself flush against him to continue assaulting his mouth. He involuntarily groaned, sending a tingle straight to her core.

She backed away a fraction to defrock, impatiently unbuckling her belt before sliding the sleeves of her robe down her arms and letting the whole thing fall to the floor in a heap. She heard him mutter the words *Maker's breath* before pulling her towards him again. He was so much taller than her that even on her tip-toes he had to bend considerably.

As they renewed the kiss she unlaced his trousers, feeling his stomach muscles tense under her touch. She plunged a hand in to his smalls, taking his already erect length in hand. She bit his lip as she slowly pumped him, his hands desperately clutching at her hips.

Without warning she dropped to her knees, revelling in the sounds of his surprised gasps and satisfied moans as she swallowed the length of him. Working his sac with one hand and the base of his shaft with the other, she teased his tip with her tongue.

She was extremely aroused by the sounds he was making, so much so that she abandoned his testicles to reach a hand in to her own smalls and tease herself. He reached down to pull the hair off her face, holding it with one hand behind her head so as to get a good view of himself repeatedly disappearing in to her delightful mouth.

“So fucking hard.” She marvelled, releasing him briefly to admire the smoothness of his shaft, then lavishing his sac with her tongue.

Removing the hand that remained on his length, she devoted her mouth to him, taking him deep in to her throat and humming to heighten his pleasure. The tightening grip on her hair told her he was close, but she had other plans, so she quickly released him with a loud *pop*.

She pulled his trousers and smalls down to his ankles, coaxing him to step-out of them, then stood and removed what remained on her own body.

She took his hand to guide him to the bed, roughly shoving him on to his back. She climbed atop to straddle his hips, adoring the feel of his heated gaze as it caressed her neglected body, his pupils dilated so much so that she could no longer make out the colour of his iris’s.
More than satisfied with his reaction, and unable to resist his enticing package for a second longer, she positioned herself just so and slowly enveloped him. It was as though she had been cursed by a desire demon all over again, even the slightest touch or movement made her moan like a harlot.

“Cullen.” She gasped as she rode him. “You feel so good.”

She had never been one for commentary during sex, she wasn’t sure what had gotten in to her – besides a Templar of course.

She grabbed his hands, guiding them to caress her breasts. With his fingers splayed wide, he was almost able to cup her completely. She was almost as blessed as Isabella in that department, though preferred to keep her own cleavage out of sight.

She was grinding against him furiously, so much so that sweat was dripping down her back. When one hand left her breast to caress her face, the look in his eyes pleaded with her to slow down. After reigning in her speed and intensity, he sat up, one hand still on her face and the other on the small of her back. He pulled her in to a kiss, all the while maintaining a modest thrust with well timed pressure on her back to guide her to him.

She placed both hands on the back of his head, her thumbs resting just beneath his ears and fingers nestled in his curls. They slowly rocked in to each other, kissing and groaning. Both of his hands were on her back now, the sheer size of them almost able to span the width of her.

Her breathing became ragged as her orgasm approached, the escalating force of her thrusts eventually pushing him back down on to his back. She placed her hands on his strong chest as she skilfully rode him and finally reached her peak, clenching around him and continuing to grind against him to prolong the waves of ecstasy coursing through her.

The intensity of her movements, and the sound of her calling his name, was enough to push him over the edge. He all-but roared as he flooded her with his thick elixir.

Thoroughly satisfied, she rolled off of him and lay on her back, loudly panting. She could feel their mixture of juices dripping out of her, laughing slightly at the prospect and causing more to gush out. She turned on to her side to look at him, nervously biting her bottom lip.

“That was.” He began, but fell silent as he stared up at the ceiling. “I have no words.”
“I don’t usually do this kind of thing you know.” She pleaded, suddenly concerned he would think her no better than a common whore.

“Neither do I.” He replied, sweetly, as he turned and leaned over to kiss her again.

“You’re welcome to stay – to sleep, I mean.” She quickly added as she noticed the look of apprehension on his face.

Not waiting for his response, she sauntered over to the wash basin, rinsing a cloth in the water than wiping the fragrant fluids from her core and thighs. She rinsed it again then slinked back over to him, now perched nervously on the edge of her bed, to repeat the process on him. She pretended not to notice as he began to re-harden in response to her attention, returning the cloth back to the basin when she was satisfied with his cleanliness.

She slid under the sheet, resting her head on the pillow and patted the space next to her. After a moment’s hesitation, he decided to comply and joined her under the covers. They lay facing each other, silently taking in every detail of the others face.

“How did I never notice how handsome you are?” She teased.

“I have always thought you were the most beautiful thing I have ever seen.” He adoringly confessed.

“Sweet talker.” She purred, sliding over to silence him with a deep kiss.

Arousal renewed, he rolled her on to her back and continued to kiss her passionately.

He broke away from her lips to feather kisses along her collarbone, moving down to her chest and then her ribs. She moaned and writhed underneath him, her ribs were always one of her favourite places to be touched.

He continued his descent, lavishing her flat stomach with kisses, but abruptly stopped to look up at her. She opened her eyes at the sudden loss of his touch, to be met with a nervous look.
“May I?” He asked, innocent as a chantry boy.

She simply nodded, then bit her lip as he slowly lowered his mouth to her core.

His movements were slow and cautious, depriving her the friction she so craved and inadvertently driving her wild. She began to thrust against his mouth, eliciting loud moans from the both of them.

“I need you, Cullen.” She begged, reaching for him.

He placed one last kiss on her mound, and another on each thigh, then crawled back up towards her. He reached down to grasp himself, positioning his throbbing length just so, before sinking in to her heat.

“Maker, you feel like heaven.” He announced, eyes momentarily rolling in to the back of his head.

He was in no rush, it seemed, as he languidly made love to her. She could feel the texture of him perfectly, thick veins slowly slid against her walls, his thick tip hitting her womb before retreating almost completely and repeating. They kissed constantly, greedily swallowing each others moans of pleasure, until his movements became a little faster and a lot more forceful. After a rather impressive length of time, they were both calling each others names, her ravenous sheath milking him until there was nothing left.

After another quick wipe down, they settled back in to the bed, her back pressed to his chest. He held her tightly and listened as her breathing slowed to that of a dreamer.

She did not hear his final words before sleep claimed him too “I think I love you, Elodie Hawke.”

Chapter End Notes

I wish I could write slow burns, but alas I simply cannot.

Song's:-
1. First Aid Kid: Nothing Has To Be True
2. Regina Spektor: How
3. The Speakeasies’ Swing Band: Black Swamp Village
4. First Aid Kit: Heaven Knows
Chapter 19 - "NSFW"

Chapter Summary

I took some liberties with this one. In Inquisition, Cullen says that Templar's can marry with the Chantries permission, and I have to assume that they would do whatever they could to limit the risk of said union producing a mage child. Hence the conversation on said topic - you'll know it when you see it.

If you haven't played the Legacy DLC, some comments towards the end might not make complete sense.

She had seen Cullen a handful of times since their first night together, though always at night and always in secret. She didn't want any of her friends – who would surely protest to an affair with the Knight-Captain – to find out. She would always find some plausible excuse to sneak off, telling one friend she was with another and so on. With no discrete way to communicate in public, they wrote letters to each other to plan their rendezvous'.

Cullen was also happy to keep their dalliance a secret, it was after all frowned upon for a Templar to seek anything more than a quick release without express permission from the Chantry. This only added to the excitement of their relationship – if what they had could even be called such a thing. Sneaking him in and out of her mansion was exhilarating, but nothing compared to being smuggled in to his private quarters in the Gallows.

After helping Anders out one day with some Templar bastard's insane plot to turn the entire circle tranquil, she discovered an underground passage in to the Gallows and formulated a devious plan. She would wait until dark, then use the passage to sneak in to Cullen's room and surprise him. The mage they had rescued from Sir Alrick – and Justice – had helpfully tipped her the guard rotation, so she had a good idea of a safe time to enter.

Having grown impatient of waiting for a new letter from her Templar, she waited until nightfall to seek out the secret passage. She managed to make it most of the way to his quarters without stumbling in to anyone, cloaking herself the last few meters when two Templar's came in to view.

She tried the door handle, but it was locked, so she stupidly opted to fade-step – only realising as she re-materialised that Cullen seeing her do such a thing would certainly give the game away. Thankfully, the room was empty and her secret remained just that.

She waited for almost an hour before she concocted another insane plan: why not greet him nude. She quickly undressed, hiding her clothes under his bed, before taking a seat on his desk. His room
was actually more like two rooms, being both his private quarters and office, so the desk was not visible upon entering.

When she eventually heard footsteps, and his unmistakable timbre, followed by a key unlocking the door, she held her breath to listen and ensure he entered alone. She was relieved to hear only one set of footsteps and the sound of the door closing behind them.

As he rounded the corner, paperwork in hand, it wasn't until he was a short distance away and her feet came in to view that he lifted his head and noticed her. His jaw almost hit the floor before an array of different emotions coloured his handsome face – confusion, excitement, anger, humour and lastly (and most importantly) lust.

“Hello Knight-Captain.” She purred, lifting a foot to his chest and trailing a path down with her toe. Much to her delight, it appeared he had just returned from a bath and was wearing nothing but a towel. “I missed you.” She seductively whispered, biting her lip and opening her legs for him to see just what she had to offer.

He needed no further convincing.

In a heartbeat he was on his knees before of her, nibbling a line down her creamy thighs before advancing on the feast that awaited. She watched him, biting her bottom lip to stifle her breathy whines, as he hungrily ravaged her. She grabbed a fistful of his hair as he increased the pressure, forcefully grinding her mound against him as her other hand struggled to hold her upright on the desk. Eventually she gave up and fell backwards, biting her own fist as she crested, the tightening of her thighs around his head the only thing to signal to him that he had been successful in pleasing her.

He kissed his way up her stomach, through the valley of her breasts and along her collar bone, before settling his own arousal against her.

“Oh no.” She protested. “My turn.”

He stood as she lightly pushed him away and allowed her to lead him around the desk and to his chair. She instructed him to sit, then dropped to her knees under his desk and began to kiss her way along his thigh towards his mouth-watering length.

About five minutes in, Cullen enthusiastically moaning and hissing, the door to his quarters swung open and she had but a few seconds to ensure she was invisible.
She listened as another Templar informed Cullen about a group of escaped mage's from Starkhaven, then struck up some idle chit-chat. Annoyed that Cullen didn't seem to be trying to get rid of the intruder, she decided to be cruel.

She bit his thigh, not gently but not so rough that he wouldn't be able to stifle his reaction. Unsatisfied with his lack of response, she ran her tongue along his length, which had rather surprisingly not softened any. His voice faltered but he continued his conversation. It seemed he too was playing a game. Without warning she took the full length of him in to her mouth and deep in to her throat. She almost chuckled aloud when he drove his fist in to the table above her. She listened with a hand over her mouth as she heard him mumble something about a cockroach, then encouraged the man to leave.

“You devil woman.” He chastised as he peered down at her from his chair.

“Perhaps you should lock the door, Knight-Captain?” She suggested.

He growled, but stood and made his way over to the door to lock it. By the time he returned she was lying seductively in his bed, beckoning him to join her.

“Maker, am I glad to see you.” He confessed as he eagerly joined her, grazing her cheek with one hand as he began to kiss her.

“I was tired of waiting for you to write.” She explained. “So I thought I'd surprise you.”

“How did you even get in here?” He chuckled.

“It's probably best you don't know.” She gravely admitted.

“Fair enough.” He retorted with a chuckle as he coaxed her to turn away from him, his hand caressing her hip and bottom before sliding down her thigh and coaxing it upwards to spread her open. His lips rarely left her neck or shoulder as he pleased her with his thick fingers and when her moans announced another orgasm, he swiftly plunged himself in to her saturated warmth, turning her moan of fulfilment in to a sob of rapture.
They had slow, passionate sex. She was still in awe of his stamina, which always seemed to last for hours. She was never dissatisfied with any of her previous lovers - not even slightly - but this man was on a whole other level. It was as though he cared nothing for his own pleasure and focused solely on hers. He was always so tender, never rough, as though she were a fragile thing.

After another impressively long stretch of time, his fingers found their way around her front to stimulate her pearl, and with a few well timed thrusts he spilled in to her mere seconds after another climax of her own.

She rolled on to her back to look at him, still panting, smiling in appreciation of his attention. He leaned over to kiss her, stopping only to stare in to her eyes with a nervous look on his face.

“What is it?” She asked, all of a sudden concerned.

“I...love you.”

“Oh.” Was all she managed to say, with a look of genuine surprise.

He looked so hurt, but amazingly retained his composure and leaned in for another soft kiss. “You don't have to say it. I just wanted you to know.”

“Cullen, I...” She began. “I really enjoy spending time with you. I miss you when you're not around and I find myself doing crazy-stupid things to see you.” They both laughed. “I'm just not quite there yet. I just need some time. Is that okay?”

“Of course it is.” He sweetly assured her.

…

Hawke made her way to the barracks for her usual training session with Aveline. After a close call with a rather large assailant, she had insisted on some sparing to further hone her tactical skills against physically stronger opponents.

“Hey Guard-Captain, ready for an ass-whooping?” She jested.
“Sorry Hawke, I have too much on today.” Aveline wearily sighed. “But I did arrange for a replacement.”

“Oh Aveline, which poor sod did you strong-arm in to...Fenris.” She hadn't noticed him sitting in her office until Aveline started looking at him.

“Yes, Fenris is going to be training with you tonight.” Aveline confirmed.

She looked back and forth between the two warriors, lips pursed. “Oh, that's not necessary. Surely one night off wont hurt.”

“Actually, Hawke, I'm going to be too busy for the next couple of weeks at least. This Qunari business needs my full attention, so Fenris is going to be taking over until things settle down.”

“You...don't mind?” She apprehensively questioned.

“I owed Aveline a favour.” He flatly stated, as though he had no choice in the matter.

“Right.” She muttered to herself. “Shall we?” She gestured for him to leave Aveline's office and head for the training room, silently glaring at the red head before following a few clear paces behind.

“Aveline tells me you've been making progress fighting off a shielded attacker.” He began, handing her a pair of training daggers before retrieving a two-handed training sword. “But you haven't yet begun training against larger weapons.”

“Enter Fenris.” She japed, in an attempt to break the tension.

It did not work.

She assumed her usual stance as she waited for Fenris to ready himself, but instead of announcing his intentions he sprung a surprise attack, charging towards her. Despite the shock she managed to step out of his path, but as he passed he twirled around and smacked the flat side of his sword against her
shoulder blades, causing her to lurch forwards and on to her knees.

“Ouch.” She grimaced through gritted teeth.

“You think your opponent will fight fair?” He questioned. “Always expect the unexpected.”

He held out his hand to help her up, but she didn't need to be warned twice. “Oh no, I'm not falling for that.”

As she attempted to stand, he pulled her leg out from underneath her and she fell flat on her back, daggers falling from her grip and clattering to the floor.

“Ok. Now I'm mad.” She gracefully flipped herself off her back and on to her feet, forward rolling to pick up her dropped weapons then launching an attack of her own. He swung his sword in a wide arc, forcing her to lean backwards to avoid the impact. As the sword passed by she dropped to her knees, sliding towards him, then sliced her own daggers across his abdomen. “And there go your entrails.”

“Again.” He insisted.

The training went on for hours, each gaining the upper hand an almost equal number of times until their exhaustion made them both a little reckless. He caught her with an elbow to the ribs after she dodged a swing of his sword, causing her to stumble and leave herself open for a finishing blow. When his sword came down on her however, she managed to turn at an awkward angle and catch the swords edge with both daggers, then twist his wrist painfully until he had to drop it, rendering him weapon-less. Unfortunately, one of her daggers also went with the sword and now they were both on the floor wrestling for the one that remained.

He rolled on top of her, she rolled on tip of him then he back on top of her. She had a firm hold on the dagger, but his larger hands wrapped around her own and began turning the dagger towards her neck. She tried to think of what she would do if this were an enemy. If they were too strong, it was better to be without the weapon than risk having it turned on her. With the last of her remaining strength she threw the dagger sideways and out of reach, using the surprise to roll back on top of him and attempt to restrain his arms at his sides with her legs, but he was too strong and almost immediately regained the upper hand, rolling them again and pinning her arms above her head, his face leaning dangerously close to her own.
And then he just...looked at her. She stopped struggling and stared back, relishing the feel of his breath on her face and painfully aware that what was unquestionably a heated gaze would end at any moment. She could see in his eyes the exact moment he remembered he hated her. He quickly released her and retreated to the other side of the room before muttering a cold “we're done.”

After that, she needed a stiff drink.

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“Isabella!” She yelled as she spotted the pirate at her usual spot in The Hanged Man. “I'm so glad I can always rely on you to not let me drink alone.”

“Problem?” The pirate enquired.

“Many.” She retorted, before downing the shot of rum which had been swiftly offered to her.

“All right, fess up. Who is he?”

“What?”

“Don't what me, kitten. There's something different about you – oh please tell me you're not sleeping with Anders again.”

“Isabella! What on earth would make you think that?” She loudly protested.

“I've made-out with enough poorly-groomed sailors and eaten enough pussy to know stubble rash when I see it. You've been kissing a man – or eating pussy.”

“How do you know it isn't both?” She teased.

“Now that's a scenario I'd like to be a part of.” She japed with a suggestive wink.

“Fine!” She admitted. “There might be...a man.”
“I knew it!” She exclaimed. “You've got the pink complexion of a sexually satisfied woman.”

“Actually, this is the complexion of a woman whose just been sparing with a man who despises her.”

“Fenris?” She knowingly enquired.

“The one and only.” She confirmed, raising her glass as though to toast him.

“You do know he doesn't actually hate you right.” Isabella dead-panned.

“You don't know what your talking about.” She laughed off her friends clueless remark.

“I know he tries to pretend he does, but Kitten, he's got it bad for you. Surely you know that.”

“Isabella, he told me himself that he has no desire to see me beyond work.”

“That's just because he can't control himself around you. He may pretend to hate you, but he just hates himself for not being able to.”

“Doesn't change anything. He'll never look at me the way he used to.” She sighed.

“I'm bored of talking about him.” She suddenly declared. “Tell me about this mystery man of yours.”

“Well he wouldn't be much of a mystery if I told you now, would he.” She retorted.

“Pleeeeeease.” She pleaded.

Hawke let out a huff of annoyance. “You have to promise not to tell anyone.”
“Pirate's honour.” She quickly retorted.

“Not even Varric, and definitely not Carver!”

“Cross my heart.” She traced a cross over her chest with a finger.

“He's a...Templar.” She whispered too quietly for the pirate to hear.

“A what?”

“A Templar.” She repeated, slightly louder.

“A TEMPLAR!?” Isabella exclaimed for the entire tavern to hear.

Hawke closed her eyes and buried her face in her hands.

“Hawke, are you sure this is a good idea?” She had never heard Isabella sound so concerned before.

“Really?” She shot back. “You're going to be judgemental about who I sleep with?”

“Sorry.” She eventually apologised, stepping closer so that nobody else could hear. “I just don't want you to get yourself into the kind of trouble you can't get yourself out of.”

She gave her friend a half-smile.

“Does he know...about you being a...you know?” She hesitantly enquired.

She shook her head, guiltily.
“Well I suppose that's something.” She retorted. “Keep it that way.”

They drank in comfortable silence for a while, presumably as Isabella decided how she felt about this new information.

“Do you like him?” She abruptly asked.

Hawke said nothing but blushed furiously.

“That much, huh?” Isabella chuckled.

“He told me he loves me.”

“Maker, Hawke, just how long has this being going on for?”

“Couple of months, maybe.”

“Well aren’t you a sneaky little wench.” She actually sounded proud.

“Hey, now that you know.” She began “I don't suppose you'd be willing to cover for me?”

“You want me to lie to our friends for you?” She asked in an obviously false tone of shock and horror.

Hawke grinned, sheepishly.

“Sure.” She agreed without hesitation. “Why not.”

The following day she took Anders, Varric and Fenris with her to the Alienage to help Feynriel...again. Knowing they were headed for the Fade, though only subconsciously, she insisted Fenris tag along so that he might get a better understanding of the sheer willpower it took to be a
good mage.

Her plan worked brilliantly. It wasn't pleasant having to cut Fenris down, even in just a dream state, but he would surely now appreciate how difficult it could be for mage's each time they dreamt. Maybe even give her some credit.

"So." She humorously drawled as she walked in to his room, unannounced. "Care to discuss what just happened?" She had fully expected him to try to defend himself.

"I...am ashamed." Was his shocking response. "I was weak, and I do not expect you to forgive me."

"I guess that's where you and I differ." She softly retorted. "I'm always willing to give the people I care about a second chance."

He looked down at his hands, as though they held something interesting. "Is it always like that?"

She arched a questioning eyebrow when he eventually looked up at her absent response.

"When you dream." He elaborated. "Are there always demons trying to tempt you?"

"Not always. Sometimes they're happy just to torture." She laughed, mirthlessly.

She cleared her throat nervously when he did not speak or look at her. "Anyways, I just wanted to check in and make sure you were okay. And to let you know there are no hard feelings."

She turned to leave, but after only a few steps he spoke again.

"Hawke."

She froze on the spot, but instead of fully turning around she simply glanced over her shoulder to look at him with one eye.
He hesitated for a few unbearable seconds, and she began to wonder if she should just leave, until he cleared his throat.

"Thank you." As soon as he said it he turned his attention elsewhere and waited for her to leave.

Well sentence me to a fiery death and call me Andraste, if that isn't progress.

That was the most civil he had been for over a year – nothing close to how he had been prior to her mother's death, but it was progress none-the-less. She didn't expect to ever be romantically involved with him again, but she hoped they could at least be friends. She still cared about him after all. Awful as he had been to her, she just couldn't get him out of her head. She suspected it was the very reason she couldn't bring herself to love Cullen.

Little did she know, Fenris was so concerned now about her vulnerability during sleep, that he began secretly visiting her at night to watch over her. It was unfortunate that one such trip coincided with a visit from the Knight-Captain.

Fenris watched from just outside the window as Hawke entered her bedroom, quickly noticing that she was not alone. A Templar followed her – Cullen – they had done a few jobs for him and Fenris had always assumed he had a crush on Hawke. He was about to intervene, unsure if Hawke was even aware that a Templar was behind her, but then Hawke turned and began to speak. He couldn't make out what she was saying, but she had a certain look on her face, one he had only ever seen directed at himself before, and then she opened her robe, revealing the alabaster flesh he refused to admit he still craved. As difficult as it was, he tore his eyes away and left.

…

"Hello Knight-Captain." She purred as she slowly untied her robe. "Are you here to take me in? I've been a very bad apostate."

He furrowed his brow. "That isn't funny, Elodie."

"Sorry," She quickly apologised, tying her robe closed to hide the flush of embarrassment on her chest. "I just assumed...taboo...might be a Templar fantasy?"

"Not for me." He scowled.
"I didn't realise you hated mage's so much." She snapped, taking a seat on the chaise long at the foot of her bed.

He pinched the bridge of his nose and took a deep breath. “I do not hate mage's.” He calmly replied. “I just have no desire to bed one.”

“Fair enough.” She folded her arms across her chest, moodily.

“I don't want to argue.” He soothed, taking a seat beside her. “I actually wanted to ask you something.”

"Shoot." She replied, desperately trying to hide the hurt she felt at his confession.

"I was thinking of asking for the Chantry's permission to officially court you."

She stared open mouthed for a heartbeat too long.

"Unless you would rather I didn't."

"It's not that I don't want you to, believe me, its just...oh Maker.” She sighed.

“Should I be worried?” He joked. “You're not already married to some absent Lord, are you?”

She took a deep, steadying breath. "The Chantry won't grant your request."

"What makes you think that?"

"Because...I have a strong family history of magic."
“At least one of your parents and a sibling would need to have possessed magic for the Chantry to deny...oh."

"Yeah. Dear old dad and my sister, Bethany. Both dead, so no need to worry about me harbouring apostates."

*Other than myself.*

"They were apostates then?"

She nodded. “Dad grew up in the Kirkwall Circle, actually, but then he knocked up a noble and they ran away together. Bethany was never really good with magic. I've often wondered if she was a dreamer, dangerous I know, but dad found an enchantment which kept her cut off from the Fade."

"I imagine you moved around a lot?"

"At first. But eventually we stopped moving, settled in Lothering, built a life. It wasn't always easy, but I wouldn't change my childhood for anything."

"How did they die?"

"The blight." She lied.

"I'm sorry."

"Me too." She sighed. “So, to get back to your earlier proposal, I'm afraid it's a fruitless endeavour, much as I might have enjoyed parading you around Hightown." She laughed, then placed a gentle hand on his cheek on seeing the look of disappointment on his face. "I know it's disappointing, you probably want a wife and kids someday, but I can't give you that. So if you need to end this, I...understand."

"You must be joking! I would rather sneak around with you for the rest of my life than settle for someone...well, someone who isn't you."
After a reassuring kiss, she rested her forehead against his. "I can't promise I'll be around forever, Cullen, but I'm here now. Isn't that enough?"

He turned to kiss her again, then pulled her towards him until she straddled his lap. As he kissed her neck and collarbone, her hands sought out the laces of his breeches. He was already achingly hard, and she slick with desire, so within seconds of freeing him from the confines of his trousers, she impaled herself on him. She had forgone her smalls, knowing she would be trying to seduce him, and was oh so glad she had. They kissed, greedily, as she forcefully rode him, grinding herself against him at just the right angle to bring herself to an alarmingly fast climax. When she quieted she heard him chuckling to himself, to which she bit her lip and shrugged her shoulders in mock confusion.

Without leaving the warm embrace of her velvet sheath, he effortlessly lifted her up then placed her back down on the couch to see to his own release. He moved slowly at first, kissing his way down the valley of her breasts before lavishing each nipple with tongue and teeth. She cried out when he changed his angle and hit a sensitive spot deep within, spurring him into a frenzy of erratic thrusts. It wasn't long before they were both crying out, she with her second orgasm and he with his first.

“Can you stay a while?” She hopefully asked as they cleaned themselves.

“Of course.” He softly submitted, following her to the bed.

She slid under the covers, holding them up for him to follow, then draped an arm over him. Using his chest as a pillow, she quickly drifted into a particularly horrible nightmare. When she awoke, Cullen was luckily still blissfully sleeping, so she quietly untangled herself and made her way over to the window.

She always found it calming, looking out over the city. It made her realise there were so many people in the world with their own problems, and that by comparison her own were relatively insignificant. She had friends, wealth, her health...and now even a handsome man in her bed. At the thought of said handsome man, she was suddenly racked with guilt, how long did she truly think she could hide what she was from him.

As she hopelessly gazed out of the window, strong arms enveloped her from behind, pressing her tightly to a tall and muscular body. He showered one side of her head and neck with kisses, before resting his chin on her shoulder.
"Why aren't you lying in bed with me?" He purred.

She smiled as she leaned her head back against him. "Couldn't sleep."

"Who said anything about sleeping." He playfully retorted, slowly smoothing one hand up from her stomach to her chin, turning it slightly to allow him better access to playfully nip at the flesh of her neck.

He always knew just how to get her going.

She turned around in his arms, staring up at him with hungry eyes. "What's wrong with right here?"

She pulled him with her as she took a few steps backwards, seating herself on the window ledge and wrapping her legs around him.

"For all of Kirkwall to see?" He tsk'd. "You are a bad girl."

"Perhaps I need to be punished?" She coyly suggested, biting her lip.

"Oh I quite agree." He immediately dropped to his knees, hoisting one of her legs over his shoulder and devouring her. "Maker." He quietly exclaimed between licks. "You taste." He made a yummy noise against her that made her shudder. "Like heaven."

"I can think of worse punishments than this." She smugly retorted, her voice hitching on the last word as her orgasm began to build.

Just as quickly as he had descended on her, he was now back on his feet and walking away.

"Hey!" She whined.

"Punishment is not supposed to be enjoyable." He chuckled to himself.
"Oh, its like that is it." She barked. "I guess I'll just have to finish myself off, then."

She leaned back against the window, never taking her eyes of his as she slowly sucked two fingers in to her mouth then trailed them down her body and between her thighs. She let out an almost too-loud sigh as she touched herself, watching the wanton indecision in his eyes as he couldn't quite decide if he would rather look at her reaction to what she was doing to herself, or what she was actually doing to herself.

"Mmmmm." She moaned as she plunged her fingers in to herself, slowly thrusting in and out then rubbing rough circles with her suddenly slick fingers around her little bundle of nerves.

"You know, your fingers feel much better than mine." She seductively confessed, pulling his gaze back to her face. With his attention on her face, she slowly brought her fingers back to her mouth and sensually tasted herself, eyes closing as she dreamily sighed.

Before her eyes had even opened again he was right in front of her, assaulting her with a desperate kiss as he thrust two fingers in to her core. She cried out with pleasure, bucking in to his hand as he curled his fingers within and used his thumb to stimulate her pearl.

"Please, Cullen." She breathlessly pleaded. "I need all of you."

He withdrew his fingers from her and stroked himself a few times, transferring her slick to his length, then lined himself up and watched as their bodies slowly joined. They were both momentarily entranced by the sight of their bodies becoming one, until he grasped her backside with both hands and began to pound in to her. With her hands on the walls at either side of her, she tried to keep herself upright and meet his thrusts with equal vigour.

“Deeper.” She whined.

At her insistence, he picked her up off the windowsill and side stepped to hold her up against the wall. Now that she had nowhere to go, each thrust of his hips hit satisfyingly deep, drawing an array of strangled cries from her.

“Ah...cramp.” He protested as he slid down to his knees, her feet landing on either side of his legs.

“Leave it to me, handsome.” She insisted, still gripping him tightly as she used her legs to power
herself up and down.

He buried his face between her breasts as his hands continued to grip her buttocks, squeezing tighter as he neared his peak. She unwound her arms from his neck, placing her hands on his chest and roughly pushing him on to his back. She ground her pelvis in to him as his fingers dug in to the flesh of her thighs, her orgasm was so close.

“El...I'm going to.”

“Not yet.” She breathlessly protested. “I'm so close.”

He tilted his pelvis upwards, pushing himself as deep as he could possibly go, stimulating her sensitive spot deep within as she continued to roll her hips and finally pushing her over the edge. She moaned, loudly, slowing her pace to prolong the sensation until Cullen gripped her by the waist and held her tightly to him as he coated her fluttering walls with hot spurts of thick white fluid.

She collapsed on to his chest, both of them covered in a sheen of sweat and loudly panting. He kissed the top of her head as his fingers trailed a line up and down her spine.

“I will never tire of you.” He sweetly confessed.

“I think I might just be able sleep after that.” She breathlessly joked.

Without further prompting, he effortlessly manoeuvred her to the bed, gently placing her down on her back then joining at her side. Sweaty and sated, he peered down in to her silverite eyes. "Maker, I love you."

"Cullen, I..." He cut her off with a searing kiss, obviously not wanting to hear, again, that she wasn't quite there yet. Though in the heat of the moment, if he hadn't silenced her, she almost certainly would have told him the same.

Resting her head on his shoulder, cradled by his strong arm, she ran her fingers through his chest hair, unable to hide her nervousness.
“Something on your mind?” He quietly questioned, pulling her closer to place a kiss on her head.

“I...need to tell you something.” She stuttered.

“You can tell me anything.” He adoringly reassured her, placing a gentle hand on her cheek and coaxing her to look at him.

As she looked in to his amber eyes, it was clear how much he cared for her, but she still had no idea how he might react to her being a mage. Was she really prepared to force him to either keep her secret or lock up the woman he loved. Racked with guilt and confused by her feelings, she pushed him away slightly and untangled herself from him to re-dress.

"Going somewhere?" He asked, disappointedly.

"Yeah...um...that's what I wanted to tell you.” She lied. “I'm going to be pretty busy for a while. Work.” She rolled her eyes as though work wasn't actually the most important thing in her life.

"How long is a while?” He questioned, suspiciously.

"I'm not sure, exactly. Few weeks, couple of months, maybe more."

"You're leaving Kirkwall?"

"For a bit, yeah. Varric figured out where that rogue Carta faction that have been bothering Carver and I are based, so we're going to confront them."

"Right." He looked confused for a moment. "Did I do something wrong?"

"Of course not." She returned to the bed to kiss him. "I promise I'll let you know as soon as I'm back. Ok?"

He didn't say anything as he watched her dress then collect his things and hand them to him.
“You should probably get back to the gallows before someone misses you.”

She walked him to the front door, furious with her lack of control over her nerves, until he took her by surprise with one of the most passionate kisses of her life. She was speechless when he pulled away, smirking that delectable grin of his, then left without another word.

…

As she was about to enter The Hanged Man, to meet the group that would accompany her to the Vinmarks, a strong grip on her arm yanked her around the corner and down an ally. She would have protested had she not recognised the scent as Fenris.

“Are you insane!?" He furiously shouted in her face. “You do know what would happen if he found out what you are?"

“What?”

“The fucking Knight-Captain, Hawke!?”

“How – why do you care!?" She angrily retorted.

“Besides the fact that without you, all of us would be out of a job...I -”

“What makes you think he doesn’t already know?” She quickly interrupted. A lie she would later regret.

“Wow.” He retorted. “That's quite the magical cunt you have.”

His cruel jape hit her like a wallop mallet to the gut. She landed a surprise slap across his face, the impact so loud it would surely have been heard across Lowtown.
“How dare you!” She seethed, fighting back tears. “What the fuck is your problem exactly? You don't want me but don't want anybody else to have me either? Is that it?”

She could have screamed at him all day, but she didn't want to give him the satisfaction of getting any further rise out of her. He looked remorseful but did not try to stop her as she stormed away from him and out of sight.

He stayed a while to calm himself before re-joining the group. He tried to convince himself he was so furious at her blatant lack of self-preservation, and not because he was jealous. Either way, he would be having words with this Templar as soon as they returned to Kirkwall.
Chapter 20 - "NSFW"

Chapter Summary

Warning: Legacy DLC spoilers.

Hawke learns a few things and turns over a new leaf.

Chapter Notes

So sorry for the delay. This and the next chapter seem to have taken me forever to get right! Hope it was worth the wait!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Their journey through the Vinmark Mountains was tedious, to say the least. Nothing but sand and thinly veiled contempt from a certain broody elf. She'd hoped after their spat back in Kirkwall that he would allow her to silently stew, instead he seemed to jump at every single opportunity to berate her.

“Remind me again why I asked you to come?” She almost yelled, not allowing him to finish the snarky comment he was only part-way through.

“I might ask you the same question.” He seethed.

“For the love of...are they always like this?” Carver spoke quietly to Varric. The Templar's had given him special dispensation to figure out why the Carta had tried to break in to the Gallows to get to him.

“Okay, you two.” Varric interrupted as he noticed Hawke's aura shift, correctly assuming she was extremely close to setting the elf aflame. “We're getting pretty close now. Maybe we should be mindful of what could be waiting for us? Instead of announcing our arrival?”

Hawke took a long, slow breath. “You're right, Varric.” She smiled at her dwarven friend, who had he not know her any better would have been relieved. As it was, he did know her better and picked up on the twitch of annoyance still on her face. “I really should be less concerned with the opinions of hired muscle.”
The dwarf chanced a look at the broody elf whose jaw was slowly grinding away, nostrils flaring as though breathing fire. He opened his mouth to speak, but Varric touched his arm, a warning. Instead, he loudly exhaled and dropped way back to cover their rear.

They were amazed when, seemingly out of nowhere, there appeared what they assumed was an old run down Carta base. They were greeted by a crazy dwarf spouting some nonsense about a guy named Corypheus who needed the blood of Malcolm Hawke to see sunlight again. It was all very bizarre. They fought their way through masses of tainted dwarves, following the trail to a chasm which lead to an underground hideout.

One strange staff, a magical apparition of her father, a hoard of darkspawn and many demons later, they found themselves face-to-face with a heavily tainted Grey Warden Commander. Her heart broke for just a moment as she imagined Oli eventually succumbing to the same fate.

The blighted warden made little sense, but he seemed harmless enough, even told them what they needed to do. Down and in, down and in, he would repeat over and over. They did as he instructed, breaking seals and vanquishing hulking pride demons, stumbling upon a group of Grey Wardens somewhere along the way.

After finding out some things about her father she didn't completely approve of, and eventually having to defend themselves from the aforementioned Grey Wardens, they finally found themselves face-to-face with this Corypheus fellow. He was dazed and confused, but that did not diminish his power at all. Or perhaps it did and he was once capable of much more...now that was a scary thought.

She found herself both terrified and amazed by the ancient magic's the blighted creature wielded. He was easily the most powerful adversary she had faced, but she had skills of her own. As the ceiling began to fall and the room was littered with deadly arcs of lightening, she downed her last mana potion and gave it everything she had. With her attention split between Corypheus and her companions, she didn't notice the precise moment a hulking boulder fell directly on top of Fenris. Luckily, the trajectory of it meant it carried on rolling after it made contact with the floor and hence didn't crush him, but he was out cold. She threw her last health potion to Varric, who was beside him in an instant, then turned her attention back to the darkspawn magister.

Now it was personal.

He didn't stand a chance.

"Fenris!" As soon as the beast was felled, she dropped her staff and raced towards him. She dropped
to her knee’s, rolling him on to his back and pulling him in to the cradle of her arms as she tried to focus what little mana she had left on healing his head wound. But the battle had completely drained her.

She had two options: make a deal with a demon, or use his markings. He would be impossible to live with if she consorted with a demon on his behalf, so she chose the latter, hoping any pain she caused would be worth the cost to save his life.

She focused her attention on the lyrium, remembering the way he had described Danarius ripping it from him and trying desperately not to do the same. Instead of leaching him to augment her own power, she took just enough to reignite her reserves, then poured herself in to him, imbuing him with magic so that he might heal himself.

She checked for a pulse, finding it weak but still palpable. She caressed one side of his face, willing him to open his eyes as tears spilled freely down her cheeks. She leaned down to kiss his forehead, her lips lingering against his skin. When she eventually – reluctantly – pulled away, she gasped at the sight of his suddenly wide and alert eyes.

"Fenris?" She gasped, completely overwhelmed with relief as the wound on his forehead began to knit back together.

He didn't speak, didn't move, just looked around with his eyes for a moment, trying to piece together what had happened.

"Creator's, please tell me you're all right. Are you in pain? What can I do?" She frantically rambled, tears still flowing.

"Did we win?" His voice was hoarse, but the half smile told her he was fine.

She laughed, overjoyed that she hadn't lost him. She leaned down to shower his face with frantic kisses, completely disregarding their strained relationship. She chanced a final chaste peck on his mouth, but he quickly recoiled. There was nowhere for him to go, but he still managed to make his intent clear: Get off me.

"Sorry." She mumbled, face crimson with embarrassment as she clambered to her feet and helped him to stand.
That was the exact moment she knew, with absolute certainty, that whatever they once were to each other would forever be remembered as past tense. Using him to recharge her power, regardless of her reasons, was likely the final straw. He would never see her as anything other than a power-hungry mage. For the sake of her own sanity, it was time to move on.

As they made their way out of the macabre underground prison, she was suddenly very eager to return home to her Templar. She felt...well she certainly felt something. Whether it was love or not she was still unsure. Perhaps it was and she just hadn't realised, having never experienced such a slow burn before. Her previous loves had been almost instantaneous, urgent and all consuming. Cullen had worn her down, showered her with love and adoration and earned her affections. Perhaps her feelings for him had crept up on her, keeping her in the dark until the precise moment she was ready to accept them.

After a few more uncomfortable nights of camping, they eventually found themselves back outside The Hanged Man. She had just bidden farewell to Varric and was headed home with Carver – it was late and she suggested he stay at the estate before heading back to the Gallows the following morning - when she felt a hand encircle her wrist.

“Can we talk?” His tone was even more insistent than his grip.

She told Carver to give her a minute, then let Fenris lead her to a quiet alleyway. She worried at her lip nervously as she waited for his ire. She had hoped this moment wouldn't come, but it seemed he was intent on voicing his displeasure at her unwelcome use of his markings.

“I'm sorry - “

“I wanted to apologise - “

They both spoke at once, abruptly stopping to stare blankly at each other.

“What do you have to be sorry for?” He asked, clearly perplexed.

Perhaps he had no memory of it?

Her mouth dried up as she prepared to confess. “I was completely drained.” She explained, pleadingly and slightly panicked. “You were barely breathing and...I had no more potions...”
Seeing the struggle with which she was speaking, he interjected. “Hawke, I know you used my markings.” He actually looked amused.

“You remember?” Her eyes were wide with shock. “Did I...hurt you?”

He reassured her that she hadn't hurt him, but what he didn't tell her was that whatever she had done to him felt...amazing, like she’d been laving his entire body with her tongue. When she had caught him off guard with that kiss, he’d had to pull away before his arousal became undeniably apparent. He'd even dreamt of her every night on the road home, ashamedly waking each morning with a sticky crotch.

“Wait.” She furrowed her brow. “What are you apologising for?”

He sighed, loudly. “For making the last few days...intolerable. I apologise for the way in which I spoke to you and for the things I said.”

She stared, blankly, waiting for some cruel punch line. But it never came.

“And thank you...for saving my life.” He flashed her a half smile.

“Right.” Was all her brain could manage, as he nodded to her and walked away. Perhaps it wasn't completely outside the realm of possibilities that they might someday be friends.

The following morning she accompanied Carver back to the Gallows, claiming she had some business with Solivitus. Upon entering the courtyard she immediately noticed her blond Templar in his usual spot. As she hugged her brother farewell, she shot Cullen a discreet wink over his shoulder. She had to stifle a giggle in response to his flustered blush, then immediately sauntered over to Sol's to peruse his wares. She may or may not have put a bit of extra wiggle in her gait, hoping the blushing Templar was still watching.

She quickly became genuinely enthralled by Sol's new merchandise, adding each interesting trinket to the crate he had offered, so almost gasped when Cullen's voice whispered in her ear as Sol was focused on another customer.
"You are wicked, do you know that?" He rumbled in a low and gravely tone.

"Fine day to you, Ser Cullen." She curtsied, trying her best to appear professional.

"And to you, My Lady." He replied with an equal amount of professionalism. "That is quite the haul." He commented on the overflowing crate at her feet. "Might you be in need of assistance?"

"Oh I could never ask you to neglect your duties, Ser." She blinked, fluttering her thick black lashes at him.

"It is no trouble, Miss. I was, in-fact, just about to take a break."

"That would be a huge help, Ser. I fear this may be entirely too much for me to carry." She pouted, as though she wasn't arguably one of the most formidable women in all of Kirkwall.

"Allow me." He replied with a smile.

Sol seemed mildly curious at the interaction, but was clearly more interested in her coin. Cullen effortlessly picked up the heavy crate and gestured for her to lead the way back to Hightown.

They spoke of generic things as they walked, as though neither of them were thinking of ripping the others clothes off. As they reached the Hawke estate, she unlocked the door and took the crate from the helpful Templar. She turned to thank him, curtsied again and then shut the door.

She waited all but three seconds before yanking the door back open, laughing at the look of adorable bewilderment on his face then pulling him inside. She slammed the door then roughly backed him in to it, attacking his lips with her own.

"I've missed you." She stuttered between open-mouthed kisses.

"You've been gone for weeks." He exclaimed, breaking away from her lips to feather kisses along her jaw. "I was beginning to worry."
“Ten days is hardly weeks, Cullen.” She chuckled as he nibbled on her earlobe. “And you needn't worry about me; I can take care of myself.” She pulled away to look him in the eye. “Though at this very moment I do find myself in desperate need of the kind of care only you can provide.” She wiggled her eyebrows, suggestively.

"Elodie." He grumbled. "I'm on duty. I've already been absent too long."

"Come on." She pleaded, pouting adorably. "Just a quickie. Look, I'll even make it easy for you." Without a further word, she slid her smalls down her legs and stepped out of them, then bent over the nearest table and hiked up her robe to expose her naked rear.

She heard a sharp intake of breath. "Elodie, we've never...like this." Despite his protests she heard the distinct unbuckling of his belt and slow footsteps approaching. "Are you sure?"

"Of course I'm..." A lustful moan escaped her when he dropped to his knees and ran his tongue along her from clit to slit. She bit down on her knuckle when he slowly entered her with two fingers, pumping rhythmically until her cheeks were flushed.

"Not sure you understand the concept of a quickie." She panted. "Though I'm not complaining."

He chuckled, deeply, as he pulled his fingers out and she moaned again as she spied him over her shoulder suckling on said fingers.

Now back on his feet, he pressed the tip of his erect length to her slit, seemingly enjoying the way she impatiently wriggled to take him. Only when she whined did he slowly begin to penetrate her, groaning as he did so at the entrancing sight before him. Once fully sheathed, he gripped her hips and began to thrust at a leisurely pace.

She felt one hand leave her hip to gently smooth down the curve of her spine, before moving back to her hip to hike her skirt up higher. Sweating slightly, she began to move to meet his thrusts. "Harder." She gasped between moans. He did as requested, increasing the intensity so that his balls smacked against her cunt with each powerful thrust. "Spank me." She demanded, breathlessly, lifting herself up on to her elbows to get a good look at him over her shoulder.

"What?" He stuttered, unsure if he'd heard correctly.
He was a magnificently sweaty mess.

"Spank me, Cullen." She repeated, locking eyes with him. "Please."

It was as though she had bewitched him. Before she even finished saying the word, he brought one hand down on her right butt cheek, both of them groaning at the resulting contraction of her walls around him.

"Again." She moaned, this time loudly crying out with pleasure when he slapped her left butt cheek, louder than it was painful.

He slapped her a few more times, impressively maintaining his powerful rhythm, until her cheeks were mottled with red hand prints.

"Fuck, Cullen!" She cried out. "I'm so close...cum with me." A split second after her orgasm hit, he threw his head back and roared as he spilled himself inside her. His grip on her hips was almost painful, but she was barely even aware of her own name at that precise moment.

She collapsed all of her weight on to the table, arms bent slightly at the elbows and stretched out above her head. As clarity slowly came back to her, she felt his forehead pressed between her shoulder blades, his cold armour comfortably crushing and chilling her and she still very much impaled on his slowly softening length.

"I didn't hurt you, did I?" Ever the gentle giant.

She felt his lips move against her skin and chuckled to herself. "Yes. But I clearly enjoyed it."

As her breathing evened out from shallow pants to slightly nervous deep breaths, she summoned her courage and closed her eyes tightly. "I love you." It was little more than a whisper, but if the abrupt halt of his own breath was any indication, he definitely heard it.

He slowly rose to his feet and stood silently behind her. After a few tense seconds, she stood too, slowly rotating on the spot to face him. Apprehension crept in and she wondered if she had done the right thing, if perhaps he enjoyed her aloofness with regards to her own feelings, but the look of sheer adoration on his face when she finally locked eyes with him made her heart flutter.
"Do you mean it?" He whispered, unbelieving.

"I do." She affirmed, smiling shyly up at him.

He wrapped his arms around her, lifting her off the ground and span her around excitedly, causing her to giggle hysterically. When he eventually set her down on her feet, he lovingly stroked her cheeks and looked intently into her silver eyes. "You have just made me the happiest man in all of Thedas." He reverently confessed.

Arms wrapped securely around each other, they swayed on the spot for a long while, quietly basking in their mutual love for one another.

Eventually duty called and he reluctantly pulled away from her, grumbling at the loss of contact. He cupped her face, tenderly, then slowly kissed her until she felt dizzy. "I have to go." He groaned, pulling away from her face and placing a final lingering kiss on the back of her hand.

"You should probably pull your trousers up before you leave." She quipped, the sight of him in full armour save for his breeches - which were around his ankles - making them both burst into a fit of carefree laughter.

She moved away from the table to retrieve her knickers off the floor, playfully spanking his rear as he bent over to pull up his own trousers. "Has anyone ever told you how adorable your little tushie is?"

"Adorable!?!" He scoffed, fastening his belt. "I'll have you know this is a man's backside. It is neither a tushie nor is it adorable."

"How about...mouth wateringly delicious?" She seduced, grabbing a handful of it.

He looked skywards as he thought about it for a moment. "I can live with that."

"When can I see you again?" She asked, strolling to the front door, hand-in-hand.
"I'm not sure." He leaned in to give her another tentative kiss, swallowing her whine of displeasure. "I'll try to slip away tomorrow night. Will you be here?"

"All alone." She pouted, but he simply pecked her on said pout and bade her farewell, stopping just before he closed the door behind him to declare his love for her.

As he strolled back to the Gallows, under a quickly darkening sky, he couldn't help but smile to himself. He had never been so happy, nor did he believe he ever would or deserved to be. It had been surprise enough that he had found someone who piqued his interest, but even more so that she cared for him in return. She was completely out of his league; a noble lady, surely expected to marry in to another noble family and have noble babies. But instead she chose to sneak around with him; a Templar with no lands or titles outside of the Order. She deserved so much more, and the sudden realisation filled him with a sense of dread. Why had he never considered this? Was this why she insisted they see each other in secret? Was she ashamed of him? Was their relationship simply recreational to her? Or was he just a lovesick fool over-thinking things?

Preoccupied by his troubling thoughts, he did not immediately hear his name being called. As he stepped passed an alleyway, an incredibly strong hand gripped him by the shoulder and pulled him in. Forced against a wall with a blade at his throat, he recognised Elodie's tattooed, moody elf companion.

"What is the meaning of this!?" He demanded, struggling to free himself from the elf's immovable grip.

"What's your game, Knight-Captain?" The elf demanded.

“What are you talking about?” He confusedly retorted, unsure exactly what was going on.

“Why would you keep an apostate hidden from the Circle?” The elf angrily questioned. “Are you forcing her to sleep with you for protection?”

“What?” Who in the void was he talking about?

“If you do anything to hurt her, I will rip out your heart and show it to you, Knight-Captain.”

The elf allowed his markings to flare to life, adding emphasis to the threat, the unmistakable scent of
lyrium filling the air, before disappearing in to the night as swiftly as he had appeared.

He couldn't have been talking about Elodie.

_Could he?_

...

She was awoken from a relatively dream free sleep to the sounds of furious pounding on her door. She rubbed her eyes, groggily put on her robe, then made her way downstairs.

“All right!” She yelled at the persistent knocking. “I'm coming!”

As she opened the door a crack to see who had been making all the noise, it was pushed open the rest of the way and a blond Templar came storming in.

“Tell me it's not true.” His voice cracked.

“What?” She hesitantly replied, hoping that by some miracle he was talking about something other than her being a mage.

“Why didn't you tell me?” He was so hurt it almost broke her heart in two.

She hesitated, opening her mouth to speak but not able to find the words to sufficiently explain herself.

“I am a Templar!” He boomed, suddenly shifting from hurt to rage. “I swore an oath. An oath you made me break!”

“I didn't make you do anything.” She shot back. “We care about each other, Cullen. Why does me being a mage have to change that?”
“You should have told me.” He insisted.

“You know me, Cullen – you love me.” She pleadingly tried to remind him. “I'm sorry I didn't tell you, but I...” She hesitated.

“But you what?” He pushed.

“Well, when I considered the outcomes...everything ended with you being hurt. You'd either keep my secret and forsake your oath, or be forced to lock away the woman you profess to love.”

“But you slept with me anyway, manipulating me in to developing feelings for you?”

“You had feelings for me way before I invited you in to my bed!” She shot back.

“A farcical infatuation! One I would have forgotten about had you not toyed with me!”

“You don't mean that.” She breathed, aghast, lip trembling.

“Don't I!?”

“Cullen, please.” She moved towards him, but he quickly recoiled. She moved closer again, insistently placing a hand on his cheek. “I love you.”

He closed his eyes, leaning in to her hand for just a second before gripping her elbow and pulling it away.

“I'm sorry.” She whispered, pathetically. “Please forgive me.”

“You cannot ask this of me.” He looked so tortured as he spoke, a look she was solely responsible for.
“Please, Cullen.” She desperately pleaded. “I really do love you.” Her words seemed to cause him physical pain. “This doesn't have to end.” She cautiously placed a hand on his chest.

He violently jerked away from her touch. “You expect me to love a mage?”

_Ouch._

"You know, I actually thought I was the reason you wanted to keep this a secret. That I wasn't good enough for you."

Her vision blurred as her eyes welled up.

"Was this just a game to you? Did you get some kind of sick kick out of sleeping with a Templar who was blissfully unaware of what you really are?"

One tear fell.

"Did you laugh with your friends at how clueless I was?"

And then another.

"How could you do this? What is wrong with you!?"

An unbidden sob escaped her.

"Do you have nothing to say?"

She furiously wiped her face with the back of her hand. "It sounds like you've already made up your mind. Would you believe anything I say at this point?"

"I should have known this was too good to be true."
"But it was true - is true. I care for you, Cullen. Truly." She desperately appealed.

"Bullshit. You're just a bored apostate with a fetish for danger. You're sick."

She winced at the venom in his words. “What are you going to do?”

“What can I do?” He exasperated. “I cannot risk the Order finding out about this...this mistake.”

She felt the tiniest bit of relief as she realised he would not be dragging her to the Gallows today.

“I...will not turn you in.” He reluctantly promised. “But when Kirkwall finds out what you are – and believe me it is only a matter of time – I will not risk my position to protect you.”

She clutched at her chest as though her heart physically ached.

He stared at her for a few pregnant breaths; whether it was longing or loathing, she couldn't quite fathom, then he turned on his heel and stormed out, drowning out her desperate apology with the slamming of her front door.

…

Had he made the right choice? Should he have reacted differently: taken her in or just accepted it, accepted her?

No. She lied to him. If she was able to keep something as big as this from him, she couldn't be trusted.

But he loved her.

No. It was all a fabrication. She manipulated him for her own personal gain. She never cared for him as he did her, she couldn't have.
But what if she really had tried to confess? He suddenly recalled an odd post-coital conversation at her home, the night before she headed off to the Vinmark’s. She’d confessed she had something to tell him and he remembered thinking at the time that she wasn’t being completely honest with him.

Regardless. She was a mage. They had no future together. She was lucky he’d even permitted her freedom. Their relationship could not – would not – continue.

No matter how much he already missed her.

Damn that woman.

"Knight-Captain." Greeted his subordinate and friend, pulling him from his sorrowful contemplation.

His friend who surely knew his own sister was a mage.

He felt betrayed all over again, and acted without thinking.

…

"What the fuck did you do!?" She heard Carver before she saw him, storming in to her mansion in a full blown rage.

"You’ll have to be more specific. A lot of things are my fault." She sarcastically retorted.

"I was just fired." He loudly seethed. "And the only reason I was given was ask your sister. So here I am, sister...enlighten me."

Half way down the stairs, she slumped to a sitting position. How selfish was she that she hadn't even considered how the consequences of her actions might affect Carver.

"Shit." She quietly responded.
"It's true then? You're the mystery woman Ser Cullen has been sneaking around with?"

She nodded.

"Why!?!" He yelled. "Why him!? You've got the entire male population of Kirkwall throwing themselves at your feet and you choose the fucking Knight-Captain."

"I'm sorry." She tried to apologise but he cut her off.

"Sorry doesn't help me, sister! I finally find a way out of your shadow and you ruin it for me!"

"I'll fix it. I promise." She determinedly annunciated.

"You better hope so, sister. Because if you don't, I'm leaving to join the Wardens." He sinisterly threatened.

She put her head in her hands and began to quietly sob. She could hear her brother exhaling in frustration, then footsteps nearing before he sat down beside her.

"Are you okay?" He reluctantly enquired, slight annoyance still evident in his tone.

"Fine." She lied, poorly.

He exhaled again. "I didn't mean to upset you."

"You have every right." She vehemently retorted. "I'm a plague, I ruin everything."

"Do you love him?" He cautiously queried.
She looked him in the eye, her quivering lip and tear soaked face giving him his answer.

"You sure can pick them, sister." He chortled as he put his arm around her shoulders, squeezing her tightly.

He held her as she sobbed, saying nothing until she was all cried out.

She sat up straight, wiped her face then took a deep and calming breath. “I'm going to get your job back.” She announced, determinedly, quickly standing and marching back to her room. “You might as well go enjoy the rest of your day off with Isabella. I'll come find you when I'm done.”

She quickly freshened up, splashing her blotchy face with ice-cold water, then headed off to the Gallows.

As she climbed the steps, she spotted Cullen at his usual spot. Fortunately he was deep in conversation so didn't notice her approaching. The look on his face when he finally spotted her was almost enough to make her cower, but she had to do this; for Carver.

"Knight-Captain, might we speak in private?" She calmly requested.

He remained silent for a while and she began to wonder if he simply planned to ignore her. She opened her mouth to repeat herself but he interrupted. "I'm afraid now isn't a good time, Hawke."

Trying to ignore the pain him addressing her as Hawke caused, she pressed on. "I'm afraid I must insist, unless you would prefer we speak of it here?" She arched an eyebrow, threateningly.

He pinched the bridge of his nose, exhaling in frustration. "Follow me."

She had to walk quickly to keep up with him as he made his way back to his office. As soon as she shut the door behind her his calm façade immediately pealed away, revealing the rage that lurked within.

"What!?” He angrily questioned, startling her a little.
"I want you to give Carver his job back." Her voice sounded ridiculously meek and she silently cursed herself.

"You must be joking!" He laughed but it wasn't humorous in the slightest. "He's been harbouring an apostate!"

"One you now also have knowledge of!" She loudly retorted, tapping in to the formidable confidence she was known for. "Are you to be stripped of your title also?"

"That's different and you know it." He shot back.

She paced back and forth, breathing deeply and trying desperately to find the right words. Desperation, it seemed, was all she had. "Carver is all I have left in this world. If I can't fix this, I'm going to lose him." She began. "If I can't fix this, I'm going to lose him." She looked directly in to his golden eyes, trying to ignore the concern at his obvious lack of sleep, pleadingly. "Please, Cullen. If you ever truly cared for me, take him back."

He took a deep breath, slowly and loudly exhaling in defeat. "Fine."

"Please, Cullen, I – what, really?" She had honestly expected a little more resistance.

"Truthfully – harboured apostate aside – he was one of our finest recruits." He admitted, even smirking a little.

Awash with relief, she couldn't stop herself from throwing her arms around him. "Thank you!"

About three seconds after making contact with him, she realised how stupid the action was. Unfortunately, however, her body had apparently been shocked in to a state of paralysis. After a few more awkward seconds, she slowly leaned back until she could see his face. His gaze held a familiar turmoil; of wanting something you know you shouldn't. She cautiously leaned closer, eyes flitting between his own and his mouth, waiting for him to reject her.

But he didn't.
Her lips softly collided with his, the kiss slow and full of emotion, the furrow of his brow conveying his internal struggle. She moved her hands to cup his face, and the touch of her skin must have lit a fire within. He pulled her closer, desperately deepening the kiss until they were both completely breathless. He broke away first but immediately set upon her neck, roughly kissing and sucking his way down to her collar bone.

Lost to the lust, she reached down to unbuckle his belt and unlace his breeches. As they fell down to his ankles, he stepped out of them and kicked them aside, then picked her up and sat her down on his desk. They kissed constantly as she pulled her small-clothes to one side and he positioned himself. With one sure and desperate thrust, he seated his entire length in her welcoming heat.

Touching foreheads, they adjusted to the feel of one another. She looked in to his eyes, knowing exactly what he was about to do.

"We shouldn't..." He began but she swiftly cut him off, gripping him tightly with her legs and attacking his mouth.

"Please, Cullen." She whispered, a desperate plea.

He looked so terribly conflicted, but silently nodded before deepening the kiss, then slowly began to move within her.

There temples pressed together as they thrust in sync with each others movements, hands grasping desperately at hips and shoulders. She grabbed a handful of curls at the back of his head, turning her face slightly to nibble on the lobe of his ear. "I love you." She breathed in to his ear, and without warning his movements came to an abrupt halt as he came; the first time in their entire relationship that he had finished before her. He quickly withdrew from her and redressed in silence.

"This can't happen again." He spoke with his back to her.

"I really wish you would reconsider." She softly pleaded, bashfully righting herself.

"Elodie." Her name sounded so right falling from his lips. "My position here is more important than my personal life. I will not risk that. Not even for you." He hesitated between each sentence, perhaps trying to convince himself as much as he was her. "Please, just...keep your distance. I don't want to see you around here again. If you have need of a Templar, you will deal with your brother."
"Cullen..." She whimpered.

"Please, just go." He coldly insisted.

She quickly wiped away her errant tears, then left without another word.

She used her walk back to The Hanged Man to silently re-evaluate her life. Did she have the worst possible luck when it came to relationships? She had thought she'd live a long and happy life with Oli, but that didn't work out. She remembered feeling as though the Maker had smiled on her when she discovered those same feelings for another, but that wasn't to be either. And then Cullen came along and she thought she'd finally found the man she was to grow old with, but that too came to an abrupt end. Perhaps she just wasn't made for love, or simply didn't deserve it. Every terrible event she had ever suffered raced through her mind, the stark realisation that every single one was made infinitely worse by the fact that she had loved; her father, Oli, her sister, her mother, Fenris, Cullen...

But was it narcissistic to believe she was alone in her bad luck? When she really thought about it, finding someone to love seemed like an indulgent thing to concern oneself with. At least a third of the population of Kirkwall simply worried about finding enough food to survive the week, nothing so frivolous as who they shared their beds with. She had been so wrapped up in herself that she had forgotten her true purpose; she needed to help the city. Kirkwall was her home now, and she had a duty to share her good fortune with her fellow Ferelden refuges.

It was time to grow up, lock away her own desires and forget about ridiculous notions such as love. She would harden her heart and be the figure of hope her people needed. No more pining, no more daydreaming and certainly no more feeling sorry for herself. She was called to a higher purpose, so she would put her skills to good use and rise to the occasion. She'd also be sure to visit Darktown as often as possible, handing out coin and food wherever it was needed most. And also offer to get more involved with Anders' mage underground; her friend was really beginning to look like he could use the help.

She felt as though a huge weight had been lifted, surprised at just how easy it was to compartmentalise her feelings. Sure, it may not be the healthiest way to deal with ones emotions, but it worked for her and was sure as shit cheaper than discussing her issues with a professional. Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, she felt as though she had been reborn. Aside from her fierce determination, she would allow just one other part of her old self to remain...her humour. That was sorely needed in desperate times such as these, it would keep her both sane and approachable.

When she finally reached The Hanged Man, her rather loud entrance immediately captured her
brothers attention, who looked at her questioningly. She strolled casually over to him, her confident mask once again fixed firmly in place. "Back to work, Ser Carver."

"I don't believe it." He laughed, standing to assault her with a bone crushing hug and twirling her around as though she weighed nothing. "Thank you, sister."

"Put me down, you big lout!" She protested, laughing as she struggled to free herself.

As her brother sauntered off to get more drinks, she caught Isabella's knowing eye. "You all right, kitten?"

"Always." She smiled back at the sailor.

"How about a back rub?" She seductively offered. "The kind with lots of oil and no clothes."

"Ugh, you know I hate it when you flirt with my sister." Carver protested from the bar, clearly still within earshot.

"Are you going to punish me, Templar?" She seduced as he returned with a tray of drinks, to which he responded by effortlessly throwing her over his shoulder and eagerly carrying her back to her room.

"Bye then." She called after them, sarcastically, knowing they could no longer hear her. "I guess I'll just have to drink these myself." She eagerly reached for the tray to slide it closer. "And maybe stop talking to myself."

"I'd say that was a good idea." She was startled by the sudden and silent appearance of Fenris. "Have you seen Isabella?"

"She's...otherwise engaged, at the moment." She laughed to herself.

"Harlot" He snorted. "Could you tell her I was looking for her? And that she still owes me coin."
"Do you...maybe...want to join me? I have ale." She offered.

He looked around nervously for a moment, then sat without speaking.

She pushed a tankard towards him, then returned her attention to her own.

"Not seeing your Templar tonight?" He brooded, looking around the room and failing to seem as disinterested as he surely intended.

She cleared her throat after almost choking on her ale. "No. No, that's...over."

"Why?" He asked, suddenly a lot less broody.

"You don't have to look so pleased about it." She mocked. "He...found out what I am...and decided I wasn't worth the trouble. Can't say I blame him."

"I thought you said he already knew?" He shot back, a horror stricken look on his face.

"Yes, well...I lied. It's what I do. I lie, and I lie, and I lie, and I lie!"

He closed his eyes and loudly exhaled.

"It was you." She realised in quiet disbelief, the sudden revelation knocking the wind out of her.

"I...yes." He admitted. "My only intention was to ensure he wasn't taking advantage of you."

She was ready to punch him in the face, until she really heard the sincerity in his words. "You care about me." She smiled, smugly.

"Of course I do." He shot back. "In a strictly platonic way."
"Yeah, sure." She laughed. "You like me." She jokingly trilled.

"Have you taken a knock to the head recently, woman?" He japed, unable to suppress his mildly amused smirk.

"It's nothing to be ashamed of, you know. I'm very likeable." She said with as straight a face as she could manage.

"You should probably let other people tell you that." He ridiculed.

"Oh, they do. Frequently in fact." She arrogantly proclaimed.

"Overbold much?" He criticised, chuckling deeply.

"By the Dread Wolf, are your feeling okay?" She held a hand to his forehead in mock concern. "You seem to be making a strange noise."

"Get off me, woman." He swatted her away, comically.

They carried on laughing for a few carefree moments, until she just couldn't hold her tongue for a second longer. "This is nice." She said, looking down at the bottom of her now empty tankard.

"This is terrible." He immediately retorted, gesturing with his own tankard, choosing to believe she was commenting on the ale.

She let out a short, breathy chuckle. "You know what I mean. Things haven't exactly been...easy, between us. I appreciate the effort." She locked eyes with him and broadened her smile until dimples appeared. "I hope this means you're ready to be friends."

His smile faded for just a second, his jaw tightened and his eyes lost all warmth, but then he seemed to force a smile. "I...would like that."
"Ahh shit." Interrupted Isabella.

"You owe me coin, wench." Fenris shouted, refocusing his attention on the sailor.

"Yeah yeah, I'll go get it." She backtracked out of site before yelling “Carver, I need to borrow some coin.”

Chapter End Notes

As always, would love to hear your comments!
Chapter 21 - "Mildly NSFW"

Chapter Summary

How about a bit of Oli fluff?

Also Qunari invasion and Hawke is tasked with a difficult decision.

I probably should have added some filler and split this chapter, so apologies if it seems a bit all over the place.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The last few weeks had been packed full of hard but rewarding work. She had quickly become known as the person to go to for help, from street urchins to nobles, everybody knew her name. She found she slept better than she had in a long time, but whether that was through exhaustion or shutting off her emotions she couldn't tell.

She'd also been paying special attention to her friends: She'd helped Merrill approach her clan, Varric to confront his brother, Sebastian to deal with the assassination of his family, and even got Aveline to admit her feelings for Donnic. She tried to help Anders, but he refused to let her do anything that might cause trouble for her, so instead she insisted she at least keep his clinic stocked with supplies.

Most nights were spent drinking at The Hanged Man. She had discovered that people were much more likely to approach her for help once they'd had some liquid courage, and welcomed their requests. There were plenty of nights, however, when nothing came up and she would just end up drinking all night with Fenris. She was pleased with the ease at which they were now able to trade japes and witty banter and often laughed until their cheeks ached.

On this particular night, they had missed the bell announcing last orders and were disappointed when Corff started ushering people out. They some how ended up staggering back to Fenris's place, to raid the still half-stocked wine cellar.

They sat in front of the fire, talking late in to the night, steadily moving closer and closer until they were practically holding each other upright. Then one thing lead to another...clothes were discarded, flesh was exposed and mewls were traded. The first time the thought even occurred to her that this may not be the best idea, they were sat upright on the middle of his bed, his cheek pressed tightly to her bare breast as she rode him.
Wasn't she supposed to be closing herself off to this kind of behaviour? Although, sex could be just that; purely recreational. It might even help relieve some pent up frustration, and allow her to re-focus her attention where it was needed. She would just have to make sure that the icy cage around her heart remained firmly fixed in place.

They clung tightly to each other, panting and sweating as she rolled her hips, his length seated as deeply as she could tolerate, grinding rhythmically against him. Neither seemed to be in any particular hurry to reach their peek, both sets of eyes shut tightly, allowing their other senses to take over. Eventually, however, exhaustion threatened to overcome them and so they kicked things up a notch. She began jerking her hips almost violently, grinding against him just so, until she felt that familiar flutter. As she was overcome by her climax, she all but screamed, which was almost immediately followed by a final forceful thrust from beneath her and a feral growl muffled by her sweat-slicked breasts.

Not a word was spoken as they untangled and their heads hit the pillows. She waited until his breathing was even before opening her eyes to look at him. He had fallen asleep, and she simply watched as she waited for the inevitable onslaught of his forgotten memories. Right on cue, he began twitching, his face set to a grimace and pained grunts escaped him. She stroked his hair and face, ever so gently, until he eventually settled in to a peaceful slumber. She allowed herself a brief moment to stare, marvelling at how even a tortured soul such as he could look so peaceful in sleep.

Discreetly, she slithered off the bed and redressed in silence. She would be the one to leave this time. She knew if she stayed she would undoubtedly awaken alone, and that would surely kill her. So she decided to take control; she would leave and pretend it never happened, so that he didn't have to.

She avoided him for a week following their drunken night together. She didn't want to be hurt at discovering he was doing the same, so didn't give herself the opportunity to notice. When they finally did see each other, she was relieved that he seemed perfectly content to act as though nothing had happened. She was surprised by how little it actually stung, but rather felt a distinct absence of emotion. She had successfully hardened her heart, at long last.

"So what do you think?" She addressed Fenris - her platonic friend - after relaying the Viscount's latest request of her, but it seemed he had not been listening at all.

"Sorry." He tersely apologised. "My mind was elsewhere."

She laughed a little at his unusually distracted demeanour. "I was just asking if you'd come with me to speak to the Arishok?"
"Whatever you need." He dismissively affirmed, seemingly without sparing a thought.

She eyed him suspiciously as he nervously shifted his gaze to his feet. "Everything okay, Fenris?"

"Fine." He retorted, a little moodily. "Hawke, do we need to talk?" He hesitantly questioned.

"About your chances of making it as a poet?" She quickly fired back, playfully mocking him.

He grumbled in annoyance. "I'm talking about what happened the other night."

She had hoped to avoid this conversation. It had been over a week, why was he bringing it up now?

"It was a mistake." She nonchalantly replied, her tone lacking emotion but not exactly cruel. "I apologise if you feel like I crossed a line. It won't happen again."

She could see the muscles in his jaw clenching and his nostrils flaring slightly. He probably thought she'd taken advantage of him. In truth, aside from the intense orgasm and soothing his nightmare afterwards, she had no clear memory of which of them had been the instigator.

"I - fine." He grunted, seemingly satisfied with her apology. He'd probably been worried she'd think it meant there was hope for them, but she knew better than to delude herself with such fantasies.

He left soon after, standing so quickly from his chair that it wobbled and almost fell over, storming passed her without so much as a goodbye. She didn't give it a second thought though, the inner workings of his broody mind were no longer her concern. She almost felt relieved by that realisation. Things would certainly be less complicated now that she wasn't allowing herself to pine over him, though a part of her had hoped they would remain friends. She had enjoyed his company over the past few weeks and had welcomed the friendly banter before they foolishly fell in to bed with each other. Was she expecting too much to think that might continue?

*Contemplation cannot change the past, Hawke, do not torture yourself.*

Rather unwisely, and much to her surprise, it happened again.
Regularly, in fact.

Whenever they would drink excessively – which was often – she would wind up back at his place, drinking even more until one thing inevitably lead to another. It was always the same: as soon as things took a carnal turn, they would stop speaking entirely and barely even look at each other. Foreplay was non existent; they'd make-out for a few minutes then he'd be buried deep inside her, always in the same position, each time eliciting an equally intense orgasm that left them both exhausted, and she would always leave shortly after he fell asleep. They never spoke about it, she didn't even allow herself to think about it. It was just something they did. As far as she was concerned, he could have been anyone. She didn't allow herself the delusion of thinking feelings might be involved.

It was just sex.

"So, you and Broody have been drinking a lot lately. Do I need to worry about that?"

She nearly choked on her ale, mid-way through a large gulp. "Your concern is noted, Varric." She calmly responded after clearing her throat. "And if it makes you feel better, I'll reign it in." She smiled at her friend, reassuringly, knowing he was likely worried she was spiralling again.

"Don't get me wrong, you're fun when you've had a skin full." He chuckled. "Just...try to think of your liver once in a while."

"Message received." She saluted with a chuckle.

At that very moment, Fenris entered and walked over to their table "Drink?" He somewhat eagerly offered.

She looked from Fenris to Varric then back again. "Actually, I've had enough for tonight." She announced, looking pretty pleased with herself. "I think I'm just going to head on home, have a nice long bath and a quiet night in."

She kissed Varric on the cheek then rose from her seat, patted Fenris on the shoulder – paying no mind to the odd expression on his face – then waltzed out without a care in the world.
It was probably wise to spend some time away from the broody elf, lest her icy heart begin to melt.

...

Everything had gone to shit. She knew it would eventually happen, but didn't expect the bloodshed to be quite so catastrophic. She raced from the docks and through Lowtown, striking down hoards of Qunari invaders.

As they passed by Gamlen's place, she saw a small group of Grey Wardens of all things. They seemed to be helping so she paid them little mind until the last of the Qunari were down. She wiped the blood from her blades then turned to thank them for the timely assist. As if the presence of Grey Wardens wasn't strange enough, she found she recognised the small group from their Deep Roads venture...Oli included.

“I don't believe it.” She breathed in exclamation.

“I do.” He quipped. “You and trouble always seem to go hand-in-hand.”

She ran towards him, launching off her feet and in to his arms. He bore her weight easily, wrapping his arms around her and holding her tightly. Quickly realising this may not be completely appropriate, she unhooked her legs from around his waist and set her feet back on the ground. She took a few steps backwards but he reached for her arms, holding her in place. He looked as though he were about to say something, but then the guy with the epic moustache cleared his throat and he released his grip on her.

She took a couple more steps backwards, returning to her own group which consisted of a mildly amused Varric, an apprehensive Anders and a scowling Fenris.

“What are you all doing in Kirkwall?” She directed her question to nobody in particular.

“Warden business.” Oli quickly replied.

_Duh!_
“And we cannot stay to help you further.” Moustache quickly added.

“Oh.” She sighed, deflated. “Look, I know your purpose isn't political, but is there really nothing you can do to help us?”

“I am sorry, friend.” Moustache apologised. “But our business is important and we must move quickly.”

“That may be difficult with that wound of yours.” She astutely pointed out, noticing the blood dripping down his arm from a deep gash in his shoulder. “Will you let us help?”

He hesitated for a long while, then exhaled. “It seems I have little choice.”

She smiled. “Follow me.”

She lead them up the steps to Gamlen's and ushered everyone inside. “Anders, do you mind?”

“Do I have a choice?” He snapped, storming past to help the injured Warden.

“Right...I think I'll just hide out here – stand watch.” She jokingly corrected herself.

“I'll stay too.” Fenris announced, retreating back towards the door.

“No need.” Oli insisted as he stepped to block the doorway, having not entered the house yet. “I'm here.”

They stared at each other, snarling slightly, before Fenris turned his gaze to her for a moment then span on his heel and stormed back inside.

They stood in silence for a few minutes listening for the sounds of any approaching chaos, then both began to speak at one.
“So -”

“How -”

They both laughed, then he nodded for her to speak first.

“I don’t even know what to say. It’s not like you can actually tell me anything, is it?”

He sighed. “Stroud is worried that – something – might be happening.”

“I take it you’re not referring to the Qunari?” She japed.

“I wish.”

“Do I need to worry?”

“Maybe. So far we haven’t found any solid proof, but…”

“You have a gut feeling?”

“You always could read my mind.” He turned to face her with a half-grin on his face.

They stared at each other for a moment, the atmosphere becoming charged with anticipation.

“You changed your hair.” She noted, aloud. “Looks good.”

She thought his hair a magnificent mane before, but with his shaved sides grown out to match the rest he looked positively rugged.
“Not much time for personal grooming.” He laughed.

“May I?” She asked, reaching out with one hand to touch his hair.

He nodded.

She ran her fingers through the ends, smiling at the memories it evoked.

“Are you seeing anyone?” The sudden question broke her from her reverie.

She let out a startled laugh. “Um, no.” She eventually managed to reply. “I have neither the time nor desire.”

“So, things with the elf didn't work out?” He nosily queried.

“Oli.” She warned.

“Sorry, sorry.” He held up his hands in submission.

She took a deep breath and let out a long, slow exhale. “It's...complicated.”

“You mean he's a fool?”

“I mean it's complicated.” She warned again.

They both fell silent for a while as they surveyed the courtyard.

“Are you...seeing anyone?” She asked without looking at him.
He chuckled. “Neither the time nor desire.” He parroted her words back at her.

She smiled to herself.

He took a deep breath then exhaled loudly. “I still miss you, you know. I think about you all the time.”

“Oli.” She sighed. “You need to stop torturing yourself.”

“Torture?” He queried, confusedly.

“You're pining for something that we can never be.”

He cast his eyes to the ground, clearly wounded.

“What I mean to say is, you're a Warden now; there is no possible future for us.”

“But what if there was?” He quickly interrupted.

“What do you mean?” She asked, confusedly.

“I...damn it, I can't say.” He balled his hands in to fists and exhaled in annoyance.

“Right.” She exclaimed. “Grey Warden secrets.”

“If I came back...would you have me?”

“Are you?”
“I...don't know.”

“Then neither do I.”

She watched him clench his jaw in frustration.

“Oli.” She placed a hand on his forearm. “I know there are things you can't tell me – and I would never insist you do – but you cannot expect me to wait for an impossible to predict length of time for something that might never even happen.”

“I know.” He quietly acquiesced, framing her face with both hands and pressing his forehead to hers. “Vhenan -“

“Don't.” She swiftly cut him off, squeezing her eyes shut tight. “Don't say it.”

“Then let me show you.” He tilted her face to meet his lips, kissing her with a desperate passion. She wrapped her arms around his neck as his hands fell to her hips, pulling each other closer as the kiss intensified.

“Ahem.” If a cough could sound annoyed, moustache had it nailed.

She turned her head to the onlookers with a grimace, noting that Oli was still caught up in her, inhaling her scent as he nuzzled her neck. She loosened her grip on his neck but he still held her tight.

“Oli” She loudly whispered, nudging his shoulder. “Oli!”

He startled, suddenly aware of the situation, releasing her and taking a few steps back. “All set?” He asked his superior, trying in vain to break the tension.

She turned from him to see exactly who had got an eyeful, noticing to her shame that it was just about everyone. Fenris looked livid, probably because they would have had little warning had another Qunari patrol found them.
“I thank you for your aid.” Moustache began. “But we must leave, immediately.”

They descended the steps from Gamlen’s place and the Warden’s began to walk away from her small group, but as Oli neared he gripped the back of her head, pressed his lips to her temple and whispered “’Ar lath ma.” Then released her and walked away without looking back.

Standing ahead of her companions, they did not notice the tear fall down her cheek. She quickly wiped it away then turned on her heel to face them. “Let’s go.”

They were exhausted when they finally reached Hightown, but had no time to rest as they were immediately set upon by another group, this one with a scarily powerful Serabas. Varric managed to keep the behemoth distracted while they took down the rest of the group, but almost as soon as he was the last one standing he let out a powerful wave of magic that knocked them all off their feet.

Her vision was blurry as she tried to blink in to focus, desperate to get back on her feet. Just as she felt the Serabas’ magic building in to a deathly strike, he just...stopped. Seconds later a sword pierced through his chest, then retreated and proceeded to decapitate him.

Meeting the knight-commander for the first time was not at all how she had envisioned it. She couldn’t help but be slightly annoyed and embarrassed by the fact that the dastardly woman had rescued her.

After a sarcastic comment from her bother, they accompanied the Templar’s to the Viscount’s keep, where the Qunari were rounding up noble hostages. It took some persuading, but eventually the Templar’s agreed to work with the surviving mages to create a distraction and allow her and her team to slip in unnoticed.

... 

Everything seemed to happen in a blur, as though she had left her body and was watching from high above, only snapping back to reality at the sound of the Arishok unsheathing his massive blades. He wielded them as easily as daggers though she wondered if she would be able to hold even one with both hands. She looked down at her own daggers feeling altogether inadequate, realising that this might very well be the last fight of her life.

No. You CAN do this.
She shook the thoughts from her mind; the entire population of Kirkwall was depending on her and she'd be damned if she allowed any more innocents to be hurt. She glanced over at Isabella, unable to contain the grateful smile. She may have betrayed her trust initially, but in the end she had returned to set things right. She admitted she'd been halfway to Ostwick before her conscience kicked in. Unfortunately for them, however, the Arishok wasn't prepared to leave without Isabella.

Her gaze swept across her companions, eventually landing on Fenris. He was the one who suggested the duel, and she seriously didn't know if he actually had that much faith in her skill or just didn't care if she fell. He looked...nervous?

She looked back at the Arishok who was staring menacingly from across the room. He raised an arm to point a sword in her direction and began to speak. “We fight to the death, you and I alone.” He made eye contact with each of her companions, a warning not to intervene. “Kill me and the duty that binds me is ended. The others will return to Par Vollen”

She glanced over her shoulder at each of her friends, making sure they understood, before responding. “And if you kill me?”

Without a hint of humour he replied. “Then you are dead.”

She dropped in to a fighting stance, impressively twirling her daggers hoping to reassure the onlookers of her confidence “All right, let’s put on a show.”

Immediately he charged her, almost catching her by surprise. She did however manage to side-step out of the way just in time. He was unusually fast for his size, and the deepness at which his blade pierced a nearby column confirmed that he was also gravely strong.

Noticing an opportunity, she attempted to slice at his back but before she was able he had quickly dislodged his blade from the stone and was swinging it around towards her head. She expertly ducked then ran behind the column to consider her next move.

She spent what seemed like hours only able to dodge his attacks, never being afforded an opportunity to strike. She was quickly tiring and ran in the opposite direction to create enough distance to allow herself some time to devise a plan.

She concentrated on keeping a constant distance between them. His frustrations were evident in his
maniacal battle cries as he tried to rush her over and over, each time burying his blade in to the stone walls and allowing her a brief window of opportunity to slink in to the shadows to stab at his flank before he was able to free himself.

His back was becoming increasingly littered with an array of significantly deepening cuts, which lefts droplets of blood on the ground in his wake. She stealthed in to the shadows once again to deliver another slash, but he had anticipated her. He relinquished the blade embedded in the wall and swiped at her with his off-hand blade. She realised almost immediately what he was planning and tried to retreat, but she wasn’t fast enough.

His blade connected with the small of her back and cleaved diagonally up to one shoulder, slicing clean through her armour and underclothes, leaving a devastating gash in its wake. Blood drenched her clothes and pooled on the floor at her feet. She barely heard the sound of her name as she fell to her hands and knees, somehow managing to hold up a hand to silently insist that nobody intervene.

She was suddenly alone. The faces of terrified citizens and disinterested Qunari no longer watching her. The scent of honeysuckle and elderflower surrounded her. She felt the grass beneath her fingers and heard the sweet sounds of songbirds all around. Off in the distance she saw three familiar children, in front of a modest-sized cottage, chasing each other and laughing. Smoke billowed out from the chimney and her mouth watered at the unmistakable scent of blueberry pie.

"Hello?" She rasped, confusedly, but if the children heard they paid her no mind.

"They can't hear you, Dove."

She knew that voice. Her eyes widened and she swallowed nervously before turning towards the source, but the sun shone so brightly that she had to lift up a hand to shield her eyes. She could just about make out a figure as she squinted between her fingers, trying to focus. It slowly moved closer until it blocked out the sun completely.

"Father?" She looked up in awe and disbelief at the person she had loved most in the world, who had been cruelly ripped away from her so many years ago, and she began to sob. “How is this possible?“

He stood beside her, watching the children playing in the distance. She tried to make sense of what was happening, turning back to watch the older of the trio, who was now waving at her father with a dimpled smile.
"That's me." She suddenly realised. "What is this?"

"Do you not remember?" He questioned, waving back to the younger version of herself.

She studied the scene again, watching as the twins wondered off to the stables. Her younger self looked on warily, and the memory of this moment came rushing back to her with perfect clarity.

"This was the day my magic manifested." She affirmed.

"A bitter-sweet memory." He sighed. "I prayed none of you would bear my curse...but to have someone to share my knowledge with." He looked on wistfully, before kneeling in the grass beside her and taking her hand. "I couldn't deny the pride I felt."

She smiled as she looked at his face. He looked exactly as she remembered. Those same silver eyes he had bestowed upon her, conveyed an intense sense of pride.

"Am I dead?" She whispered.

Her father placed a loving hand on her cheek. "No, Dove." He smiled, but it was a pained expression. "But we do not have much time."

"I don't understand." She tried in vain to remember how it was she came to be here.

"Get up." He suddenly insisted, now on his feet, extending a hand to assist her.

As she took his hand, her surroundings momentarily flickered to some place else. A large cavernous room, with plush carpet and stone columns. She shook her head, trying to focus her vision on the cottage, but then she felt a sharp pain at her back. She grimaced as she touched the source, surprised to find it soaked. She looked at her hand and found it covered with blood. "Father, what's happening to me?"

"You have to fight, Dove." He pleaded. "You will not die this day!"
As she stared back at him, he flickered out of existence, replaced by a horned beast for just a second.

"The Arishok." Everything came flooding back in a rush. "He's too strong."

"You must use your gifts." He enunciated. "All of them."

She caught on to his meaning. He was referring to magic. "But everyone will know." She resisted.

"Succeed in this, and you will have the luxury of figuring out how to deal with that later." He insisted. "Now go."

He kissed her forehead, but when she reached out a panicked hand to hold on to him she felt nothing.

"Father!" She yelled, but she was no longer standing in a grassy meadow. She looked around at the scared faces of the Kirkwall nobility, and the concerned faces of her friends, realising she had somehow managed to get back on her feet during what was surely a hallucination.

The Arishok looked amused of all things, and perhaps a little impressed by her unwillingness to admit defeat. She swayed dangerously on the spot, desperately resisting the call to the Fade. She had lost so much blood. It cascaded down one shoulder, coating her arm and dripping from her fingertips to the floor beside her. The call to use it was deafening, but that wouldn't help; she may win the battle but at what cost? She would lose the respect of everyone she loved. The people would fear her and she would live out the rest of her days as a tranquil. No. She would rather die than resort to blood magic.

Ignoring the searing pain at her back and the heady scent of blood, she effectively silenced the demons, so close yet so far, with a sinister battle cry that would instil fear in to the heart of any adversary, as the Arishok readied himself for a final charge.

She conjured every ounce of mana, drawing on the energy of the fade, as she focused on her own version of Makers Fist. Instead of simply pummelling the Arishok, she would rip him apart. She had promised the people a show, and she planned to deliver.

She used her own hands as mental templates as she recreated the shape on a massive scale. She reached the magical Maker sized hands down to grip the Arishok’s arms and with one fluid gesture,
pulled him apart where he stood.

After a tense moment of silence, the crowd began to roar with glee as the rest of the Qunari kept to their word and began filing out of the keep.

Realising the danger had passed and her job was done, she fell to her knees without a single ounce of strength or mana left. Just before her head hit the floor, a strong arm snaked around her waist and pulled her to her feet. “You'll have to show me how to do that one sometime”

She cried out in pain as her wound gapped open in response to the movement, Anders's heeling aura quickly beginning to flow through her entire body. Her nerve endings felt like they were on fire as they knitted back together.

She had lost a lot of blood, of that she was sure. Her skin was cold and pale. Her heart thumped erratically and she was desperately short of breath. She felt so light-headed that she would surely have slumped back down to the floor without Anders shouldering her weight.

She watched, semi-consciously, as the remaining Qunari continued their peaceful exodus. Her relief was cut-short however when the Knight-Commander entered the room with a hoard of Templar's, causing Anders to halt his healing. The deepest parts of her wound had healed, bone chips and torn muscle, but her flesh was still very much maimed and she remained at significant risk of bleeding out.

She looked around at the crowd of Kirkwall residents with panicked eyes, silently pleading for them to keep her secret from the Templar's. A two-handed sword found its way in to her hand. She looked to her side to see Fenris's concerned eyes, communicating without words. She nodded to let him know she understood. As far as the Templar's were concerned, this was the weapon that cleaved the Arishok in two.

She was vaguely aware of a conversation between the Knight-Commander and her companions, before her surroundings were swallowed by blackness.

…

She awoke two days later in the comfort of her own bed, feeling surprisingly not dead despite the dull headache. A figure caught her eye and she turned to find Fenris quietly dozing in a chair. She reached out for the glass of water on her bedside table, suddenly aware of an insatiable thirst. She
drained it in a few large gulps, which had obviously been loud as once she had put the glass down she saw that Fenris had awoken and was silently staring at her. After an unbearably long silence he eventually spoke.

“I'm sorry.” He whispered, seemingly disappointed with himself.

She silently surveyed him with sad eyes, waiting for him to elaborate.

He studied his feet through an almost unbearable stretch of silence. Eventually he lifted his head to look her in the eye. “You almost died, Hawke.” He choked. “It was my idea and you almost died.”

“But I didn't.” She reminded him with a chuckle. “I'm still here, Fenris.”

He smiled for a moment then quick as a flash he was on his feet and kneeling by her side, caressing her hand with his own. “When you fell...I thought I'd lost you.” He whispered, lips brushing against her fingers. “I've been such a fool, Hawke.”

“What are you saying, Fenris?” She asked, confusedly.

“I can't be your friend, Hawke. Not any more.”

“Oh.” She pulled her hand away from him. “Are you leaving, then?”

“You misunderstand me.” He chuckled. “What I mean to say is, I can't be just your friend.”

She frowned as she tried to make sense of what he was saying.

“I...love you, Hawke.” He swallowed nervously. “I always have, I just...didn't know it.”

She stared open mouthed at the surprise revelation.
“Say something.” He prompted her, nervously.

“Fenris, I...”

“You don’t feel the same.” He finished for her, ears drooping slightly.

“I didn’t say that.” She argued. “I just...” She took a deep breath. “Losing you once almost killed me. I don’t think I could willingly put myself in a position where that might happen again.”

“I’m not going anywhere this time, Hawke.” He insistently reassured her.

“Fenris, nothing has changed.” She shot back. “Everything that drove you away is still true. I will always have magic and I will always be at risk of -”

“I don’t care.” He cut her off.

“Fenris.” She pleaded.

“What do I have to do to prove myself?” He begged, but before she could answer Anders came waltzing in.

“You’re awake!” He exclaimed, effectively cutting through the tension in the air.

Fenris continued to stare at her, expectantly, but when he realised she was not about to ask Anders to leave, he fled - unsurprisingly.

She sat up a little too quickly, wincing at the pinching pain along the length of her back.

“Sorry about that.” Anders apologised. “But our illustrious Knight-Commander saw your wound and would be a little too suspicious if you managed to heal without any trace of a scar.”
“So she believes I cut that brute in half with a sword I can barely even carry?” She asked, incredulously.

“Not completely. But with nobody telling her otherwise, she's powerless.” He retorted, gleefully. “Even named you The Champion Of Kirkwall.” He was doubled over laughing now.

She sat in silence as she mulled over this new information. She was so sure she would have to flee immediately, without so much as a goodbye. But her secret was safe, at least for now. The Templar's remained blissfully unaware – all but two anyway.

“Thank you, Anders...for everything.” She gave his hands a gentle squeeze and landed a quick peck on his cheek.

“I'd do anything for you.” He confessed. “You know that.” He lifted his hand to her cheek and stared longingly in to her eyes. “Come. I'll prepare you a bath.”

“That sounds divine!” She approved, allowing him to take her hand and help her to the tub which he quickly filled with ice then heated until steaming.

“Varric and Merrill are downstairs, and I'll be at the clinic if you need me.” He informed her before exiting her room, closing the door behind him.

She quickly unbuttoned her nightgown, allowing it to fall to the floor before dipping a toe in to the water to test the temperature.

Perfect.

She stepped in with both feet and carefully sat down before leaning back to submerge herself completely, face and all. She lay completely still for as long as her lungs would allow, quickly emerging from the water to catch her breath, smoothing her hair out of her face.

Movement caught her eye and she snapped her head around to see Fenris standing with his back to the door.
“Fuck, Fenris, you scared me.” She admitted, laughing nervously as she turned her attention back to the soothing bath water. “I thought you left?”

She grabbed a soap bar and began to wash her hair.

Ouch.

Lifting her arms up pinched the still throbbing magically almost-healed wound on her back.

She must have winced out loud as she soon felt his hands relieving her of the soap and he took over the task of washing her hair. She didn't object, sitting in silence as he worked his deft fingers through her tresses and gently massaged her scalp. Eventually curiosity got the better of him and he draped her long hair over one shoulder to examine the scar on her back.

His fingers lightly traced the dark pink line down to the surface of the water, causing a shiver to reverberate up and down her spine.

“Can he - you not heal this?” He asked.

“Anders thinks it would be wiser to keep it, lest the Knight-Commander suspect I or one of you of apostasy.”

After a minute or two he continued to work the soap over her hair before retrieving the jug from the washbasin to help rinse it out.

Once thoroughly cleaned he offered her a hand to help her stand and step out of the tub, wrapping a towel around her and pulling her against his chest. She didn't resist, allowing him to embrace her protectively for what seemed like a very long time.

“I'm sorry I left.” He eventually spoke. “It wont happen again.”

She huffed in a way that told him she did not believe him.
“I don't care how long it takes to prove it, Hawke.” He persisted. “I'll make you see that I'm serious about this.”

“You do know I can be pretty stubborn.” She japed.

“As can I.” He threatened, slightly. “I expect it's why we clash so often.”

She chuckled a little.

He gripped her shoulders and held her at arms length to look in to her eyes. “I'm sorry – for so many things.” He rolled his eyes at himself. “But I know this is where I want to be...with you.”

“I need some time.” She spoke quietly.

“Take all the time you need.” He cupped her face with both hands as he searched her face, a faint smile tugging at his lips. “I'll be here.”

Chapter End Notes

This is already way longer than I intended (just wanted to write some FenHawke smut, honestly). Hope it's still interesting and I reckon we'll be caught up to inquisition in just a couple more chapters.
Chapter 22 - "NSFW"

Chapter Summary

What will Fenris do with his hard-earned freedom?

Chapter Notes

A bit of angst, lots of smut and a dash of fluff for good measure.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

She returned home in a surprisingly pleasant mood, considering she'd just spent the last hour in the gallows trying to convince Meredith that Emile de Launcet was not remotely dangerous, only to be greeted by an obviously agitated Fenris; who was currently pacing back and forth in her study.

Things had been a little tense between them since his confession of love and promise to remain at her side. Still too emotionally traumatised to switch her feelings back on, she remained uncertain of what she was going to do. She had succeeded so far in remaining aloof and avoiding any physical contact - or even remotely close proximity; she didn't want to give him false hope and, truth be told, part of her wanted to see how serious he was about proving his intentions.

“Is something the matter?” She worried aloud, catching him by surprise.

“Hawke.” He immediately stopped pacing to face her. “I need your help.”

“What is it?” She enquired, rapidly switching gears from curious to concerned.

“It's my sister.” He said the words as though she were in imminent danger. “She's here...in the city.”

“Is she in trouble?” She panicked, mentally preparing herself for a fight.

“What?” He sounded confused. “No – I don't think so.”
“So what's the problem?” She asked, equally confused.

“I sent for her,” He exclaimed. “...and now she's here.”

“That doesn't sound like quite the crisis I was expecting, Fenris.” She japed.

“Yes, ha ha, let's all laugh at the cowardly elf!”

She quickly rid her face of any trace of humour, now was apparently not the time. “Sorry.”

“Come with me Hawke!” He pleaded. “Please?”

“You really want me there?” She asked, unbelieving.

“I really do.” He affirmed as he strode towards her, grasping both her hands and pulling them up to his lips, thumbs caressing circles over her knuckles.

She swallowed nervously at the intensity in his eyes, her cheeks flushing with the unexpected contact. “All right.” Well this wasn't going to be awkward at all.

As they entered The Hanged Man, her eyes were immediately drawn to the red haired elf by the steps. As they approached, she studied the woman's rapidly changing expressions with a curious intensity. First she saw a shocked recognition; she obviously wasn't certain she would be meeting her long-lost brother, then it peculiarly changed to something akin to regret before finally settling, rather disconcertingly, on fear.

She didn't hear a word the siblings said to each other, too caught up in surveying the scene. She looked around at the patrons, most of whom she did not recognise. Something felt off. She focused on that nagging feeling, suddenly recognising the unwelcome and all too familiar scent of demons.

“It's a trap!” She yelled as she reached for her daggers.

Fenris cast her an annoyed scowl, irked by her interruption and clearly oblivious to the reality of the
situation, until a man began to speak and his face turned ashen. She had never seen Fenris scared before, but the fear in his eyes was impossible to miss. This had to be Danarius.

She tore her attention away from Fenris to look into the eyes of his sadistic ex-master, his very aura made her hair stand on end and she had to fight the urge to charge across the room and plunge her daggers into his eye sockets; she would leave the privilege of ending his life to Fenris.

Her heart ached as she realised his own sister had sold him out - if she even was his sister.

Shifting her focus to their surroundings once again, to identify exactly which of the patrons where Danarius' men, she wasn't fully paying attention to the conversation between the ex-slave and his former master, until she felt both sets of eyes on her and caught the magister's words “So this is your new mistress?”

“Fenris is a free man!” She raged at the blood mage, willing herself not to launch a bolt of lightening at his genitals.

The man infuriatingly grinned at her, before accusing her of fucking jealousy and making a disgusting comment about the lad being rather skilled.

She'd had enough, and so too it seemed had Fenris. As he let out a menacing battle cry and his lyrium markings flared to life, the final battle for his freedom began.

They fought wave after wave of slavers, demons, reanimated slaver corpses and even more demons, before they were able to penetrate Danarius' protective shield. She delighted in causing the man pain and the sight of his blood on her blades made her giddy, but she held back on striking the killing blow.

She resisted the urge to let out a celebratory whoop when Fenris picked him up by the throat, phased through to his wind pipe then ripped it out. Fenris had never looked so magnificent as he did covered in the blood of his old master. It was truly over: Danarius was dead and Fenris was finally free.

Her smile quickly faded when he redirected his homicidal rage to the woman claiming to be his sister. He heeded her advice, however, and allowed the woman to leave - but not before she dropped the bombshell that he had actually competed for the markings he so vehemently resented. Hawke watched his sorrowful expression, wondering if his sisters words has jogged a forgotten memory, then listened as he began ruminating, hopelessly, about having lost everything to magic.
"You still have me." She apprised, causing him to turn and place a cautiously affectionate hand on her cheek. "We'll always be friends." The slight furrow of his brow - imperceptible to the untrained eye, but not to her - at her use of the word friends, was a clear reaction of painful disappointment. Why had she even felt the need to say that?

He let his hand drop to his side, quietly observing her for a short while, then left without saying a word. She looked over to Varric, who gave her an encouraging nod and she quickly followed after him.

Fenris could move fast when he wanted to; although she left less than a minute after him she did not catch up to him before reaching his mansion. She let herself in, making enough noise so as not to be a surprise, then headed for the only habitable room.

He was sat on a bench by the hearth, staring at the blood on his hands. "What do I do now?" He asked without lifting his gaze. Her heart physically ached to hear him sound so lost.

She slowly made her way to the bench and took a seat beside him. "Anything you want." She tried to reassure him.

"I never truly allowed myself to consider what I would do with my freedom." He admitted.

She remained silent as she mulled over the possibilities, immediately unhappy with the response her brain selected. "Perhaps you should leave?"

"What?" His eyes were suddenly on her face, his expression one of confusion and...hurt?

"You should leave Kirkwall." What was she doing!? Her brain had apparently disconnected from her mouth. "You finally have the chance at a fresh start. You can put all of this pain and suffering behind you, move on, start a life somewhere new. You have that luxury."

"You...want me to leave?" He reminded her of a kicked puppy and she might not have heard him if she hadn't been sitting so close.

"I want you to be happy." Of that she was certain; she truly wanted him to make the most of his
freedom. “You deserve to be happy, Fenris - more than anyone.” Her voice wavered slightly with emotion.

He looked as though he were about to speak, but she quickly interrupted. "I'd be happy to cover your travel expenses. I have way more coin than I'm ever going to need.” She chuckled, but it sounded more nervous than anything else.

"That's...very generous of you." He eventually responded, his gaze returning to his bloodied hands.

"It's the least I could do." She bit the inside of her cheek, desperately trying to stave off the tears that threatened to emerge at the thought of never seeing him again. When he looked as though he were about to speak again, she swiftly cut him off. "I should go. You probably have a lot to consider."

She watched the muscles in his jaw violently clenching as he held his tongue, then simply nodded.

She saw herself out and headed straight back to The Hanged Man to help with the clean up...and perhaps to drown her sorrows.

By the time she arrived, the place was looking a lot less like a battle had recently taken place, and with her help it wasn't long until not a single trace remained. She joined Varric in his room and they drank in silence for a time.

“How is he?” Varric eventually asked, breaking the silence.

“Wondering what to do next.” She exhaled, loudly.

“Listen, Hawke. I'm not one to tell you what to do, but, why are you here and not with him right now?”

“I'm just giving him some space.” She argued.

He looked at her as though he didn't believe a word of it. “Hawke...he told me what he said to you after you annihilated the Arishok.”
She blushed slightly, casting her eyes to the floor. “Oh.”

“I know how you feel about him, even if you don't, so I ask again: why aren't you with him right now?”

“Oh Varric.” She hopelessly whined. “Shouldn't it be easier than this – if we were truly meant to be together?”

"Nothing worth doing is ever easy." He calmly retorted.

"You are such a smart arse, have I ever told you that?" She scowled, affectionately.

"Frequently." He chuckled.

She took a long, contemplative sip of ale then quietly sighed. “It's too late, anyway.”

"What do you mean?"

"I...may have...encouraged him to leave Kirkwall."

"Come again?"

"I just want him to be happy, Varric. Getting out of here and putting all of this behind him...a fresh start is exactly what he needs."

"Is that what he wants?"

She shrugged.
"And you’d be happy if he just...up and left?"

"Of course not!" She passionately protested.

"So go tell him that!"

"What would I even say!? Wait, don’t leave, I need you to put your freedom on hold for just a little bit longer while I try to figure out what I want?"

“It’s better than crushing his heart and sending him on his merry way.” The knowing dwarf argued.

She let her forehead drop to the table with a loud thud.

"What do you want, Hawke? Really think about it for a minute.”

She lifted her head up off the table to look at her best-friend, silent tears running down her cheeks.

"I just don't want to get hurt again.” She admitted, pathetically. “Varric...I can't."

“And do you honestly believe that avoiding possibly being hurt I worth never letting yourself be happy?”

She took a deep, slow breath. "No."

He placed both hands on her shoulders and looked directly in to her eyes. "So go get him."

“Yes, mother.” She laughed as she wiped the tears from her face, standing from her seat and striding to the door. She turned back just before opening it, rushing back to her trusty dwarf to kiss him on the cheek, then fled the tavern and headed to Hightown.

She cried the entire way, it was such a strange mix of emotions she was feeling; regret, relief,
anxiety, hope. The rain was coming down so hard, and the droplets so large, that she was completely soaked through in seconds. She stood unmoving, head tilted skywards with her eyes closed, as she tried to steady her nerves. The heavy rainfall on her face was refreshing, and she happily allowed it to wash away her tears.

Without even thinking, her feet began to move. She walked across the square, around the corner and up the steps. She halted outside his door, unable to knock. Was this a mistake? Would they really be able to overcome their differences? She should leave, return home and sleep on it. But then she lifted her hand and pushed open the door. “Come on Champion.” She whispered to herself. “You've got this.”

“Fenris?” She called as she ascended the stairs, but no response came. When she entered the master bedroom, the fire had been extinguished and it looked as though the place had been trashed. If not for the enchantment she had personally placed on the door, she would have assumed vandals had broken in.

She glanced around the room, trying to see past the carnage, noticing that none of his personal belongings were present. Had he left already? Her heart seemed to stop beating as she replayed their last conversation in her head. Was he so hurt by her suggestion that he couldn't even bring himself to say goodbye?

Her head span as she tried to quell the raging emotions within, emotions that had lain buried for far too long. In a state of semi-consciousness, she made her way back downstairs, trying desperately to reinforce the icy cage around her heart. As soon as she reached the ground floor, however, she fell to her knees and began to sob in to her hands. She stayed there for what felt like hours, unable to move or focus on anything beyond the pain his absence evoked, until her head pounded from the dehydration her tears had wrought.

She took a few ragged breaths, and even slapped herself across the face for good measure, then rose to her feet and headed for the exit. She yanked open the heavy door and stepped out in to the torrential downpour, eyes closed and silently praying to make it home without bumping in to anyone. She tried to think of anything but him, but even the thought of not wanting to think about him was enough for a loud sob to escape her.

“Hawke?” Came a far away sounding voice, somewhat muffled by the noisy rainfall.

Her eyes slowly opened as she steeled herself to deal with whichever nosey neighbour stood before her, but instead of a pompous noble she found a drenched elf. Unable to speak she simply stared at him with a tormented and questioning gaze, the rain still falling heavily around them.
He stared back, his expression quickly mirroring her own. She took a deep breath as though to
speak, but he was on her before she could make a sound. Having dropped his luggage somewhere
along the way, he splayed his palms widely on her back, pulling her flush against him as he engaged
her in a passionate kiss.

She ran her fingers through his equally drenched locks, gently grazing his scalp. His hands moved to
cup her face as he broke away from the kiss to gaze at her, but he said nothing. Picking up his
belongings, he took her by the hand and slowly lead her inside. She followed him up the stairs in
silence, until they stood before the cold fireplace where he returned his hands to her face, thumbs
gently caressing her cheek bones.

"You're soaked." He quietly observed.

"So are you." She managed to reply, through chattering teeth.

He placed one delicate kiss on her lips. "You should dry off before you catch a cold."

She nodded before he released his grip on her, wandering off without a word and leaving her to
undress. Once down to her smalls, he reappeared with one of his old tunics. As he moved to re-ignite
the hearth, he put some - largely unsuccessful - effort in to keeping his eyes off her as she proceeded
to peel off her sodden undergarments before she slipped the tunic on over her head.

"Does this feel like deja-vu to you?" She chuckled to herself as she approached him from behind to
help unbuckle his armour. "Minus having to cut me out of a corset." She quickly corrected.

"We've been through a lot together." He thoughtfully contemplated, turning to face her. He cupped
her face again and slowly kissed her.

She lightly gripped him by the wrists, returning the kiss for a moment before pulling back just
enough to press her forehead to his.

“I thought I was too late.” She breathed, shakily. “I'm such an idiot for suggesting you leave – I don't
want you to go.”

“Shhh.” He gently soothed her. “I only made it half-way to the docks before I calmed down enough
to realise there was no way I was ever going to leave you.”
She instigated the kiss this time, her face pressed tightly to his, before abruptly breaking away and fixing him with a resolute stare. "If we do this." She sternly began. "No fucking around this time, okay?"

"I swear." He immediately assured her, punctuating his promise with a kiss to her neck.

"You have to trust me, Fenris." She insisted. "No more distancing yourself when things get difficult."

"You have my word." He switched sides, placing another kiss on her neck.

"And you cannot abandon me again." She gazed into his majestic emerald orbs, pleadingly.

"Never." He pulled her face to his, gently butting heads.

She closed her eyes and slowly exhaled. "I don't think I could survive it."

"You'll never have to." He vehemently promised, sealing his declaration with a searing kiss until she felt like putty in his arms. "I love you." He stared into her eyes, expectantly.

She rolled her eyes and loudly exhaled. "I fucking love you too, okay?" Her tone was mildly irritated, but he saw the playful spark in her eye, before a tiny half-smirk graced her tempting lips.

He smiled a smile she had never seen on him, before embracing her tightly and desperately kissing her. They devoured each other as his hands ventured underneath the fabric of the oversized tunic she wore, to caress the bare flesh of her voluptuous derrière. She ran her fingers through his damp hair, lightly tugging when he bit her bottom lip, teasingly.

"Why are you still wearing clothes?" She panted, trailing a line of desperate kisses from his jaw to his collar bone.

He abruptly pushed her away from his neck to look her in the eye. "Hawke, we don't have to - not
She smiled, sweetly, before sinking a hand beneath his waistband to palm his temptingly erect length. "And what if I want too?"

His lips curled up in to a cocky smirk, accentuating his roguish good looks. "Who am I to refuse the Champion of Kirkwall?"

She removed her hand from him to pull her tunic off over her head. His hands quickly returned to her face as hers began to deftly unbuckle his belt, which was off in seconds. He stopped the kiss briefly to pull his own tunic off over his head, returning his lips to hers with a growing intensity.

She always loved being naked with Fenris, his skin gave off an unnatural heat and, when he was otherwise distracted, his markings seemed to leak magical energy, overcharging her own connection to the fade and resulting in a terrific high.

Without warning, he scooped her up in his arms and carried her over to the bed. He placed her down gently and carefully settled himself on top of her to resume the kiss. She could feel his arousal pressed against her own and she moved her hips slightly, beckoning him.

He continued to kiss her, lovingly, as he began to fill her deliciously slowly. This was an entirely new experience; each of their previous encounters had been lust filled and urgent. Despite the slow movements, she was completely breathless and consumed by her desire.

He moved within her in a divinely unhurried rhythm, which she met with equally delicate thrusts of her pelvis. She marvelled at just how good this slow pace felt, certain she was approaching the edge of a sensational orgasm.

The kiss hadn't stopped, despite the involuntary moans now escaping both of them. His hands still caressed her face as she obliviously began to dig her nails in to his flanks. His thrusts maintained the same speed but became exceedingly more powerful, eliciting louder moans each time.

Thrusting slightly quicker now, he broke away from the kiss to nibble at the soft supple flesh of her neck. No longer stifled she let out a satisfied sigh, which emboldened his own desire.

His breathing became increasingly laboured as he continued his strong thrusts, his own moans
alerting her to the nearness of his rapidly approaching release. She tilted her own hips to meet each of his thrusts, angling for a deeper penetration, causing him to growl liked a wild animal.

She arched her back as she came, hard, her consciousness momentarily transported to another plane of existence. Her mind was slowly coaxed back to her body by his gentle and loving kiss, her legs wrapped firmly around his waist and his torso pressed flat against hers. He administered a few more long, slow thrusts, before biting down on her neck as he spilled himself inside her.

Neither moved for what seemed like an eternity, both rendered incapable of speech by the intensity of their orgasms, until eventually she wet her lips and kissed his ear. "Wow." Was the only word she could manage, still a little breathless.

He chuckled, then hissed as his barely softened length slipped from her pleasantly tender sheath. He propped himself up on his elbows, to relieve her of his crushing weight, and gazed lovingly in to her eyes. "I love you, Hawke."

"Mmm, I love you too." She replied, somewhat euphorically.

"Will you stay the night?" He enquired, hopefully.

"Sure." She sleepily replied, a ridiculous grin on her face.

He rolled on to his side beside her, easily manoeuvring her back to his chest. He wrapped an arm around her waist and held her tightly as they almost immediately drifted off to sleep.

When she eventually awakened, the bright light streaming through the windows indicating it was late morning, the first thing she noticed was that she was alone.

"Oh, for the love of Andraste!" She loudly muttered to herself, almost suffering whiplash when she turned to the sound of his gravely voice.

"Problem?" He had the smuggest look on his face she had ever seen.

"Fenris!" She yelled her disapproval, clutching at her chest as her heart pounded within. "I thought
you'd run off again!"

He chuckled as he watched her slowly regain her composure.

"What are you doing all the way over there?" She whined, exaggeratedly sticking out her bottom lip like a petulant child.

"I've been trying to make notes...of my memories." He began, self-consciousness evident in his uncertain tone. "But my writing isn't great, so it's mostly just sketches."

"When did you start doing that?" She asked, pleasantly curious.

He nervously rubbed the back of his neck. "Shortly after we...started drinking too much and sleeping together?" His tone was questioning, as though he was unsure if that were a good enough description for what they had been doing during the weeks leading up to the Qunari assault.

"Can I see?" She asked, optimistically.

He contemplatively tapped his finger on the paper, before standing up from behind the desk and making his way over to her - providing her a full frontal view of his glorious nakedness.

She eagerly accepted his offering, thumbing through the pages in awe. "Fenris, these drawings are amazing. I had no idea you were capable of this."

"Neither did I." He laughed, bashfully rubbing his arm.

"Wait, is this me?" She halted her exploration as the book opened on a rather detailed sketch of her sleeping in his bed: face down with the sheets only just covering her rear, long hair splayed over the pillows around her head. She could tell he had focused on the details of her bare back above all else.

"No!" He immediately objected, yanking the book from her grasp.

"So you've had another woman in your bed?" She goaded.
"What?" He choked, realising what his objection sounded like. "Fine, it is you." He grumbled, dismissively, cheeks burning with embarrassment.

"Shame it isn't accurate any more." She mumbled, solemnly. "It's missing one fugly scar."

"Don't you dare." He angrily chastised before instructing her to roll on to her front.

She rolled her eyes first, but did as instructed.

He straddled her thighs then proceeded to reverently caress the expanse of her back. "I dream about this back - scar and all."

"You're mad." She dryly retorted.

"Silence, woman." He smacked her bottom lightly, making her giggle. "This curve..." He traced the lower half of her spine with two fingers as he spoke. "...is quite possibly the sexiest thing I've ever seen."

"You need to get out more." She japed, earning herself another swift spanking.

She let out a contented moan as he began kneading the flesh from her neck and shoulders down to her buttocks. "That feels nice." She dreamily sighed. As he leaned down to kiss her shoulder, she felt his hardness press against her rear. "Well if you insist." She chuckled, digging her knees in to the mattress to lift her pelvis up, angling herself for the taking.

She felt his fingers first, lightly separating her folds to test her readiness. "So wet." He groaned.

"Don't keep me waiting, love." She pleaded, wiggling her rounded rear as much as she could manage whilst pinned beneath him and caged by his strong thighs, hoping to entice him.

He chuckled near her ear before taking the lobe between his teeth, then slowly pushed in to her. Without any warm-up, besides her intense arousal, it was an incredibly snug fit. He slowly withdrew
and re-entered a few times before she was able to fully house him. He tucked his hands underneath her to palm her breasts, as he began to thrust at a leisurely pace.

She whimpered when he suddenly withdrew and sat back on his heels. “What are you doing back there?” She whined.

“Enjoying the view.” She could have sworn the deep baritone of his voice made her actually gush. “You should see yourself from this angle.”

“Fenris!” She chastised. “Don't be such a cunt tease!”

He chuckled, deeply, making her impossibly wetter. "On your knees.” He ordered.

She did as commanded, propping herself up on to her knees with her chest still pressed mostly to the bed. She began to plead for him to take her, but the feel of his mouth suddenly pressed tightly to her apex rendered her speechless. She moaned, loudly, as he stopped sucking her pearl to run his tongue along her folds all the way up to her tight ring, which he proceeded to circle a few times. She cried out in both surprise and arousal, whimpering as he continued his ministrations.

"Has anyone ever taken you here?” He punctuated his question with a gentle circling finger.

"No." She replied, breathlessly. "But right now I have another hole that desperately needs to be filed." She whined.

Without another word he pulled her upright onto his lap, sliding in to her as her back connected with his chest.

"Fuck." She sighed, euphorically. "I will never tire of this."

He held her tightly to him, one arm encircling her waist as the other sought out her pearl. She bounced herself in time with his thrusts, re-connected each time with a loud smack, until he sunk his teeth in to her shoulder and they both came. He held her tightly to him, both hands on her hips, as she felt him repeatedly pulsing deep within.
She leaned her head back on to his shoulder, panting for just a moment before tuning to kiss him on the cheek. "Good morning." She chuckled.

"Yes, it is." He agreed, turning to claim her lips.

She remained astride him, his semi-erect length still nestled comfortably inside her, as the kiss turned heated and his fingers dug a little roughly in to her ribs. She managed to turn just enough to wrap her arms around his neck, deepening the kiss as she felt him begin to re-harden within. With little effort - thanks to her limber joints - she swiped one leg over his head, rotating herself in his lap so that they sat face-to face without having to release him.

He held her against him with one hand splayed on her back, while the other wove fingers through her hair, lightly tugging. She locked her arms around his neck, breasts pressed tightly against his chest and forming a pleasingly bulbous cleavage.

They began rocking against each other, eager open mouthed kisses muffling moans of hypersensitive pleasure. He bit her lip when she contracted her pelvic muscles, momentarily tightening her grip on him. They were both covered in a sheen of sweat and she felt herself fatiguing. He must have sensed her energy depleting as he grabbed her hips and began to grind her against him, moving her in time with himself and creating friction at just the right spot. She sunk her nails in to his shoulders as she was overcome with another wave of bliss, slowly grinding against him as she rode the waves of heavenly rapture.

She was vaguely aware of herself being repositioned, her back now flat on the bed as he - what could only be described as - made love to her. His pace was slow and tender, his lips worshipping her own. She felt truly blessed.

Having regained some strength, she flipped him on to his back and began kissing her way down his torso. He sighed, contentedly, as she trailed her tongue along his iron-like-length, before taking him deep in to her throat. He was covered in a heady blend of their previous climax, the taste of which made her groan; the extra stimulation resulting in a deep and involuntary thrust down her throat. Creators bless her almost non-existent gag reflex.

After a few more slurps she let him go and smiled up at him, devilishly. She chuckled as she fell backwards, patting the bed at either side of her. “Knees here.”

He flashed her a curious look, but did as instructed, straddling her waist.
“Spit.” She commanded, pressing a finger to the valley of her breasts.

He tilted his head, quizzically, for just a moment before realisation dawned and his eyes widened excitedly. He did as instructed as she generously licked her own hand and began stroking him.

He leaned closer, pressing his thoroughly lubricated length to her chest, as she pressed her breasts together around it and secured him in place with the flat of one hand. He moaned as he began to move, gliding slickly between her bountiful mounds, his excitement evident in the way he clenched his fists and bit his lip.

“Hawke, I'm going to -”

“Do it.” She begged. “I want you to cover me in it.”

With one last groan he pulled away from her bosomy embrace, pumping himself once, twice, then promptly coating her chest with his opulent seed.

He panted as he stared down at her, smirking at the surprisingly satisfying sight of her covered in his spend. “This is a really good look on you.” He half-joked.

She laughed, melodiously, as she shoved him off and on to his back beside her. “Mmmmm.” She purred as she smeared the ropey fluids around her breasts.

“You are a very dirty girl.” Though the words were chastising, his tone was unmistakably approving.

She locked eyes with him, then brought one cum covered finger slowly to her lips, lightly sampling with her tongue before sucking the entire thing in to her mouth.

“Filthy.” He breathed, completely entranced.

“You want to try?” She asked, offering another coated finger.

“No!” He jerked away from her, but she quickly rolled on top of him, trying to press her hand to his
face. He resisted her easily, gripping her wrist and holding the offending hand at arms length as she laughed hysterically.

With his free hand he began grazing a well known ticklish spot just above her hip with tortuously light fingertips. “I yield, I yield!” She protested, squirming to get away from him.

He rolled them both over, pinning her beneath him while still holding her hand at arms length. “I love you.” He revered, effectively silencing her laughter and plastering a ridiculously happy smile on her face.

She sighed, contentedly. “I love you, too.”

...about a year later

Waking from a short nap, she became aware of a tightening grip on her thigh. He had blissfully fallen asleep with his head on her stomach after another joyous morning of love making. These dreams in which his memories were slowly returning were happening so frequently it had become their normal routine, but it still pained her to see him suffering. She gently ran her fingers through his hair and quietly sang to him.

_The worst is over now and we can breathe again_
_I want to hold you high, you steal my pain away_

_There's so much left to learn, and no one left to fight_
_I want to hold you high and steal your pain_

'Cause I'm broken when I'm open
And I don't feel like I am strong enough

'Cause I'm broken when I'm lonesome
And I don't feel right when you're gone away

His grip eventually loosened and she felt him smile against her skin. "I never did tell you how much I enjoyed your singing."

She chuckled, never quite knowing how to deal with a compliment.

They remained silent for a while as his fingertips gently caressed the length of her bare thigh.
"Did you remember anything useful?" She asked, cautiously.

"Maybe."

She knew better than to push him. He would talk about it if and when he wanted to.

"Messer Hawke." Came Bodhan's voice from downstairs. "Your dress has arrived for this evenings festivities."

She let out an exasperated sigh. "Thanks Bodhan. I'll be down soon."

"Problem?"

"Fucking nobles and their incessant parties." As if one ball to honour her defeat of the Arishok wasn't enough, the bloody nobles had insisted that the Seneschal make it an annual thing. "Please tell me you're coming to this one?" She whined. "I'm not sure I could survive another evening alone with those lecherous nobles."

He let out a breathy laugh, causing goose flesh to erupt on her lower abdomen. "Of course, Amatus." He turned his head to place soft kisses on her naval, slowly creeping over her ribs and making her squirm.

She whined when he pulled away and rolled off the bed.

"Hawke." He jokingly chastised. "We've been in bed for almost an entire day! Are you never satisfied woman?"

"Always, ma lath." She retorted with a playful grin. "Doesn't mean I would ever refuse more."

"You are insatiable." He submissively sighed as he sauntered back over to her.
They laughed as though they had not a care in the world, feasting on each others flesh until their grumbling stomachs could no longer be ignored. She couldn't quite believe how happy they both were, with Danarius out of the picture, Fenris seemed like a different man. Sure he still had bad days, but they were few and far between and he had finally stopped trying to push her away.

All that was left to do was piece together his missing memories - oh and this business with the Templar's and Mage's; that wasn't going away any time soon, and she had somehow been drawn in to the middle of it all, acting as a middle-man of sorts. Both Orsino and Meredith had called upon her for favours and seemed to realise quite quickly the influence her opinion had over the people of the city. That coupled with her connection to the guard, and her reputation in general, meant they both intended to use her and were constantly pestering her to pick a side – neither of which seemed remotely appealing.

Fenris was still cautious of Mage's, though had begun to see the Templar's - and the Circle - as less than perfect. Anders was up to something - something big. He had become somewhat of a recluse, bailing on jobs at the last minute and even neglecting his clinic. Whenever she did manage to catch a glimpse of him, he looked thin and unwell. She was worried about her friend and resolved to figure out where he kept on disappearing to.

But not today.

Today she would adorn her new dress, a full face of make-up and a hair-style that would have her scalp aching by the end of the night. The ball was in her honour after all, she could hardly refuse to attend. If she was being honest with herself, she was rather looking forward to wearing her new gown. She had decided against the current fashion of tight corsets, opting instead for delicate fabrics that were loose and low cut. She was more than a little eager to see Fenris' reaction.

And was not disappointed.

After an hour or two of preparing herself, with assistance from Orana, she exited her bedroom and descended the grand staircase. Fenris stood near the hearth conversing with Bodahn, turning to the sound of her footsteps. His expression fell to nothingness as he drank her in from head to toe, smiling sinfully only when their eyes eventually met. She glided towards him, relishing the way the delicate fabrics caressed her legs, until she was close enough that he caught her hand and kissed it, like a real gentleman.

"I have never seen anything so beautiful." He adoringly approved.

"It's not too much?" She nervously questioned, never really knowing quite how to deal with a
compliment.

The style would most certainly stand out. She had never seen such a dress in the waking world before. The design had actually appeared to her in a dream and she'd simply had to have it commissioned by a seamstress in the alienage. The fabrics consisted of silk and chiffon in various shades of green. She'd had to enlist a smith to create the belt: Instead of leather she wanted silverite, featuring both the Hawke and Amell insignia. She also had matching ornate vambraces with a few emeralds embedded in to them and pauldrons connected by lots of delicate little chains. The bodice was basically just a lined sheet of chiffon which wound around the back of her neck and covered only her breasts, leaving her entire back - and subsequently her faded war-wound - as well as the valley of her breasts and much of her naval exposed. The skirt was floor length, and had several layers, with a split on either side from bottom to top. The top few inches were laced together from her pelvis to the very tops of her thighs, keeping her modesty intact. She felt like a strange cross between warrior and ancient elven princess.

“What happened to the antaam-saar?” Rather hilariously, or so she thought, she had sourced the Qunari outfit for shits and giggles.

“Seneschal Brann may have gotten wind and - rather eloquently - suggested that I not wear it.” She chuckled. “Actually he insisted I burn it. Apparently it isn't racially appropriate. Who knew?”

The ball was exactly as she had feared, hoards of nobles vying for her attention – some even going so far as to propose marriage. She found herself wondering if a room full of darkspawn wouldn't be less appealing. As a show of respect, she had agreed to dance with several of the more prominent members of the City, however she was quickly tiring of the fanfare and just wanted to leave.

As she struggled to formulate yet another polite refusal to dance, Fenris appeared at her side and, with a calm politeness she didn't know him capable of, informed the young noble that she was spoken for, punctuating his statement with a rare, but not unwelcome, public display of affection. He pulled her hand up to his face and adoringly bestowed it with a kiss.

"My loss." The nameless noble disappointedly sighed, bowing low to bid her farewell.

She turned to Fenris with a huge smile on her face. “Want to get out of here?”
He simply nodded, looking at her as though she were a delicious buffet and he a man starved. She giggled as she took his hand and all but ran from the soirée.

It took an exceedingly long time to reach home, each of them stopping frequently to dry hump in the shadows. So desperate were they to be joined, they did not even attempt the journey upstairs, instead opting for the luxurious rug in front of the hearth. Bodhan and Sandal were both blessedly still at the party, and would likely not return for some time.

Fenris had given up on trying to undress her properly, instead settling for simply pulling the flimsy fabric aside to free her unbound breasts. As he lavished one hardening nipple with the attention of his mouth, he actually growled when his hands moved low to push her undergarments aside, only to find she wasn't wearing any.

She reached a hand down between them to free him from the confines of his tight breeches and line him up, then tortuously slowly engulfed him. She let out a long, satisfied sigh, until their pelvis's connected and he was fully seated; at which point she moaned, wantonly.

He moved his mouth to her other nipple, sucking and nibbling in a way that never failed to make her squirm. Her head fell backwards as she began to slowly ride him, pulling a rumble from deep within his chest. He kissed his way back up her neck to her lips, greedily swallowing her moans as he tilted his pelvis in tandem with her movements. He grasped the globes of her arse, guiding her with a strength she couldn't quite achieve on her own, grinding deliciously against her at the end of each downward stroke.

Her climax took her by surprise, slowing her movements almost completely as she pressed herself against him to savour the burst of sensation. Before she had a chance to protest, he lifted her off the ground then sat her down on the nearby chaise. He dropped to his knees in front of her and pressed his face between her legs, covering his mouth and chin with her fresh slick. He hungrily lapped at her hypersensitive pearl, curling two fingers inside her until she began murmuring a steady stream of incoherent praise.

She reached up and backwards with one arm to grip the chaise - the other gripped the back of his head, holding him in place as she neared another peak. She bit down hard on her bottom lip, trying desperately to keep her legs open as the pleasure became almost torturous. She removed her iron grip from the chaise to pinch at a nipple in the hopes of distracting herself, the sight earning her a feral growl. Unbelievably, she felt another climax approaching. Grinding herself against his mouth she came undone with a sharp cry and her legs clamped tightly against his ears.

With a little effort he managed to pry her legs apart, then coaxed her to lie flat on the chaise. "More?" She half-protested, but he simply chuckled then sank in to her.
She breathlessly panted and loudly moaned with each movement he made. He pulled her legs up, hooking her knees over his shoulders as he fiercely pounded in to her, never too fast but oh so hard. He ran a thumb over her bottom lip, dipping it in to her mouth for her to suck on, then dragged his hand down her body to rub at her swollen pearl.

She could feel the stirrings of her own conclusion, tingling libidinously, until the world shattered around her. Her senses all but disappeared, save for the spectacular throbbing between her thighs.

“Fenris, ma lath.” She whimpered, breathlessly, sending an intense shiver down his spine and pushing him over the edge towards his own conclusion. He came harder and for longer than ever before, each thrust spilling more seed and drawing out her own orgasm in an intense and unending symphony.

As soon as his breathing would allow, he peppered her neck and face with light kisses, stopping frequently to declare his love for her; as though he would never be able to say it enough.

Chapter End Notes

Amatus (Tevine) = a term of endearment
Ma lath (Elven) = my love

Song lyrics: Seether ft Amy Lee - Broken

Up next: Actual story!

Want to see some animated artwork of Fenris & Elodie, courtesy of @nswfrosch? Visit my Tumblr: https://66.media.tumblr.com/c6343837817072766757a41b3b09a7ad/tumblr_pquh7ku0iW1vkI8oi_12
Chapter 23 - "NSFW"

Chapter Summary

Everything seems pretty perfect in the world of FenHawke...until it isn't.

01.12.18: Now with artwork from the amazing Pookyhuntress of Tumblr!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It was inevitable that, over the past year or so since her defeat of the Arishok, rumours had begun to circulate that she was a magic user – at least half the nobles in Kirkwall had witnessed it first-hand, after all. She handled the accusations well enough, laughing them off as though the idea were preposterous, and so far the Templar's hadn't shown up at her door. She wondered if Cullen had anything to do with it, though he had predicted that people would find out sooner or later and that when the time came he would not risk his position to save her.

She was sitting by the fire, book in hand though completely lost in thought, when she heard a knock at the door. So preoccupied was her mind, that the noise startled a gasp from her and the book she was cradling fell from her grasp and on to the floor.

She took a deep breath to calm her nerves then headed for the door, tying her robe to conceal her black satin slip. As she placed her hand on the doorknob it dawned on her how late it actually was. Who could be knocking on her door at this hour? Just to be safe, she retrieved the letter opener from her writing desk and secreted it away behind her back.

As she slowly opened the door she locked eyes with the late caller: warm amber surrounded by dark circles.

“Knight Captain?” She asked in disbelief, wondering if she might be dreaming. This was the last person she expected to see at her door. Unless... “Shit. Please tell me your not here to -”

“No.” He immediately protested, submissively displaying his palms. “I came to warn you.”

“Warn me?” She looked at him in confusion, noticing that he had forgone his Templar armour in favour of civilian clothing.
“Can I come in?” He looked around nervously. “I'm not entirely certain I'm not being followed.”

She stared agape at him for a few startled moments, before stepping aside and gesturing for him to enter. As she turned to close the door, she took a few deep breaths, praying to whatever gods might be listening that this surprise meeting remain civil – and perhaps that Fenris would not return home until the Templar had left.

“So.” She began, turning to face him, nervously fidgeting with the belt of her robe. “What's this warning you mentioned?”

He cleared his throat as he tried valiantly to keep his eyes off her chest, failing for just a fraction of a second every few breaths. “It's Meredith.” He cautioned. “She's heard one-too-many rumours about you and plans to test the truth of them. I have convinced her thus far that it would be very bad for her reputation to apprehend the Champion, so instead she's planning a public silencing.”

“Well, shit.” She deflated, sitting down wearily on the nearest surface.

“She is obsessed with you, and has begun to question my loyalty for not sharing her suspicions.”

“So you think she's having you followed? What about Carver?”

“He is definitely being watched, hence why I did not send him to warn you.”

"What's so special about me?" She scoffed.

"You have become a voice of reason for many, one which rarely agrees with Meredith." He chuckled.

"And yet you don't seem overly displeased about that."

He sighed. "I fear Meredith is not the Commander she once was. Time and experience have warped her mind. She is suspicious and easy to anger."
“So, what do you suggest I do?”

“Oh, I would never presume to tell you what to do.” He chuckled. “But it isn't safe for you here any longer. You need to leave.”

“I'm not going anywhere.” She flat out refused. “This is my home.”

“Then you need to find a way to avoid Meredith, or are you so arrogant as to think you can withstand a silencing?” He scathingly berated her.

“Once was more than enough, thank you very much.” She retorted. “And no, I do not think I could withstand another.”

“When -”

“Why would you risk telling me this?” She interrupted before he could enquire further. “I thought you said you wouldn't help me whenever I was inevitably exposed.”

“Yes, well, rule does not serve by caging the best of us.”

She was speechless.

“Don't get me wrong, I believe in the Circle and that mage's need to be properly educated and protected.” He took a deep breath. “But your father obviously did as good a job as any Circle could with you.”

She could have cried as they stared quietly at each other for a few moments, until he cleared his throat again and turned to leave.

“Cullen.” She called out, postponing his exit. “Thank you. I really appreciate you helping me like this.”
“I did it as much for myself as I did for you.” He admitted. “There are some in the order who suspect that you and I – well, that we have history.”

“Cullen, I never told -” She couldn't honestly finish that sentence; she knew of at least three people who knew. ‘I'm certain none of them would have said anything to anyone.” She amended, though would definitely be having words with Isabella later.

“No, I'm fairly certain it's my own fault.” He chuckled. “I overheard one of the recruits bragging about – well, being with you; and I may have reacted...poorly.” He blushed.

“Where you defending my honour, Knight Captain?” She teased.

“I suppose that's as good a reason as any to break someone's nose.” He japed. “But I apologise, it's none of my business who you sleep with.”

“Wait, you didn't actually believe him did you?” She was aghast. “Cullen, you are the only Templar I have ever been with.”

“Oh.” He blushed. “Then I retract my apology.”

“I should think so.” She agreed. “I'd quite like to have a crack at this little shits face myself. What did you say his name was?”

“No.” He sternly objected. “It was a long time ago and I think he learned his lesson.”

“Oh you're no fun.” She pouted.

“Well, I should...probably go.”

“Yeah” She agreed; Fenris was bound to be home any second and she really wanted to avoid the confrontation which would surely ensue. “Thanks again. I owe you one.”

“Goodnight, Champion.”
And then he left.

She had fallen asleep on the couch by the time Fenris finally returned from playing cards with Donnic. The two of them had become thick as thieves in recent months. She was glad he had a normal friend: one with whom he didn't regularly find himself thrown in to life threatening situations, though it wasn't for lack of trying: Donnic was relentless in trying try convince Fenris to join the guard.

The once broody elf stared lovingly at his snoozing woman, basking in her effortless beauty, before kneeling down beside her and gently caressing her cheek to rouse her from sleep. “I'm home.” He whispered as she grumbled in to consciousness.

She smiled as soon as she locked eyes with him. “Ma lath, did you have fun?” She sleepily enquired.

“Sorry I'm so late.” He apologised, still caressing her cheek.

“You don't have a curfew.” She chuckled. “You can stay out as late as you like.” She stretched her arms out and yawned, before attempting to rub the sleep from her eyes.

He leaned closer to kiss her forehead. “Let's go to bed.”

She made an agreeable noise, but her lids drooped shut again and she made no attempt to move. She didn't protest when he lifted her, bridal style, draping her arms around his shoulders as he carried her upstairs. He placed her down gently on the bed, quickly undressing himself then snuggling up behind her. As he pulled the blanket up to cover them both, she moved in her sleep, turning to press her cheek to his chest and wrap her arms around his waist. He returned the gesture, holding her tightly and gently stroking the shell of her ear, until he too drifted into a peaceful slumber.

She awoke in a cold sweat, sitting violently upright, frantically scanning her surroundings. Just a dream, she tried to reassure herself, but her racing heart refused to slow down. She began panting, unable to catch her breath, when Fenris began to stir beside her.

“One way to fall asleep… and one way to wake up.” He sighed, his gaze drawn to her. “You were having a terrible dream.”

“Hawke?” He panicked. “What is it, are you okay?”
Her vision was beginning to tunnel, everything sounded as though underwater and she felt like she was about to faint.

“Look at me.” She barely heard him speak as he grasped her arms and forced her to look at him. “Breath when I breath.” He instructed. “In.” He took a deep breath in. “And out.” He exhaled slowly then repeated.

She tried to focus on him, and not the total panic consuming her. After a few attempts she felt her lungs begin to obey her commands, breathing deep and slow, until she felt her racing heart begin to settle.

“Better?”

She nodded then allowed him to guide her back down to the mattress, resting her head on his chest as he cradled her with his strong arms and pressed his lips to her head.

“I'm sorry.” She shakily apologised.

“Bad dream?” He asked, knowing all too well the effects such a thing could have on a person.

“Just the usual.” She affirmed.

“It's been a while.” He commented. “Did something set it off?”

She thought about her Templar visitor. “Yeah. Can we talk about it later though?”

He kissed her head and held her just a little tighter. “Of course. Try to get some sleep.”

“I love you.” She whispered, pressing a firm kiss to his chest, her consciousness slipping almost instantly back in to the fade.

He chuckled to himself at her remarkable ability of being able to fall asleep on command, but he was wide awake now and so resigned himself to guard her from the demons that plagued her dreams.
A few hours later, as the morning sun slowly brightened and filled the room, he felt her stirring.

“Morning.” She yawned.

He responded only by pulling her closer to nuzzle in to the crook of her neck.

“That tickles.” She giggled, putting next to no effort in to pushing him away.
He rolled her on to her back, pinning her beneath him as he proceeded to lavish her neck and collar bone with open mouthed kisses. He pulled open her robe to run his hands reverently over her satin clad curves. As his hands reached her thighs, he slid them back up and underneath her slip then tucked his fingers in to the waistband of her smalls and slowly pulled them down her legs.

She giggled but made no attempt to protest. Once her smalls were nowhere to be seen, he returned his mouth to her own and languorously kissed her as one hand paid special attention to the apex of her thighs. She was always embarrassingly ready to go first thing in the morning, so he quickly had enough of her slick on his hand to lubricate himself, and without further preamble he sank in to her gloriously welcoming nerve centre.

He made slow, worshipful love to her; one thumb reverently caressing her cheek as the other ran up and down the hood of her clt. Their lips rarely broke apart, only to cry out in ecstasy as their conjoined climax burst forth. He thrust deeply with each pulse of seed, prolonging the feel of her own orgasm, until they were both utterly spent.

He shimmied down the bed between her legs, until his upper torso came to rest against her pelvis, relieving her of his weight without having to leave the warm embrace of her thighs. He ran his hands up and down her sides as he kissed her stomach, circling her naval with the tip of his nose.

She ran her fingers through his hair, as he pressed his cheek to her womb, forever amazed by its softness. He moved his hands underneath her to grasp the globes of her arse, squeezing playfully.

“You have a gorgeous arse, Hawke.”

She laughed out loud, coaxing his seed to come gushing out of her and on to the mattress below. “As do you.” She purred, stretching out one leg to run her foot over his taught rear. He really did have a magnificent rump; so firm and bite-able.

“You want to talk about what caused your dream now?” He asked, cleverly having waited until she was completely relaxed.

“Yeah, about that.” She began.

He continued to pepper her lower abdomen with kisses – something she had noticed him doing a lot lately – glancing up without stopping to encourage her to continue.
“The Knight Captain stopped by last night.”

He suddenly stilled, his lips pressed firmly to her hip, though after a few seconds he resumed what he was doing. “And.” He encouraged, attempting to sound unconcerned. He sounded calm, but the faint glow of lyrium told her otherwise.

“He came to warn me.” She continued. “Apparently Meredith is planning to publicly silence me.”

He frantically slid back up her body, coming face to face with her. “Then why are we still here!?”

“Calm down.” She tried to soothe him. “It'll be fine.”

“How can this possibly be fine, Hawke?” He argued.

“I just need to avoid her, is all.”

“Oh that's all?” He sarcastically snapped.

“Look, I'm the Champion of Kirkwall. She can't just haul me in, she has to wait for an opportunity where nobody knows what she's up to.”

“Templar's are everywhere, Hawke. How do you know she won't get someone else to try?”

“Well, from what Cul – the Knight Captain said, it sounds as though even her own men think she's losing it.”

“And what else did the Templar have to say for himself?” He attempted to sound disinterested.

“Nothing much. Just that he didn't think I belonged in the Circle.”
He snorted.

“Do you disagree?” She snapped.

“No.” He shot back. “But I think he’d say just about anything for another chance with you.”

“You are joking!” She humorously yelled. “He would never – with a known apostate?”

“Don’t be so naïve, Hawke. I see the way he still looks at you. The man has no loyalty to his order, its shameful.”

“That is not true, and you should be thankful for that fact. He ended things with me as soon as he found out the truth. If he’d been okay with it, you and I might never have happened.” She stubbornly speculated.

“I don’t believe that.” He arrogantly disagreed. “I would have won you back sooner or later.”

“Such confidence.” She mocked.

“Do you deny it?” He smirked.

“I -” The truth was, she couldn't. She knew she would have gravitated back to him eventually. “Arse.”

“Come here.” He growled, grasping her wrists as he sat back on his heels, pulling her up to straddle his lap.

He kissed her with every fibre of his being, as if to convince her of his love for him – as if she would ever need reminding of such a thing. She began to roll her hips, sliding her folds along the length of his renewed erection, until he sneakily angled himself to slip inside.

He held her tightly, savouring the feel of being one with her. Never in his life did he think he could ever be so joyously content. He held her face with both hands, gazing rapturously in to her eyes.

She placed an adoring hand on his cheek. “I love it when you say things like that.”

“Might you love anything else?” He teased. “A dashing, brightly coloured elf, perhaps?”

“Hmm.” She comically considered, tapping a finger on her chin, until he began furiously tickling her ribs.

“Okay, okay!” She loudly protested. “I really love you too...now shut up and fuck me.”

“As you wish.” He surrendered, slamming her down on to her back and hitching her legs over his shoulders, pounding in to her with the ferocity of a rage demon.

She threw her head back as her hands desperately clutched at the sheets around her, loudly moaning at the delicious blend of pain and pleasure. She reached a hand between them, letting out a wildly uncontrolled jolt of lightening and sending herself careening off the edge. Fenris made a startled groan of pleasure, slipping from her and rolling on to his back as her magic lanced through him. She managed to focus on him through her orgasm just in time to see him release on to his own stomach with nothing but the caress of her arcane touch.

“What the fuck was that?” He panted.

“Complete accident.” She insisted, breathlessly.

“It feels amazing.” He whined, completely overcome with pleasure, hands fisted in his own hair as he continued to leak on to himself.

She watched him writhe with hungry eyes, thrilled and amazed that she could accidentally bring him such intense carnal pleasure. She repositioned herself on the bed, pressing herself to his side and wrapping his arm around her.

“Life doesn't get much better than this.” She sighed.
He chuckled as the fog of sexual gratification began to clear. “No, I don't imagine it does.”

Having spent the majority of the day in coital bliss, she decided she needed to do something a little more productive with her evening. She had attempted to catch up with Anders several times over the past month, though had been largely unsuccessful. She bade farewell to her elven lover, culminating in a final farewell tumble, then headed out to Darktown.

“Hawke.” He beamed “To what do I owe the pleasure?”

“Just thought I'd come lend a hand.” She lied, noticing that he had lost even more weight since the last time she'd seen him. “And I feel like we haven't spoken for ages. I actually miss you.”

“Try not to sound too surprised.” He scoffed.

“Shut up.” She shoved his shoulder, playfully. “I mean it. Where have you even been for the past month? Every time I stop by the place is empty.”

He looked away, guiltily. “The less you know the better.”

“Oh, not this again.” She whined in frustration. “Anders, whatever it is you can talk to me. I want to help.”

“I don't want you getting mixed up in this, Hawke, it's too dangerous.” He was wearing that grim expression again.

“Danger's my middle name.” She joked. “But in all seriousness, if you don't tell me I'm just going to follow you around until I find out for myself.”

He growled in protestation. “It's just...mage stuff.”
“Well in case you'd forgotten, I happen to be a mage.”

“I haven't forgotten.” He muttered under his breath,

“What is that supposed to mean?” She demanded.

“Nothing.” He sighed.

“It clearly isn't nothing.” She goaded. “Anders, if I've done something to offend you I'd like to know about it.”

“I'm sorry, I didn't mean it. It's just...well I'm trying so hard to help the mage's of this city while you're still pretending not to even be one. Hawke, you could inspire so many of them if they only knew what you truly were. You're living proof that the Circles are completely unnecessary!”

“So, what, you want me to announce what I am and be forced in to hiding? Because the Templar's wouldn't just turn a blind eye you know, they would come for me like any other.”

“You don't know that.” He argued. “You're the sodding Champion of Kirkwall, the people of this city owe you their lives, they wouldn't stand for it!”

“Anders, that's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard.” She scoffed. “The people of this city – even if they would protest to such a thing – have no influence over the Templar's. Meredith would probably make me Tranquil just for making her look so foolish!”

“I don't want to argue, Hawke.” He deflated. “I just – were losing this fight.”

“So let me help.” She tried to persuade him. “Surely we can find some kind of happy medium – something somewhere between absolutely nothing and way too much?”

He hesitated in the face of her genuine compassion, clearly giving some serious thought to his next words. “Well...there is one thing I could use your help with.”
She wished she hadn't asked. His request seemed innocent enough, but she just knew there was something sinister to it. He refused to tell her why he needed her to do what he was asking, and pretty much gave her an ultimatum: help him with this or nothing at all. In spite of everything, she just couldn't bare the thought of something bad happening to him as a result of her refusal to help, so she reluctantly agreed. She had a terrible feeling in the pit of her stomach: something catastrophic was going to happen, she just knew it.

As soon as she was done *distracting* Elthina for whatever it was Anders was up to, she dragged him, Varric and Fenris down to check on the workers at the bone pit.

“What the fuck happened here?” She breathed in disbelief, praying for survivors but knowing it was futile. The entire place had been reduced to ash. Only one thing she knew of could cause such fiery ruination. “Dragon!” She yelled as she spotted the winged behemoth circling ahead.

They charged through a newly opened passage, presumably to its lair, and she wasted no time in bringing down a barrage of lethal elements. Initially she succeeded only in pissing the creature off, forcing it to call out to it's hoards of offspring hiding in the mountains as it perched on a ledge beyond their reach. Once it noticed it's children being decimated however, it soon returned to the fray and one of the most exhilarating battles of her life ensued. She wished there was some way to reason with the magnificent beast, but it was all raw power; capable only of immense chaos and destruction.

It wasn't easy, but eventually they divided the creatures attention enough to create an opening - just long enough for her to formulate an insane plan, though not long enough for her to realise the absurdity of it. She charged straight towards it as it stretched its long neck out low and let out an ear splitting screech, launching herself off the ground in a part-cartwheel-part-somersault and on to its back. She landed with grace in to a seated position, legs dangling over each shoulder.

It reared it's scaled head, wildly convulsing in an attempt to throw her off. She sank one dagger in to its thick neck to secure her position and as it let out another ear splitting scream she rapidly swiped her other dagger several times across the narrowest part of its neck, eventually cleaving its head from its shoulders.

As its body fell lifelessly to the ground, she slid effortlessly from its back and down one wing, landing nimbly on her feet. It must have looked pretty fucking awesome, if she did say so herself. She prayed there were spirits watching from the other side of the veil who might be so kind as to replay the scene in her dreams.

“Did you see that!?” She turned to the rest of the group, grinning widely.
“There will be no living with her after this.” Fenris muttered to Varric.

“Stick that in one your novels!” She yelled at Varric, unaware of Fenris’ jape.

“Too unbelievable.” He immediately rejected. “I'd at least have to end it with you tumbling in to a pile of dragon shit.”

“Eurgh.” She grimaced.

She stripped as much as she could from the carcass, reasoning that Solivitus would be able to make something useful out of it, then they headed back to Kirkwall to let Hubert know the bad news. He reacted as expected, with absolutely no regard for his deceased workers and concerned only about his loss of income. She therefore took it upon herself to personally visit the homes of the miners to deliver the terrible news, and offered each of them a generous amount of compensation.

“I'm exhausted.” She exhaled, collapsing backwards on to her bed: delivering the news of so many deaths was almost as draining as battling a dragon.

“Don't forget about the party.” Fenris reminded her as he knelt down to unlace and remove her boots.

“Shit.” She cursed. “I had forgotten about that.”

The Alienage was throwing Lia - the young elf girl she saved from Kelder some years back - a party to celebrate her eighteenth name day. She had kept in touch with Lia through Merrill, who had passed on the invitation to Hawke and the rest of their companions.

“Do I have time to bathe at least?” She whined.

“Just about.” He chuckled. “I'll go make a start.”

She grumbled as she forced herself to sit up and slowly began to peel off her blood stained armour. Once down to her smalls she perused her wardrobe and selected an outfit – an off the shoulder black velvet dress that fit snugly to her torso and hung loose from her hips – then sauntered in to the
bathroom where Fenris had just finished filling the tub. She activated the rune below and the water began to heat to a perfect bathing temperature.

She helped Fenris out of his own armour before removing her smalls, then took his hand and lead him to the tub. She climbed in first, leaning back against the side and parting her legs for him to sit in front of her. She used an old tankard to wet his hair – which was pink from all the dried dragons blood – then lathered up a bar of soap and massaged the suds in to his scalp until he melted under her touch.

“Hawke.” He chastised. “We don't have time for this.”

“What?” She innocently protested. “I wasn't doing anything.”

“You know exactly what you're doing.” He scolded. “You know what that does to me.”

It was true, she knew exactly how much he loved the feel of her hands in his hair. During his previous life, washing his masters hair had been a duty of his; but nobody had ever done it for him, until Hawke. He struggled to articulate his feelings the first time she did it, leading her to believe that it had only made him uncomfortable, but he was later able to admit how he truly felt about finally having someone take care of him.

She behaved herself after that, quickly finishing up then tending to her own hair. She still had the enchanted hairbrush her mother had gifted her as a young girl – no doubt hoping she would put a little more effort in to being presentable – and was grateful for the time it saved. She ran it through her long and impossibly black locks, leaving glossy waves in its wake. She slipped in to her dress then turned to see how Fenris was faring. He'd been ready for ages of course, sat patiently waiting on the bed, idly twiddling his thumbs.

“Ready?” She smiled as he looked her up and down, relishing the weight of his devouring gaze.

“You look beautiful.” He declared as he walked towards her, leaning in for a quick kiss before brutishly hoisting her over his shoulder and carrying her downstairs, despite her half-hearted screams of protestation.

By the time they arrived at the alienage, the party was in full swing. She spotted Lia amidst the crowds of people and headed over to wish her a happy birthday. Satisfied with her effort of socialising, she turned back to where she had left Fenris, but he was no longer there. She looked
around for him for a while but eventually gave up and helped herself to a drink.

After several more drinks, and no sign of Fenris, she began to worry. She did a few laps but nobody had seen him since they arrived. Something was definitely wrong. She headed up the steps to go check in at The Hanged Man, in case he'd become too uncomfortable with the crowds of people, but as she neared the corner she heard hushed whispers and stopped in her tracks; immediately recognising one of the voices as Donnic.

“You're making this a lot more difficult than it needs to be.” He sounded fairly amused.

“I tried!” That voice definitely belonged to Fenris. “I just...couldn't.”

“Are you sure you actually want to?”

“Yes, of course I am!”

“So what's the problem?” Was he laughing?

“What if she says no? - She should say no.”

“Fenris.” Donnic chided.

“Hawke!” Merrill shouted up to her from the bottom of the steps, bringing the conversation on which she was eavesdropping to an abrupt end.

“Hawke?” Fenris popped his head around the corner, frightening her half to death.

“By the dread wolf!” She exclaimed, one hand on her chest. “I was just...looking for you.”

He eyed her, suspiciously. “Were you listening?”
“To what?” She feigned ignorance.

He narrowed his eyes further, weighing her up. “Never mind.” He eventually let her off the hook. “Come on, lets get a drink.”

She tried not to speculate about what little she'd overheard, but she found herself distracted the entire evening. Eventually he pulled her up on it.

“Hawke, are you feeling okay?” He sounded genuinely concerned.

“What?” She answered reflexively.

“You've been quiet all night: it's disturbingly out of character.” He teased, nudging her shoulder.

“I'm just tired.” She smiled, dismissively. “It's been a long day.”

“Do you want to go?” He suggested.

“Yeah.” She nodded. “Let me just say goodbye to Lia.”

They walked home hand-in-hand in relative silence. She frequently felt his peripheral gaze on her, but was relieved that he seemed content to not speak.

“Are you sure you're okay?” Fenris' caring voice cut through her morbid musings as she readied herself for bed. “Are you worried about Meredith?”

*That'll do,* she thought to herself, silently nodding her false affirmation.

“We could leave, you know.” He suggested as they both climbed in to bed.

She snorted. “I wont be forced from another home. And anyway, I sense chaos on the horizon. This
city is going to need us.”

“Why do you always put the needs of everyone else ahead of your own?”

“I’m a helper.” She shrugged.

“You are a far better person than I deserve.” He revered, moving closer to kiss her bare shoulder.

She grumbled when his hands began caressing her curves. “Not tonight, Fenris, I'm beat.”

“Just lay back.” He insisted. “Let me take care of you.”

She sighed, half frustrated and half aroused, as he kissed his way down her body and proceeded to bring her to climax several times with his mouth and fingers alone, before settling down beside her with no regard for his own release.

“Goodnight, amatus.” He kissed her forehead as she snuggled closer, wishing for the umpteenth time that he had the balls to say what he wanted to. Just as sleep was about to claim him, he felt Hawke stir.

“Fuck it.” She huffed as she rolled herself on top of him.

“Hawke, it's fine, we don't have to - “

“We were practically sleeping under a tent, Fenris.” She laughed, but it dissolved in to a low moan as she slowly sheathed him to the hilt.

“This won't last long.” He warned as she began to move.

“Fine by me, I've already been thoroughly satisfied.” She gripped the headboard to augment her strength, grinding hard against him with each roll of her pelvis.
His hands worshipped her flesh, caressing her breasts and hips before moving to grasp the globes of her arse, guiding her to grind even harder against him. Her own climax was a pleasant surprise, soon followed by a final rough thrust as he filled her with his seed.

When she finally opened her eyes to look down at him, she was startled by the far-away expression on his face. “Fenris?” She shoved his chest when he didn't respond, bringing him back to himself with a few rapid blinks. “Another memory?” He looked her up and down in silence, almost as though he didn't recognise her. “Fenris?” She tried again.

“It's fine - I'm fine.” He not so reassuringly tried to assure her. “I...need to be somewhere.” She slid off of him as he made to get out of bed.

“It's the middle of the night – where do you need to be at this hour?”

“So I do have curfew?” He snapped.

She wanted to rage, but bit her tongue. “Whatever.” She huffed, forcing herself to get comfortable. He had obviously remembered something disturbing - and she felt bad for that, truly - but she couldn't help being miffed at his lack of desire to confide in her.

She didn't hear any movement from him for a few minutes, until he abruptly gathered his clothes and left.

…

The next morning she wasn't at all surprised to find he hadn't returned, so she decided to keep herself busy. She planned to visit Solivitus to see what he could make with the bits of dragon she had foraged. She considered Meredith for but a moment, the woman would no doubt be hold up in her quarters, she couldn't actually remember having ever seen her patrolling or standing guard in the Gallows.

She was cautious when she ascended the steps in to the Gallows courtyard, surveying the place for any sign of the Knight Commander or any of her shit-eating lackeys, but saw only somewhat friendly faces. Deciding it was safe, she headed straight to Sol, ignoring the panicked look on Cullen's face when he noticed her.
Halfway across the courtyard, she heard Isabella shouting her name. She turned to welcome the sailor with a smile.

“Fancy meeting you here.” Isabella purred in her forever sultry tone.

“I could say the same. What brings you to this little slice of hell?”

“I will kill you in your sleep if you ever repeat this...but I was looking for Carver.” She almost whispered.

“Still avoiding you, huh?” Carver had cut all ties with Isabella after the whole Arishok-almost-killing-his-sister thing.

“It’s not like I care about him or anything, I just miss his co -”

“Don’t you dare finish that sentence.” She loudly interrupted.

“What? I was going to say company.”

“Really?”

“No.” She smirked. "I was totally going to say cock."

She had become completely unaware of her surroundings, consumed by their shared raucous laughter, when she suddenly felt as though all the air had been sucked from her lungs as her connection to the fade was violently severed. This was immensely more powerful than the silencing she endured back in Lothering. She fell to her knees with a surprised gasp of distress, one hand sprawled out to stop herself from falling flat on her face. Breathing heavily she looked up to see which Templar was responsible, feeling exceedingly foolish to find the Knight Commander herself marching towards her.

She reached for a dagger, but just as her fingertips brushed the hilt she was struck in the temple by something cold; and everything turned black.
Chapter End Notes

Well, shit!
Chapter 24 - "NSFW"

Chapter Summary

Four Weeks!? Come on Charlotte!

So sorry for the wait. To be honest I've been able to produce nothing but Cullen smut and had to purge myself of that before continuing this fic. On the plus side, I almost have enough for a CullenxInquisitor one shot. I may even flesh it out and do a few chapters. Still trying to decide.

But now...Hawke's story (finally) continues.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Cold and confused, he sat alone in Danarius' old mansion. He hadn't been back at all since moving in with Hawke, but he was glad it hadn't yet been repossessed by the city. After the memory he had just recalled, he needed to be alone. Torture and degradation he could handle, but this one was something else entirely, something he did not care to see more of.

One moment he had been adoringly gazing at the woman he loved as she rode him to completion, and the next he was looking in to the golden eyes of a pretty elf as she too climaxed above him. He felt sick with guilt, as though he had betrayed Hawke somehow. He had vowed never to hide anything from her again, but he hadn't expected to remember something like this when he'd made that promise to himself.

He had no recollection of the elven woman beyond this one sexual encounter, nor did he have any desire to learn more. Although...what if she was important to him? Would he want to remember that? No. No, he wanted Hawke and only Hawke. He wouldn't jeopardise what they had both worked so hard to achieve. He would block this elf from his thoughts, and speak of her to no one.

By the time he returned home, after spending most of the early hours working on an explanation for his sudden disappearance, it was mid morning and Hawke had already left. Intent on making it up to her, he found Orana and asked for her help in the kitchen. Hawke would often team her apologies with baked goods - which he thoroughly enjoyed - and so decided to attempt the same for her. Blueberry pie was something she always said reminded her of home, so he settled on that.

Baking was a lot more time consuming than Hawke had ever lead him to believe. She'd always say just something I threw together, as though it was barely any effort. He would be sure to thank her properly next time.
As the pie was left to cool, he started to worry that she might actually be out searching for him. He waited for her to return for a little while longer, then decided to go look for her. First he swung by The Hanged Man, but Varric hadn't seen her. Then, reluctantly, he checked in with Merrill at the alienage, but she hadn't seen Hawke either. On a positive note, nobody had said she'd been looking for him, but he still couldn't shake the feeling in his gut that something was amiss. Lastly, he decided to stop by Anders' clinic, to see if she'd been helping out.

When he arrived, he heard frantic voices inside. He made his way in, fully expecting to find Hawke, but instead both Anders and Isabella fell suddenly silent when they saw him. Uninterested in their personal issues, he ignored the awkwardness. “Have either of you seen Hawke?”

They looked at each other nervously before Isabella began to speak. “Fenris, don't freak out....”

As if he could do anything but when presented with those particular words.

“...Hawke's in trouble.”

“Is she hurt!?” He demanded, stalking towards the pirate, insistently gripping her by the arms. “Where is she!?”

“Just relax, will you!” She snapped back, wrenching herself free. “She's been taken to the Circle.”

“What? How? When?” He frantically paced the room. “Why are you both just standing here? We have to get her out!” He turned on his heel to head for the door, but Anders used his magic to seal it shut before he could leave.

“You step foot in the Gallows in that temper and you're as good as dead!” He shouted as Fenris banged his fists against the immovable door. “We have to be smart about this!”

“I will tear every Templar's heart from his chest, if I must.” He raged. “Do not make me do the same to you!”

“I have no love for Templar's, you know this, but we have to think about the long-term repercussions!“ His voice wavered as the elf began to glow. “Listen to me! We have a plan.”
“Let. Me. Out!” He was across the room in a flash and seconds away from sinking his fist in to the mage's chest, but Anders was a quick thinker. He begrudgingly lifted a hand and swaddled the angry elf in a powerful sleep spell. Isabella caught him as he fell, rescuing him from the impact of the hard floor.

"He's going to kill you when he wakes up, you know that right?" Isabella annoyingly stated the obvious.

"Yeah.” Was all he could think to say, trying and failing to convince himself that he wasn't afraid.

Earlier that day...

"Hawke!?" Isabella panicked, stepping protectively between her friend and the large group of approaching Templar's.

“I knew it!” Meredith raged as she closed in on the incapacitated Champion. "Take her away." She barked at her men. "And I want him arrested." She yelled, pointing a gauntleted finger towards a helpless Carver. "Infiltrating the order whilst harbouring an apostate!" She spat at his feet. "You disgust me!"

“Isabella, don't.” Carver shouted at the woman preparing to defend his unconscious sister. Though it was a fight she had zero chance of winning, and they both knew it.

She reluctantly sheathed her daggers before issuing a clear warning. “You're going to regret this.”

She waited until Hawke was out of sight before heading for the boat. Anders would know what to do, but she dare not tell Fenris about this until they had a plan.

…

Lying on a creaky cot, she stared up at the wooden beams as the calming scent of elfroot filled her nostrils. "Anders, what are you doing down there?" Hawke giggled as the mage with his face between her thighs began to quietly chant the words to yet another secret erotic spell of his.
"Patience." He cooed, lightly teasing her with the tip of his nose.

She gasped when she felt as though he had sheathed himself, though his cock was nowhere near her, eventually realising the spell he was using was one to make certain appendages temporarily larger - in this case, his tongue had grown about eight inches in length. He curved the impossibly long appendage so that it ran along her clit with each caress of her inner walls. She writhed uncontrollably, her legs repeatedly sliding off his shoulders as she struggled to endure the excruciating pleasure. He placed one hand on her lower abdomen, pinning her down in an attempt to hold her still, but all it did was add to the pressure of his tongue reaching deep inside her, and that coupled with the constant friction against her pearl was more than enough to bring about a rather glorious climax.

She found herself suddenly enveloped by the scent of elderflower and oakmoss. The mattress beneath her shins was firm, and the sheets soft. She felt a muscled chest beneath her palms and as she blinked in to focus she was greeted by the sight of a blond Templar, smiling up at her as she sat astride his hips. "Cullen?" She asked, a little confusedly, though lost any sense of cohesion when she felt their physical connection and he began to thrust upwards in to her. He gripped her hips and forcibly ground her against himself at the end of each downward stroke and she came apart to his desperate pleas of love.

She stared up at the starry night sky, running her fingers through the blades of grass beneath her as mage lights floated above, casting a warm golden glow on the naked body beside her. In an instant she found herself blanketed by said body – that of a chestnut haired elf - who was kissing her neck as his fingers explored the place between her thighs. "Oli." She moaned, writhing beneath his teasing touch.

"Vhenan." He answered, with nothing but adoration in his ethereally dark eyes.

"What -" She confusedly tried to make sense of where she was, but then his tongue found its way in to her mouth and she lost herself to the sensation as he simultaneously hilted himself in her wet heat. His fingers found their way back to her little bundle of nerves as he slowly made love to her, pushing her over the edge as she released a resounding cry of ecstasy.

In the familiar comfort of her own bed, expensive cotton sheets caressing her skin as she lay on her front, she felt worshipful lips caressing the expanse of her back before strong hands gripped her hips and dragged her to her knees. "Fenris." She gasped as he attacked her with that talented mouth of his. "Ma lath, what's happening?" She breathlessly pleaded, trying desperately to make sense of what was going on. But all thought was wrenched from her when he swiftly entered her from behind, his pelvis slapping forcefully against her rear as she cried out at the intense, but not unwelcome, stretch. He leaned over her, wrapping one arm around her waist, nipping at the flesh of her shoulder as he
pounded in to her.

Without even being aware of moving, she found herself straddling his hips as he lay flat on his back, looking back at him over her shoulder as he watched their joining. He licked his thumb then began massaging circles around her puckered hole, causing her rhythm to falter for just a second. He continued to tease her tight ring as she rode him, eventually - and ever so gently - slipping his thumb inside to the first knuckle. She cried out at the new sensation of fullness it created, enraptured by the look of intense arousal on her lover's face as his thumb slipped deeper still. She ran her own hand down her front to play with herself and without warning she found herself in the throws of an explosive orgasm.

She awoke to the feeling of many sets of lips and hands on her naked body. She lifted herself up on to her elbows to take in her surroundings, finding herself in bed with not one, but all four of her previous lovers. "What the -" She near enough leapt from the bed, unable to finish her question. "What in the void is happening?" She panicked.

"Come back to bed, Vhenan." Her first love purred, in his delicious Dalish accent.

"Hawke?" That gravely voice alone made her knees weak as a renewed wave of arousal flooded her senses.

"Let us love you, Elodie." The handsome Templar cooed.

"Stay with us, Kitten." The mage pleaded.

"No, this isn't right." She whispered to herself. "This is a dream." She finally realised.

"One you can enjoy forever." All four men spoke in unison. "All you have to do is let us in."

"What kind of foul demon are you?" She spat, her realisation that this was all an illusion quickly restoring her sanity. "I don't want this."

"I could have made you so happy." A multifaceted demonic voice surrounded her, filling her with a sense of dread.
The four men were suddenly cocooned by a blinding light, but what emerged was no man. A desire demon stood not four steps away, vulgarly fondling itself.

"You're trick has failed, demon." She angrily seethed. "Now release me!"

"Pity." It sighed. "I could have had so much fun wearing you."

"Fuck off, before I end you." She threatened.

"I may not be able to escape this place with you." It snarled as it began floating towards her. "But I can keep you here as my play thing."

"I'm not some inexperienced Circle mage." She laughed, menacingly. "I'm Elodie fucking Hawke! Champion of Kirkwall. Slayer of ancient dark spawn, Qunari hoards and mother fucking dragons!" She summoned every drop of mana, channelling her full potential in to a devastating bolt of lightening. She had to shield her eyes from the blast, and upon opening them found nothing but a pile of steaming goo.

She began to laugh with relief until she felt herself being roughly tugged by some invisible force. She started to panic, wildly lashing out at nothing until she felt a cold gauntleted hand on her shoulder. Her eyes snapped up to the fully armoured Templar, only his eyes were visible through the visor of his helmet, but she'd recognise those amber pools anywhere.

She quickly assessed her surroundings, in full on fight or flight mode. She was sitting on the stone floor of a large circular room, surrounded by Templar's. "Where am I?" Her voice was hoarse, as though she had been shouting.

"You're in the harrowing chamber." Cullen whispered. "You passed."

"I...? - You fucking harrowed me!?" She furiously rose to her feet, ready to take a swing at anyone who so much as looked at her. She pushed passed two Templar's towards the door, but as her fingers grazed the handle she found herself immobilised. "Who fucking silenced me!?" She growled at the Templar's behind her as she slid to her knees.

"Hawke." Cullen warned as he slowly approached. "I'd like for you to be escorted to your quarters now, but if you don't calm down I'm afraid it will be the dungeons."
"Fuck you!" She snarled through gritted teeth.

She saw his shoulders slump as he slowly exhaled, then motioned for his men to restrain her. She fought with everything she had - which wasn't much after her recent ordeal - but was eventually clapped in irons and thrown in to the dungeons. She waited in the dark for what felt like hours, but she had no way to tell. Her stomach grumbled at the thought and as if summoned her door creaked open; bathing her little cell in a fiery orange glow.

Cullen hesitated as he tried to assess her state of mind. "I brought you some food." He eventually announced, voice a little anxious.

She said nothing as she followed his movement with just her eyes. As he placed the tray on the ground before her she launched herself towards him, but her wrist restraints had been chained to the wall and she couldn't quite reach him. He stumbled backwards none-the-less, looking both terrified and ashamed.

"I did try to warn you." He angrily chastised. "Why didn't you stay away?"

All of her frustration and anger suddenly imploded and tears began to spill from her eyes.

"Please don't cry." He hesitantly whispered, clearly troubled by her demeanour but unsure if it was simply a ploy to get him within reach.

"I'm not." She flat out lied, roughly wiping the evidence from her cheeks. However, with her tears came a sense of clarity. She realised that if she continued to act out and was kept chained up in a cell, her chances of escape were none existent. "Did I hear you mention something about quarters?"

The blond Templar visibly appeared to relax a little at her change in tone. "Can I trust you to behave?"

"For now." She smirked. "And only if there's a bath involved."

"I'll see what I can do." He chuckled.
He moved closer to free her from her restraints, and she didn't miss the look of concern on his face.

"I hate seeing you like this." He suddenly whispered. "I didn't think it would be easy, but it's harder than I thought."

"Fear not, Templar, I wont be here for long." She dead-panned, examining the superficial damage to her now unbound wrists.

"I'm not sure if I should be relieved or concerned by that." He shuddered slightly. "But don't be too hasty: Meredith has already received a number of appeals demanding your immediate and unconditional release."

"Ha!" She laughed, shaking her head. "Varric."

"Not just the dwarf." He corrected. "Many people here owe you their lives and believe you should be trusted to live outside the Circle."

"Fucking Anders was right." She muttered to herself. "Oh, I will never hear the end of this."

"So just...try to stay off the radar - at least for a few days." He near enough begged. "Will you do that?"

She sighed in defeat. "Fine - but I still want that bath."

…

The very first thing she did when she finally found herself without Templar guards was head for the secret tunnel which lead to Darktown, only to learn it had been discovered and caved in! It seemed she really would have to bide her time, and trust that her friends would find some way to get her out. She wondered how Fenris was handling the news of her capture, flooded with a sense of dread that he might be planning something insane and almost certainly suicidal. She tried to push the thoughts from her mind, more than adept at compartmentalising her thoughts and feelings – if there was naught she could do, why make herself sick with worry?
Although she had passed her harrowing, undoubtedly disappointing Meredith to no end, she was placed in the children's classes to learn the ways of a good Circle mage; as though she had zero education. She was in fact more skilled than even the first enchanter – or so she told herself, though she would never admit to just how powerful she was; it would only make them even more wary of her. The senior enchanter who lead the class was not the nurturing sort, many of the children were still adjusting to life without their parents and her heart broke when she discovered a tiny little elf boy, no more than six years old, cowering in the corner after being yelled at for crying.

She knelt before him, coaxing him to turn and look at her as she whispered soothing words to him, completely ignoring the senior enchanters rantings until she eventually gave up and resumed the class without them.

“What's your name?” She asked with a warm smile as his tear filed chocolate brown eyes hesitantly peeked up at her through his unruly mop of jet black hair.

He sniffled and wiped his face with his sleeve. “Myles”.

“It's a pleasure to meet you Myles, I'm Hawke.” She took his hand and enthusiastically shook it, coaxing a little laugh from the tiny elf. “Don't let that nasty lady upset you, she's just in a bad mood 'cause she's got a stick lodged up her backside.” He laughed again and his tears were almost forgotten. “Come on, you can sit with me.”

She lead him back to her desk and, much louder than necessary, dragged another stool over to accommodate the both of them; ignoring the scathing looks from senior enchanter stick-up-her-butt.

As the lesson proceeded, she frequently turned to whisper to Myles in much more relatable terms that which the senior enchanter was dispassionately attempting to teach. As the lesson ended and they began to file out of the classroom, she felt Myles' tiny little hand grasp her own and follow her out. She didn't have much experience with children, besides her own siblings – when she was still a child herself – and that one Dalish mage from Oli's clan, but she didn't much mind his company.

In the days that followed, Myles would seek her out at every opportunity and never leave her side. As an enchanter, she was assigned a room of her own; separate from the apprentices and children who slept in shared dorms. Unfortunately for the little elf however, senior enchanter stick-up-her-butt had complained to the Templar's about her disrupting and undermining behaviour, so they reluctantly moved her to a more age appropriate class.
They were studying force magic, of all things. Some were beginning to understand it, but most were astonishingly oblivious. She wanted so badly to step in and better instruct them, but she was supposed to be staying under the radar. She settled for whispering a few pointers as she passed by to those who were right on the verge of understanding; with varying results. Some heeded her words - with great success - while others simply pretended not to hear her and one even became so flustered by her attention that he accidentally threw himself clear across the room.

She tried not to laugh, she really did.

After that she was relegated to organising the stock rooms with the tranquil. They gave her the creeps. She tried to humanise them, to think of the people they had once been, but all that did was add fuel to her steadily simmering rage. These poor people, taken from everything they once knew, afforded neither privacy nor dignity, disrespected and unloved, forced to face demons and endure cruel jailers, and for what? To be deemed undeserving of independent thought, feelings and emotions. Magically castrated and sentenced to a life of nothingness.

A quiet cry from a nearby room interrupted her furious thoughts. She took a few steps towards the offending room, but the way was suddenly blocked by one of the tranquil. “We are not permitted to enter there.” He told her in a monotonous tone.

“Why not?”

“The why is irrelevant.” Was his unemotional reply as he sauntered along and continued with his own tasks.

She watched until he left her line of site, then stepped closer to the room. She pressed her cheek to the door to try to make out any sound from within. She definitely heard some kind of scuffling, another quiet cry, gasps maybe? She was torn between laying low – as she’d been told - and sticking her nose in where it was very likely unwanted and would result in some form of punishment.

Fuck it.

She reached for the handle, but before she could touch it the door swung open and she came face-to-face with a pretty young elf. She couldn't have been any older than sixteen and she looked absolutely petrified. “Are you all right?”

She opened her mouth to speak, but it was a man's voice from inside the room that answered. “She’s
fine.” A slimy looking man sauntered out behind her, face flushed from exertion. “Isn't that right, mage?” He fixed the elf girl with a threatening stare.

“Did he touch you!?” She snarled at the out-of-breath Templar.

The elf looked at him for just a second, then turned to Hawke with a forced smile. “Of course not. He was just...helping me with my studies.” She turned to the Templar once more, a look of barely concealed nausea on her face. “Thank you, Ser Templar.” And off she scurried.

“If I find out you're forcing yourself on -”

“Watch your tongue, mage!” He angrily snapped. “You're not the Champion of Kirkwall any longer. In here you're just another mage. And if you don't keep your nose out of things that don't concern you...” His sudden smile made her blood run cold. “You might find that you need my help with your studies.” He reached out to swipe the back of his knuckle along her cheek.

She swatted him away, recoiling in disgust. “Just you fucking dare.”

“Do not test me!” He loudly retorted, silencing her – though it was the weakest one she had endured so far. He was clearly unsatisfied with her lack of physical reaction, so delivered a swift and surprising punch to her gut. He'd completely knocked the wind out of her. She doubled over trying to catch her breath but when she eventually straightened up, ready to unleash her wrath, he was gone.

He was going to regret doing that...she'd make sure of it.

She caught up to the pretty young elf later that evening, trying to coerce a confession from her, but she was far too frightened. She couldn’t in all honestly promise she could keep her safe, or that she could make it stop, but she could damn well try. The girl, Denali, may not have confessed to the Templar's crimes, but she didn't have to; it was obvious he'd forced himself on her from the way she walked. He certainly hadn't been gentle with her.

She kept a close eye on Denali in the days that followed, when her attention wasn't occupied by Myles, until finally she saw her following the slimy Templar down to the store rooms.

"Follow me.” She whispered to Cullen as she strode passed him on her way out of the room.
“Hawke, I don’t have time for your games - “

“How about stopping a rape?” She snapped back, spinning on the spot to face him. “Do you have time for that?”

“Where?” He demanded, now solely focused on her.

“As I said, follow me.”

He gripped her by the arm to halt her movements. “Hawke, stay out of it. Just tell me where.”

She scowled at him but eventually relented. “Store room...fourth one in.”

“Go back to your room. I'll take care of it.”

“See to it that you do.” She shouted after him. “Or I will.”

...

“Thank you.” Danali said with a smile as she passed by the following morning. It would seem she owed the Knight Captain a thank you.

...

“You stopped him then?” She surprised him as he entered his office, her back to the wall beside the door. “What was his punishment?”

“Maker’s breath!” He exclaimed. “You can’t be in here, Hawke! If anyone sees you -”
“Oh, pipe down. This isn't my first time you know.” She quipped with an overly exaggerated wink.

“I take it you used magic to get in here before, then?”

“Not always: I am a pretty skilled rogue too you know. Lurking in the shadows, picking locks; it's what I do.”

“Why are you here?” He sighed, pinching the bridge of his nose.

“I just wanted to thank you.”

“No, you wanted to make sure the Templar had been dealt with.”

“That too.” She admitted, with a somewhat annoying smile.

“He's being relocated.”

“To another Circle!?”

“Yes.”

“Are you fucking kidding me!? Cullen, he'll just do it again, you must know that!”

He looked as though his patience was wearing thin.

“What if it had been the other way around?”

“What?”
“What if it was a mage forcing himself on a Templar. What would be the punishment for that?”

“Hawke, I -”

“Un-fucking-believable.” She fade-stepped out of his office before he could respond and fled back to the solitude of her own room.

She was not expecting the welcome she received. Three Templar’s, including the creep who was being relocated, were ready and waiting. The blow came before she could anticipate it, immediately rendering her unconscious. When she eventually woke up, she'd been shackled to the wall, manacles around her wrists and pinned above her head. As she pulled on her restraints, the sounds of clanging chains lured the men closer.

“Such a pretty thing.” The slime ball stood before her, grasping her chin and moving her face from side-to-side. “I insisted we wait until you woke up.” He leaned in close to whisper in her ear. “I wanted to hear you scream.”

Blood spurted from his nose as she deftly head butted him before he could move out of reach, earning her a reflexive right hook and a split lip. He gripped her collar with both hands and tore open her robes, right down to her naval. He took out a dagger and lightly dragged the tip along her stomach from her smalls to her breast band, drawing a little blood as he slid it underneath and began to hack through the garment.

Just as he was about half-way through, the three Templar's suddenly turned their attention towards the door, which she could see had opened but not by whom. There was a flurry of panicked activity and as she struggled to see around the tall men, she caught only a shock of messy black hair and a pool of blood.

“Unchain me!” She demanded. “I can help him!”

The two she didn't know looked at each other and nodded.

“What are you doing!?” Slime ball roared as they began to free her.

“How are we supposed to explain this?” One of them shot back. “Or were you planning on killing her too?”
They continued to free her, undeterred, and as soon as her wrists were free she flew to the boys side. She turned him over, cradling him in her arms as she examined his wound. He'd been run through almost completely. She pressed her fingers to his jugular, desperately searching for a pulse. It was faint, but there.

“Lyrium!” She demanded with an outstretched hand. At least one of the bastards had silenced her at some point and she was far too weak to summon the power required to save the boy.

Two sets of hands thrust vials towards her, which she snatched and greedily chugged. Immediately she felt her connection to the fade reawaken and she quickly began to heal the tiny little elf's wound.

Feeling exhausted, she gently probed his abdomen just to satisfy herself that she had done all she could. The Templar's watched in silence as she spoke softly to the boy, trying to coax him in to consciousness.

“You saved me.” He quietly croaked.

“Just returning the favour.” She smiled down at him, maternally stroking his hair.

She lifted him as she stood and carried him over to her bed, where she tucked him gently under the covers. “Rest now, little one.”

He immediately closed his eyes and was softly snoring within the space of a minute. She sat beside him, watching as he fell in to a deeper sleep, discreetly tracing a glyph of silence on his hand.

The Templar's had no time to intervene before she released a powerful telekinetic blast, knocking the two idiotic bystanders across the room and rendering them unconscious. She then hit the rapist with crushing prison, effectively pinning him to the ground, before encasing her fists in rock armour and repeatedly smashing his face. Eventually the other two came-to, silencing her repeatedly in quick succession until she was forced to use her bare hands to deliver justice to the man currently pissing himself on the floor. She clamped her hands around his neck, pinning him to ground and putting all her weight in to the attack.

She felt almost delirious what with all the silencing's and was impressed that her desire alone to rid the world of this one man was fuel enough to grant her the strength to continue. As his face transitioned from red to a deep purple, she was pulled away by strong gauntleted hands. She reached
desperately for the living beetroot, but could only watch as he coughed uncontrollably at the sudden rush of oxygen.

“Mad...bitch...” He managed to splutter between gulps of air.

“Oh you have no idea!” She viciously retorted as she struggled to free herself from the Templar's vice like grip.

She noticed then that the other two were by the door, clearly too afraid to approach themselves. So who was restraining her? She stopped struggling to look back, finding worried amber eyes burning a hole through her.

"All right.” She held up her hands in surrender. “I'm done.”

“Take him to my office and don't let him leave.” He barked at dumb and dumber.

He turned to the sleeping boy and she anxiously waited for the wrath of the Knight Captain.

“Heavy sleeper.” He commented.

“Silence glyph.” She cautiously responded, still anticipating an argument.

She watched as he took in their surroundings, his gaze lingering on the manacles before stopping at the pool of blood. “What happened?”

“Exactly what is looks like.” She snapped.

“I need specifics.” He calmly pressed.

“I guess your friend - “
“He is no friend of mine.”

“The rapist, then – was none to pleased about my involvement in his relocation. Said he wanted to hear me scream.”

His nostrils flared and his hands balled into tight fists.

Now that her adrenaline was wearing off, she was beginning to realise just how bad it could have been had Myles not shown up. She remembered then how much of herself was on display and reflexively crossed her arms in an attempt to conceal herself.

“Here.” Cullen lifted a blanket from the ottoman at the foot of her bed and draped it around her shoulders.

“You can’t just send him away.” She sighed, exhausted. “He’ll hurt others.”

“What do you suggest?”

“Expel him from the order.” She insisted. ”Condemn him to the madness of lyrium withdrawal.” The sinister image of him begging on the streets for dwarf dust brought about a sick sense of justice.

“It will be done.” He nodded then turned on his heel and marched off.

She closed and barred her door, then climbed on to the bed beside Myles and allowed herself to sleep.

…

The next morning, as news spread of the nights events, there were more than a few relieved looking young mage girls. That prick had been having his fill, she only wished she could have ended him before Cullen had arrived to hold her back. Why couldn't he have just shown up a few seconds later!? In fact, why had he shown up at all?
“Champion?” Came the voice of a Starkhaven Templar. “The Knight Captain wishes to speak with you.”

It seemed she was being permitted the chance to find out.

She knocked on the frame of his open door to announce her arrival, his attention seemingly consumed by whatever lay on his desk.

“Hawke.” He greeted, looking at her for only a second before returning his attention to the paperwork before him. “Take a seat.”

She strode confidently to the chair opposite him, trying to repress the memory of herself on her knees beneath his desk, and did as asked. She waited patiently for him to finish his report, idly twiddling her thumbs until he put down his quill and looked at her.

“I just wanted to save you the trouble of breaking in to accost me later.”

She snickered.

“- but you should know your attacker is a Templar no more.”

“You should have let me kill him.”

“Believe me, this is worse.”

“You're a fool if you believe that.”

“And you clearly know nothing of lyrium withdrawal!” He roared, surprising her in to a state of silence. He took a deep breath and slowly exhaled. “But I did not ask you here to argue.”

“What of the other two: tweedle-dee and tweedle-dumb?”
“Latrine duty for a month.”

“Ha!” She genuinely laughed. “I have to say, your intervention was...rather timely. Why were you there?”

“I – was patrolling.” He didn't sound too convinced of his own words. “It was a blessed coincidence.”

“That it was.” She played along, though not very well.

“How is the boy – Myles, isn't it?”

She was glad for the change of subject. “He's a resilient little thing, I'm not even sure how much he remembers. He seems happy enough.”

“He's grown rather fond of you.”

“I think I was just the first friendly face he saw here.”

“Don't sell yourself short. He clearly thinks the world of you.”

“You spoke to him?”

“Only a little. He seemed frightened of me, I didn't wish to scare him further.”

It suddenly dawned on her that she hadn't seen Meredith once since her abduction. She felt stupid for not having questioned it sooner. “Is the Knight Commander avoiding me? She hasn't given me a tour or anything.” She japed, feigning disappointment.

She could tell he was trying to suppress a smirk. “She isn't here. She was summoned to Orlais the night of your arrival.”
“Arrival? He made it sound like she were a guest in some high class spa. “You mean imprisonment?” She snapped.

Instead of responding he simply exhaled in annoyance.

“So you get to make all the decisions in her absence?”

“Yes.” He answered, hesitantly, concerned by the mischievous grin on her face.

“I may have some ideas.” She smiled, innocently.

“Go on.” He rolled his eyes as he crossed his arms and sat back in his chair.

“The mage's here are going stir crazy. They need a break – or at least be given the opportunity to earn one.”

“You mean for them to leave the safety of the Circle?” He scoffed. “Absolutely not.”

“Just hear me out.” She pleaded. “Don't you realise that by keeping the mage's confined you're missing out on lucrative investment opportunities? I've seen the state of disrepair some of this place is in, you could use the extra coin.”

“I take it you have some suggestions?”

“I do. The bone pit's just sitting there. With some magical assistance we could get it back up and running in no time. I'd be happy to give the Circle a cut of the profits once we hire new miners, plus wages for the mage's and Templar's.”

“Anything else?”

“A friend of mine runs a free-clinic in Darktown – he'd certainly appreciate some magical assistance. It wouldn't pay anything but it would certainly improve the Circle's reputation with the city.”
“Is that all?”

“You have some pretty top notch alchemists. Why not let them set-up a stall and sell their wares in Lowtown?”

“You make it sound so easy.”

“Why can't it be?”

“Trust cannot be forced, Hawke.”

"Then let the mage's earn it. Give them a chance to prove themselves - freedom is a powerful motivator."

"You speak as if you're not one of them."

"I'm just visiting, remember." She winked. “Please, just give them chance?”

He promised he would consider her suggestions, and she only hoped that he would decide before the dreaded return of the Knight Commander, for she would certainly abolish anything that allowed mage's any sense of freedom. But even just a couple of days would be better than nothing at all.

As she sauntered back to her room, she reluctantly had to admit it to herself that - without the rapist - the Circle wasn't altogether as bad as she had mentally prepared herself for – though perhaps that was a direct result of the Knight Commander's absence. She did, however, have no intentions of staying put for much longer. If her friends couldn't help her, she'd just have to figure a way out herself.

Chapter End Notes

Please let me know what you think. I'd happily consider advice and suggestions.
I had planned to be up to date with Inquisition by now, but on further consideration I think I'll stick in at least a couple of chapters that take place between DA2 and DAI. I'll pre-warn prior to any Inquisition spoilers for those of you who haven't yet played.

Next up: Chantry explosion...maybe.
Chapter Summary

Meredith returns.

Chapter Notes

Once again, I am so sorry for the delay.

I will try to do better in the new year.

Also, check out chapters 6 & 23 for beautiful pictures of HawkexOli & HawkexFenris.

Having decided to make the most of her time in the Circle, she had pulled as many of the oldest and dustiest tomes from their shelves in the hopes of finding some long-forgotten school of magic. With her tiny elven shadow in tow – who she had tasked with reading something much more age appropriate – she discarded yet another disappointing find. She was reaching for the last of the lot when she heard the chinking sounds of a Templar approaching.

"Enchanter." Cullen called as he neared. The fact that he'd called her *Enchanter* and not Hawke made her instantly uneasy. He was here on official business, she surmised.

"Templar?" She humorously retorted, though it didn't make quite the impact she'd hoped having been almost immediately followed by a violent sneeze as a result of all the dusty books in her vicinity; which Myles found hysterical and his infectious laughter soon spread to her.

Cullen sighed as he waited for the pair to compose themselves. "Knight-Commander Meredith wishes to speak with you."

Her smile immediately disappeared and she swallowed nervously, despite her false bravado. "Well it's about time." She snickered. "I've been wondering when she was planning to welcome me properly."

He gave her a look that said Meredith was in no mood for humour.
She followed him in relative silence through the seemingly endless corridors. Only when the Knight-Commanders door came in to view did she quietly ask. "Any advice?"

He gave her a warning look over his shoulder. "Hold your tongue."

She nodded and said nothing more.

"Knight-Commander." Cullen saluted, having stopped at her open door. "Enchanter Elodie is here to see you, as requested."

"Enchanter." If she meant it as a greeting, she failed. Her tense jaw made it sound more like a curse.

"Knight-Commander." She had to bite her tongue to stop herself from adding 'been a while, thanks for the silencing by the way'.

"Leave us." She barked at her second in command, who nodded then shot Hawke another warning look before leaving.

Meredith seemed content to let her stew in silence for a few minutes, before finally finding her voice. "Knight-Captain Cullen has passed on your...suggestions." She almost spat the last word as though it were some sort of foul insult.

"Which I can see you're clearly very excited about." Damn it Hawke! If looks could kill, she'd be six feet under.

"Let's get one thing straight." She seethed through clenched teeth, pointing a finger in her direction. "You are no different than any other mage here and it is not your place to make suggestions on how I run my Circle."

“I meant no disrespect, Knight-Commander. I simply wished to help -”

“Your help is neither appreciated nor welcome.” She furiously interrupted.
She opened her mouth to speak, to really get in to it with the mad bitch, but then she remembered Cullen's warning and reconsidered her response. "Understood, Knight-Commander." She smiled, pleasantly, even as she secretly willed the woman's head to explode. "May I return to my studies now?" She determinedly held her gaze as she continued to bore in to her with those menacingly cold eyes.

"Go." She eventually ordered.

She stood, bowed over-exaggeratedly, then sauntered off to the satisfactory sounds of frustration.

"Still alive, I see." Cullen humourlessly stated as she re-entered the library.

"Oh, you were worried over nothing." She swatted the air. "She just wanted to invite me to girls night. We're going to braid each others hair, talk about boys and have pillow fights in our underwear."

He stared at her, clearly not amused.

"Oh, lighten up." She rolled her eyes.

"I don't think you understand the seriousness of the situation, Hawke."

She furrowed her brow. "What are you not telling me?"

He looked around, shiftily. "Not here. I'll come to you after lights out."

"Well that's not ominous in the slightest." She half-heartedly japed.

"Best behaviour, Hawke." He warned. "I'll see you later."

True to his word, about an hour after lights out she heard him quietly tapping on her door before
letting himself in.

"I'm not sure how I feel about being alone with a Templar after dark." She quipped.

"You've never taken issue with it before." He confidently retorted.

"Was that - did you just sass me?" She grinned, delightedly.

"Oh, so it's okay for you to make inappropriate remarks but I'm not allowed?" He chuckled, despite the less than pleasant circumstances.

"On the contrary, Knight-Captain, I encourage it." They quietly laughed together for a little while, until the look of affection in his eyes made her slightly uncomfortable. "So," She cleared her throat. "You had something to tell me?"

His face once again resumed the tense and concerned expression she had become all too accustomed to seeing of late. “You didn't hear this from me – in fact you didn't hear it at all.”

“Cross my heart.” She promised.

“I told you Meredith was summoned to Orlais shortly after you arrived?”

“You did.”

“It was because she refused to have you released.”

“Who did she refuse?”

“The Grand Cleric. I don't know all the details, just that Elthina called for your release, Meredith refused and was then summoned by the Divine.”
“What's so special about me?”

“You're the Champion?” He shrugged. “Is there any other reason the Divine might know of you?”

“Actually, I did meet with an advisor of hers not so long ago. She was apparently concerned about Resolusionists riling up mage's in the City. Her advisor said she was considering an exalted march.”

“You know, nothing about you surprises me any more.” He chuckled in pleasant disbelief. “Well you must have made quite the impression, because the Divine has sanctioned your release.”

“Shut the fuck up.”

“I'm serious.” He chuckled.

“Why the fuck didn't Meredith tell me this?”

“She was supposed to, but I could tell from speaking with you after that she hadn't.”

“So when do I get out?”

“That's what has me so concerned. You're to serve a total of thirty days. So long as you display no concerning behaviour during that time, you will be released.”

“What are you worried about, exactly?”

“Although I haven't witnessed it myself.” He began, already on the defensive. “There have been an increasing number of reports of Templar's...provoking mage's.”

“And you think that might happen with me?”

“I think Meredith will do whatever she thinks is necessary to keep apostates off the streets. I need
you to be hyper-vigilant. If someone tries to push you, do not react – you come find me, alright?"

“With my freedom as the prize, I'm fairly certain I can control myself for a couple more weeks.”

He turned to leave but paused as he gripped the door handle. “There is something else I feel I should
tell you.”

“Well that doesn't sound good.”

“Your harrowing...” He continued without turning to look at her. “It was me who gave the order.”

She sat down slowly on the bed, before her knees gave-way. “Why would you do that?”

He turned to face her. “An unharrowed mage is an easy target. Any slight mishap could have easily
ended in tranquility for you.”

“And you had no idea how I was going to react to being trapped here.” She finished for him. She
could understand. She didn't like it, but she knew he'd made the call for her benefit. She took a deep
breath then stood and walked over to him. He looked so terribly conflicted. "It's fine.” She offered a
half smile, placing a firm hand on his shoulder. “I'm...grateful, really.”

“I was so afraid for you.” His voice was barely a whisper. “I know that nothing can ever happen
between us – and that you've moved on – but...I still care about you.”

She leaned forwards and kissed his cheek. “Thank you. I'm not sure I could have survived this place
without you caring for me.” She tapped his shoulder then resumed her seat on the edge of the bed.
“So what did Meredith do when she found out you'd harrowed me? Did you get in to trouble?”

“Since she'd chosen not to inform me of her intentions, I was able to claim that I knew nothing of her
plans and was dealing with a possible threat the only way I was able.”

She winced slightly at the insult.
“I don't actually think of you that way...you must know that?”

“Must I?”

“Look at what I'm doing, Hawke.” He exasperated. “Do you have any idea what Meredith would do if she found me here talking to you?”

“I'm sure she'd turn a blind eye if she thought your intentions were sinister.” She mumbled. “Hey, there's a point. What did you tell her about the prick I almost strangled to death? Can't she use that against me?”

“She was not informed of your involvement. As far as she's concerned I discovered what he was doing and dealt with him accordingly.”

“Ser Cullen.” She tskd. “Lying to a superior officer, for me? You really do know how to make a girl feel special.”

He huffed out an exasperated chuckle and shook his head. “Goodnight, Hawke.”

“Night, Cullen.”

...

Three days later she found herself being escorted by Ser Rylen to the Knight-Captain's office. She had come to the conclusion that Rylen was one of the good ones. Not only was he decidedly not cruel to her kind, but she'd even heard him engage them in casual conversation. He was most unusual, and she whole-heartedly approved.

She sat twiddling her thumbs in the Knight Captain's office, having been left alone to wait. Eventually nostalgia got the better of her and she found herself rounding the corner to see if his sleeping quarters were as she remembered.

As she was about to pick up a book from his personal collection, she heard muffled voices approaching. She fled back to his office and threw herself down in to the chair, trying her best to look innocent.
“Hawke.” He greeted, a little suspiciously, as his eyes did a quick sweep of the room; no doubt looking for anything out of place. “You have visitors.”

“Visitors?” She repeated in shock. “Is that even allowed?”

As Cullen entered the room and cleared the way for their guests, she saw him mouth the words ‘you know nothing’. After that the first thing she saw was Sebastian's brilliant azure eyes.

“Sebastian!” She exclaimed, running in to his arms. “It's so good to see a friendly face – er, no offence, Knight-Captain.” She turned her head to throw him a wink.

Sebastian hugged her back for a moment then held her at arms length to appraise her. “Are you all right? Have they been treating you well?”

“Just the vacation I needed.” She japed, but on seeing his furrowed brow she added in a less cheery tone. “I'll be fine once I get out of here.”

“That's what we've come to talk to you about.” He smiled, stepping aside to allow the Grand Cleric to enter.

“Grand Cleric Elthina?” She startled. “To what do I owe the pleasure?”

“You're enrolment in to the Circle has caused quite the debate, Champion.” She spoke in an even and unhurried tone with a pleasant smile on her face.

“Enrolment?” She guffawed. “Not sure that's what I'd call it...but please, do continue.”

“From the moment you were taken in – and each day since - petitions have been pouring in from all over the City. It seems I've a riot on my hands, should I not intervene.”

Okay Hawke, time to put on a show.
“You have the power to get me out of here? But didn't you once tell me that the Templar's don't answer to you...was that a lie?”

“Hawke.” Sebastian warned.

“That's quite all right, Sebastian.” She gently patted his shoulder. “I did say that, Champion, and I meant it. But the Knight-Commander and myself have reached a compromise.”

“Speaking of, shouldn't she be here for this?”

“She has deferred to the Knight-Captain on this.”

Interesting.

“So what's the compromise?”

“Thirty days.” She authoritatively announced. “For a total of thirty days you will show the Knight-Commander that there is no cause for concern and your time here will be done.”

“Why the leniency?”

“Her Holiness, it seems, was already aware of your...talents.”

What the fuck?

“Uh...how?”

“Sister Nightingale spoke well of you.”

“It seems I underestimated her powers of observation.”
“You might be aware that in Orlesian cities, each office of power has a position for a mage consort. Her holiness feels this could be a step in the right direction for Kirkwall. She would like to appoint you as magical advisor to the viscounts office.”

“But we don't have a viscount.”

“The Seneschal will be in touch upon your release – provided of course your remaining time is served without incident.”

Well that was a little more than Cullen had prepared her for. “I don't know what to say.”

“It seems you've achieve the impossible.” Cullen muttered to himself, but she caught it and flashed him an amused grin.

“Prove to Meredith that you are the Champion everyone knows you to be.” Sebastian implored. “And you'll be home in time for Satinalia.”

She smiled at her friend, but she had a terrible feeling in the pit of her stomach that Meredith would find some way to keep her locked up. She longed for the comfort and easy reassurances of her friends. “Are you allowed to tell me how everyone is?”

Sebastian looked to Elthina for permission and on seeing her nod he took a seat and gestured for Hawke to join him. “Everyone was so worried when Isabella told us what happened. She said the Knight-Commander silenced you?”

“Don't remind me.” She grimaced. “Do you know what happened to Carver? Is he okay?”

“He's fine, I promise. Aveline had him released from custody almost immediately and he's been taking care of things at the estate for you.”

“And everyone else?”
“Varric and Anders have been hard at work rallying the citizens to your cause – not that its been difficult, mind you; you have a lot of fans. The girls miss you, they wanted me to tell you that.”

“I cant help but notice there's someone you haven't mentioned.” She worried. “Should I be concerned?”

Sebastian lowered his voice, glancing quickly at the Knight-Captain who was currently engaged in conversation with the Grand Cleric. “Fenris is safe.”

“But?” She apprehensively pressed.

He leaned closer, lowering his voice even further. “Anders had to put him to sleep.”

She clapped a hand over her mouth at the unattractive snort of laughter, quickly composing herself under the scrutinizing glare of the Knight-Captain.

“Say no more.“ She quietly reassured the chantry brother. “I'm pretty sure I can guess exactly what happened.”

“Is there anything I can do for you? Pass on any messages?”

“Just tell them to start planning my welcome home party.”

“Anything else?”

“Could you...visit Fenris? Tell him I love him?”

“Of course.”

“Thank you, Sebastian.”

…
The next two weeks flew by, due in large to the fact that the Knight-Commander had kept a somewhat suspicious distance, but she was just glad she didn't have to see her face. She spent most of her time working up the courage to tell Myles that she would be leaving soon. When she eventually did, he actually cried. She felt so bad that it was on the tip of her tongue to actually volunteer to stay. In the end she managed to placate him with the promise that she would do everything within her power to visit him as often as she could.

At the end of the week she stumbled upon another Templar displaying deviant behaviour – this one favouring the Tranquil. Having learned from the last time that she couldn't simply intervene, but that a Templar had to witness the crime, she grabbed the first one she could find. He wouldn't have been her first choice, having known nothing of the man, but he did the right thing and reported the incident to Cullen.

She waited outside his office while the perpetrators punishment was decided upon, hiding in the shadows when he was eventually lead out, until only Cullen remained. She knocked on the frame of his open door and sauntered in.

“So...another rapist.” She drawled. “There's a shocker.”

He rolled his eyes. “I might have known you were involved in this.”

“I kept my hands clean this time, I promise.” She smiled. “So what did you do to him?” She noticed his foot tapping agitatedly on the floor. “Cullen?”

“It's...complicated” He hesitantly replied.

“I suppose he slipped and fell dick first?” She angrily retorted.

“There's more to it than that.” He snapped, rubbing tiredly at his temples.

“How do you sleep at night?” She seethed, completely horror-stricken.

“That is not your business.” He roared, slamming his fists in to his desk as he stood to his full and imposing height, effectively knocking all sarcastic retorts out of her. “Ser Rylen,” He called to the
Templar who had probably approached to see what all the commotion was about. “Please escort the Enchanter back to her quarters and see that she remains there until I say otherwise.”

“Knight-Captain.” Ser Rylen saluted.

She eyed him incredulously. “Pleasant dreams, Knight-Captain.”

She walked back to her quarters in a foul mood, grumbling to herself.

“I've never seen him quite so rattled.”

“What?” She'd completely forgotten about Ser Rylen following her.

“The Knight-Captain. You obviously said something to anger him.”

“I just wanted to know how he was able to sleep at night, working with such up-standing individuals.”

“Very poorly, I can tell you.”

“What?”

“Mostly he just doesn't - but you didn't hear that from me.”

She observed him with a furrowed brow, gauging his sincerity. “No, of course.”

They continued to walk in silence, her furry having been replaced with something else.

“Feeling remorseful?”
“No.” She quickly snapped, then added a quite “Maybe.”

“He is in a very difficult position, Champion. Meredith, by all accounts, was once a reasonable sort. Cullen would much rather have her see the error of her ways than move against her.”

“He confides in you?” He gave her a knowing smirk and she quickly looked away. “He must trust you a great deal.”

“Aye. And I him. I believe he is this Circles best hope for change. He just needs to decide how he's going to do it.”

“You came from Starkhaven, right?”

“That's right. Transferred here after the Circle burned down.”

“Where they all like you there?”

“Like me?”

“So...tolerant of mage's?”

“We are all the Maker's children. Mage's didn't ask to be made different, and I have known far more good ones than bad. Can I give you some advice?”

“Shoot.”

“Don't ostracise yourself. Stay on the Knight-Captain's good side. I've a feeling your going to need his friendship.”

...
"Champion?"

Turning towards the somewhat timid voice she didn't quite recognise, she was startled to find the latest in what she imaged was a long line of sexual miscreants.

"You'd do well to remember that I don't need magic to protect myself." She warned.

"I'm not here to cause trouble." He protested. "I just wanted to talk - to explain myself."

"Why?" She asked, suspiciously.

He actually looked remorseful. "I know it was you who - you know."

"Caught you forcing yourself on a tranquil?" She finished for him.

He winced, but did not deny it. "Yes. But it's not what you think - not entirely."

"And why do you care what I think?" She pressed, impatiently.

"Because I thought you might understand." He shrugged. "Eloise and I were in love, you see." He took a long slow breath. "I was out on patrol when they made her tranquil - had no idea the Knight-Commander was even considering it - if only I'd been here..." He took another steadying breath. "It's just so hard to see her like that - I'd lost my temper when you found us; I thought I could make her remember how we felt about each other, and I..."

"What makes you think I'd understand this?" She squinted at him, suspiciously.

He sighed. "I...once saw the Knight-Captain leaving your estate."

Shit!
"He had this look on his face..." He smiled, wistfully. "I used to see that same face in the mirror."

She should probably try to deny it, but her tongue suddenly felt too heavy in her mouth.

"I never told anyone." He quickly reassured her. "Not even after it came out that you were a mage. I didn't even mention it to the Knight-Captain; didn't want to risk a transfer away from...Eloise."

She remained silent as he composed himself.

"I hate myself for what I did – and for what I couldn't do - but the thought of never again seeing her face light up when I walk into the room is just..." He closed his eyes and she could tell he was picturing his love as she once was. "I hope you can forgive my deplorable behaviour. I promise it won't happen again." He turned and slowly made his way towards the door.

The troubling thought that this cautionary tale could have just as easily been about she and Cullen, made her feel some tiny shred of compassion for the man. "Templar." She called when he had one foot out the door, temporarily halting him. "I'm sorry for your loss."

He nodded his thanks, lip quivering with barely concealed grief, then left her alone with her thoughts.

...

“So...you may have been on to something.”

“Maker's breath!” He startled. “You really need to stop letting yourself in to my quarters, Hawke.”

“Oh, pipe down, nobody saw me.”

“I'm serious.” He insisted. “What if I hadn't been alone?”

“I'm well acquainted with this rooms hiding places, Cullen.” She smiled, triumphantly, when he blushed.
“And I’d appreciate it if you addressed me as Knight-Captain from now on.” He stubbornly persisted.

“I’ve had your cock in my mouth,” She unashamedly retorted, narrowing her eyes at him. “Cullen will do just fine.”

Aside from turning the most adorable shade of crimson, he seemed unwilling to react. Instead he paced over to his desk and began moving things around. “You said I’d been on to something?” He eventually spoke, attempting to change the subject.

“Right.” She became suddenly serious again. “Ser Hugh paid me a visit.”

“Oh?” He stopped what he was doing but didn't look up, obviously waiting for a confession about another mess he'd have to clean up.

“I take it he told you about his former relationship with the tranquil – Eloise?” She asked, assuming he had.

“He was...quite forthcoming, yes.”

“And you believe him? That his feelings were reciprocated, I mean?”

“I'd had my suspicions about the two of them.” He admitted.

“But you never intervened?”

“That would have made me a bit of a hypocrite, wouldn't it?”

“Not really. You never would have allowed anything to happen between us if you'd known who I really was from the start.”
“I suppose we'll never know, will we?” He sighed.

She honestly couldn't tell if he hated her for allowing their brief relationship to go as far as it had. She looked away, guiltily. “I am sorry about that.”

“Me too – for...how I reacted.”

“You really don't need to apologise. I'm just glad you didn't drag me off to the Circle - for all the good it did.” She added with a chuckle.

“Still, some of the things I said were...unkind.”

“Truce?” She offered her hand, hopefully.

He huffed a quite chuckle. “Truce.” He agreed, taking her hand and giving it a gentle shake before blushing and promptly releasing her.

“Anyway, I just wanted to let you know that I will try not to assume the worst from now on. I guess some of you are...not so bad.”

“You flatter me.” He dryly japed.

“Do try not to let it go to your head.” She chuckled. “Goodnight, Knight-Captain.”

“Goodnight, Hawke.”

She walked leisurely back to her chambers, thinking over everything she had experienced in her short time here. Although there were some pretty shady characters, the Circle was a far cry from the prison she’d expected. She did realise she was likely only of this mind because she knew her time here was limited, and vowed to get more involved with Anders' mage underground the moment she was free. The mage's here were good people, and deserved at least some semblance of freedom.

She found Myles curled up on her bed, as she so often did. Her heart broke for the poor little mage,
who she'd have to leave behind. She worried about how he would cope without her support. If only she could find some way to ferret him away and sneak him back to his mother. Perhaps she'd give it some serious thought.

…

When her day of release finally came, she couldn't quite believe she had successfully managed to thwart all of the Meredith's attempts to rattle her cage. She deserved a fucking medal for some of the insults she'd endured. Many times she'd wanted nothing more than to sink her thumbs in to their eye sockets, or turn the blood in their veins to ice, but she had somehow prevailed.

She packed up her meagre possessions, said an emotional farewell to Myles, then made her way to Cullen's office.

She knocked to announce her presence then let herself in. She was surprised to find he wasn't alone. Meredith loomed nearby with her death-squad in toe. She also noticed that Cullen refused to meet her gaze.

“Knight-Commander.” She cheerily greeted. “Come to see me off?”

A snarl was the only response she received before Meredith and her men barged passed her and out of sight.

“Was it something I said?”

Cullen strode towards her, gripped her by the arm and pulled her towards the door. “You need to leave, right now.”

“Hey.” She swatted him off and shoved him backwards. “What's going on?”

“The Knight-Commander offered to have her new entourage escort you out.”

“And her sour face just now was due to the fact that you refused?”
“Yes. I told her Brother Sebastian would be expecting me to deliver you.”

“But...?”

“I'm...concerned that she might try something.”

“As in...back me in to a corner until I snap?”

“Precisely.”

“Then I guess we should get a move on.”

“Your friend should be waiting by the docks for you. I just need to get you there without running in to any trouble.”

“Your confidence is a real comfort.” She flatly japed.

“Pull up your hood. Hopefully we can move unnoticed for a while.”

She followed closely as he lead her through the corridors and out in to the courtyard. She was about to make a joke about him worrying over nothing when a heavily armoured shoulder barged in to her and just kept on walking without any apology.

In any other situation she would have knocked him on his arse, but she knew this was exactly what Cullen had been expecting to happen. So instead she took a deep breath, nodded to him and they carried on.

A total of three more Templar's almost knocked her flying before they reached the gates. She reached for Cullen's arm to stop herself from falling when she was hit with the first silence. It was the perfect balance to get the reaction they wanted: enough to trigger a fight-or-flight response without completely depleting her mana.
He gave her a panicked look, as though he knew exactly what was happening and was imploring her to soldier on. She nodded and eventually regained enough balance to press on, but was soon hit by another intentionally weak silence. It took a ridiculous amount of time to get even halfway across the square, as soon as she shook off one attack she'd be hit with another.

Eventually she caught sight of Sebastian, whose immediate response to her haggard appearance was to valiantly sweep her off her feet and carry her the rest of the way. She could have sworn she heard Meredith curse as soon as her feet left the ground.

“I’ve got you.” Sebastian whispered as he held her tightly to him.

The next thing she remembered was waking up in Anders' clinic.

“Sebastian Veil, did you carry me the entire way here?” She spotted him lounging in a chair beside her.

“Ah, no.” He chuckled. “You mostly walked, though you were only semi-conscious. You kept warning me that the dread wolf wasn't a fan of bellyrub's.”

“Huh.” She mused. “Haven't had that dream since I was a child.”

She turned at the sound of a forced cough, beyond surprised to find all of her companions seated behind her. “Creators! I had no idea you were all here – Fenris!” She yelled in alarm, suddenly noticing his still body on another cot across the room.

“He's fine.” Anders appeared beside her, assuring her that he was merely asleep. “He would have killed me, a bunch of Templar's and then himself.”

“Yeah, I know, Sebastian told me. But why is he still out?”

“Because he's scared.” Isabella laughed.

She couldn't really argue with that.
“I just didn't want to risk waking him until he could see with his own eyes that you were okay.” He was eager to elaborate.

She quickly crossed the room to sit on the cot beside him and ran her fingers through his messy hair. “It's all right, Anders. You can wake him up now.”

Anders unravelled the seems of his spell and Fenris slowly began to stir. She continued to run her fingers through his hair as she gazed down in to his sparkling emerald eyes. “Good morning, handsome.”

He slowly blinked a few times. “Am I dreaming?” He asked as he lifted one hand to her cheek.

“You tell me.” She dipped her head down to capture his lips and kissed him...hard.

When she moved to pull away, he cradled her face between both hands and held her in place, deepening the kiss until a groan emanated from her throat.

“Ahem.” Anders cleared his throat from across the room.

“Spoil sport.” Isabella whispered as she elbowed him in the ribs.

“You!” Fenris was off the cot and halfway to Anders before Hawke managed to get a grip of him.

“Fenris, stop!” She ordered. “You'd probably be dead if it wasn't for him.”

“How long?” He didn't take his eyes off the healer.

“Why don't you lot give us a minute?” She suggested, at which point they all eagerly fled the clinic.

“How long, Hawke?” He turned to look at her, but all his fury had turned to woe.
“A little while.” She sheepishly answered, deciding that sounded much better than the truth.

He staggered backwards and sank in to the nearest chair. “Tell me everything.”

It took quite a bit longer than she imagined, but she'd eventually covered every tiny little detail of her capture and incarceration.

“So if I hadn't left that night -”

“Hey!” She quickly interrupted. “This wasn't your fault. It was bound to have happened sooner or later...and now it's done.”

“And I did absolutely nothing to help you.”

“Stop scolding yourself. There isn't a doubt in my mind that you would have left a bloody trail of dismembered Templar's in your wake to get to me.”

“I would have.” He pouted.

“And I appreciate that.” She smiled, affectionately. “But I'm also really glad you didn't.”

Already straddling his lap, she wrapped her arms around his waist and fused herself to him. Now that the initial anxiety had passed, she was beginning to appreciate the things she'd missed. His signature sandalwood and juniper scent, the insane heat emanating from his olive skin, the feel of his soft lips pressed to her temple as he stroked her hair.

She squirmed slightly as the first sparks of arousal began to snake their way up her thighs. Her eyes widened when she felt the hardness of his own arousal beneath her and she slowly tilted her head to press her lips to his neck.

“Here?” He breathed near her ear before taking the lobe gently between his teeth.
She answered by reaching to free him from the confines of his increasingly tightening trousers and he responded by pulling her in to a kiss with one hand and pushing aside her smalls with the other.

At least mage robes were good for something.

Their reunion was fast and furious and before long he found himself once again looking in to golden elven eyes. He squeezed his own eyes shut tight as he insistently locked her in an all consuming kiss, praying that the memory would pass, but Hawke could tell that something was amiss.

“Ma lath.” She whispered as she managed to draw away from his tempting lips. “Is everything okay?”

“It is now.” He eventually answered, gazing adoringly in to her silver eyes, beyond relieved that the flash of memory had finally dissipated. “Let's go home.”

He'd tell her what was bothering him, eventually – she hoped.

Chapter End Notes

Merry Christmas!
Chapter 26 - "NSFW"

Chapter Summary

Eeek! Sorry for the delay.

I've been working on another DA story (Helter Skelter), so haven't been giving this my full attention. But now that I've done most of the ground work for the new fic, I hope to be able to work on both of them moving forward. Check it out if you like the idea of a sexually aggressive Cullen x Inquisitor fic.

Also, AMAZING NSFW artwork in progress for this chapter. I will upload as soon as it's finished. Find me on Tumblr (@Charlatron) for updates!

Chapter Notes

See end of chapter for some outstanding NSFW artwork from the amazing @samusisagirl/@samusafterdark (Tumblr/Twitter).

Since her release from the Circle, she and Fenris had barely left the bedroom. She'd sent Bodahn, Sandal and Orana on an extended vacation to Tantervale to enjoy the spectacle of the grand tourney. Having recently lost a few hundred house mates, she was desperate for some privacy. Carver, in a surprisingly thoughtful turn of events, offered to 'stay with a friend' for a few days.

“Did you want white or red?” Fenris yelled from downstairs.

“Red.” She shouted back from the bathtub. “And bring some of those fancy chocolates.”

She sighed, blissfully, as she sank deeper in to the fragrant water, until she decided Fenris had been gone for far too long. She got out of the tub and wrapped herself in a towel, then headed downstairs in search of him.

“Fenris, did you get lost - Knight Captain.” She startled, stopping half-way down the stairs when she spotted Fenris and Cullen having a quiet but clearly heated discussion.

They both seemed a little speechless as they took in the site of her, dripping wet and barely clothed.
“Uhhh...I'll be right back.” She darted back upstairs, hoping her bottom wasn't as exposed as it felt, and grabbed a robe from her bedroom.

When she arrived back downstairs, Cullen was quick to drop the conversation with Fenris and approached her instead. “Hawke, I was sent to make sure you'd received the summons from the viscounts office.”

“What summons?” She asked in confusion, until her eyes landed on Fenris and the unmistakable look of guilt on his face.

“And I was just telling the Knight Captain that you deserved a break.” Her lover argued back.

“It's been three days and no one has heard from you -”

“Three days!?” She loudly interrupted. “Holy fuck, has it really been that long?”

“Pretty sure I could go three more.” Fenris spoke quietly beside her with a smirk, but he obviously said it just loud enough for the Templar to hear.

She blushed as some of the more debauched memories of the last (apparently) three days came to mind. “Knight Captain.” She raised her chin and stood with the poise of someone clad in far more than just a damp robe. “I will make my way to the keep first thing tomorrow, you have my word.”

“Please see to it that you do.” He sighed, wearily. “Goodnight.”

She waited for the Templar to leave before turning on the very naughty elf. “I take it you're behind the disappearance of this so-called summons?”

“Yes.” He guiltily answered. “But I had a very good reason.”

“Which was?”
He gently grasped one of her hands and pulled it up to his lips, all the while giving her his you can't be mad at me when I'm this adorable eyes. “I missed you.”

She pursed her lips as she tried to fight her smile. “And did you not think the Templar's might interpret that as an act of non-conformity and send someone to drag me back to the Circle?”

“They could try.” He seethed, almost growling. “I would end every last one of them.”

“I don't doubt it, love.” She caressed his cheek, sweetly, before sliding her fingers in to his hair and pulling him in to a bruising kiss.

“So we have until morning?” He mused as his lips trailed a blazing path along her jaw and down her neck.

“Mhm.” Was the only response she could muster when a probing hand found its way beneath her robe.

“Then you will not be sleeping tonight.” He hoarsely whispered, his lips grazing her ear and making her shudder.

She squealed when he effortlessly threw her over his shoulder and carried her upstairs, taking the steps two at a time.

True to his word, he did not let her sleep. He was relentless in his pursuit of pleasure, squeezing what felt like more in to that one night than the three previous combined. By the time she managed to successfully peel herself off of him, she literally had time to run a comb through her hair and throw on some questionably-clean clothes.

She arrived at the viscounts office just a few minutes later than anticipated, looking like a - well, like a woman who'd spent the entire previous night having sex with a voracious lover and had literally just rolled out of bed. She presented herself to the seneschal, still out of breath from running the entire way, who (although gave her a disapproving look) seemed happy to ignore her appearance and was quick to reiterate everything that was expected of her with his usual condescending flare.

“To surmise: you will act as a liaison between the Circle and the office of the viscount. You will meet with the magistrate's once a month to put forth requests and suggestions from the Circle and it
will then be your responsibility to communicate the outcomes back to the Knight-Captain.”

“Cullen?” She confusedly questioned. “Why not Meredith?”

He sighed, clearly wishing the conversation had already ended. “The Knight-Commander,” He corrected. “Has deferred any and all responsibilities involving you to her second in command. She sees your position as a mockery of the order and refuses to report to an apostate.”

“That’s too bad, I really thought the two of us would work things out.” She winked at the seneschal when he failed to react, but that too had little effect. “I’ll just...see myself out, shall I?”

“Please do.” He readily agreed, with just a hint of scorn.

Since her new position gave her unreserved access to the Circle, it meant she would be able to visit with Myles as often as she pleased. She decided to head over right away to see how the little elf was doing - straight after she nipped back home for a quick nap and a proper wash.

As she stepped off the boat and on to the gallows docks, she did not miss the number of nervous double takes she garnered.

“Champion.” Thrask enthusiastically greeted her. “I hear congratulations are in order.”

She hadn’t seen much of Thrask during her time in the Circle. She theorised that Meredith probably kept him as far away from the mage’s as possible, since he was too soft on them for her liking.

“Ser Thrask.” She politely greeted. “How’s the mood today?”

“A little tense.” He hesitated. “Might I ask what brings you to the gallows? I had assumed we wouldn’t be seeing you back here for quite some time.”

“Oh, you know me: I’ll do anything to avoid becoming predictable.”
“Yes, I'm starting to see that.” He chuckled, but only for a moment.

“I'm actually here to visit a friend.”

“Then allow me to escort you inside.”

“Such a gentleman. Thank you Thrask.”

They chatted about mundane things, until she realised he was leading her towards the mage quarters.

“Actually, Thrask, my friend will probably be in the apprentice dorms.”

He looked at her in confusion, obviously assuming her friend was some high ranking enchanter.

She smiled at his expression. “He’s just a boy: names Myles, dark haired elf, big brown eyes.”

“Of course.” He seemed to recognise either the name or her description and promptly changed course. “He’ll probably be in the library.”

“What makes you think that?” She curiously enquired.

“He spends the majority of his free time there since you left. Says you can learn far more from a dusty old book than a dusty old enchanter.”

She bit both lips, trying not to laugh as she recognised her own words. “Oops?” She shrugged, knowing she should probably apologise but at the same time not sincerely wanting to.

“Don't worry, he gave us all a laugh at least.”
She spotted him as soon as she entered the library, sitting at their usual table all by himself with his nose buried in an old tome that was almost as big as he was.

“Hey, you.” She called out to him as she approached.

“Hawke!” He dropped the book on the table with a loud thud and ran in to her arms, almost knocking her over in his excitement. “You came back, just like you promised.”

“Well of course I did.” She chuckled. “I always keep my promises.”

“Come look what I'm reading.” He grabbed her hand and tugged her towards the table.

“I'll leave you to it, then.” Thrask called from the doorway.

“Thank you, Thrask” She called over her shoulder.

Myles delighted in reciting everything he'd learned from reading. It seemed the little mage had somewhat of an eidetic memory, a skill she wouldn't deny being more than a little jealous of.

“And look at this.” He was so excited as he conjured a tiny flame in the palm of his hand, sustaining it with apparent ease as she praised him. “And this.” While still maintaining the flame, he splayed his other hand and danced tiny little arcs of lightning between his fingers.

She opened her mouth in shock. “Myles, that's incredible.” She was in genuine awe of the little lad. To wield two completely different elements at the same time was something that usually took an incredible amount of effort to perfect. And he made it look so easy.

But her amazement quickly turned to concern for the boy. A mage with such obvious talents would surely catch the Knight Commanders eye, and the woman was not a fan of magical talent.

“Have you shown this to anyone else, Myles?” She asked with a smile so as not to worry him.

“Nope.” He beamed. “I wanted to show you first.”
“That's good.” She exhaled in relief. “Look, I'm going to level with you Myles.” He sat up straight, listening attentively. “Powerful mage's, like you and I, tend to attract the wrong sort of attention. So, would you make me a promise?”

His eyes widened with excitement.

“Promise me you won't show this to anyone else?”

“You want me to pretend to be bad at magic?”

“Not bad.” She quickly corrected. “No, that would be just as dangerous as being too good.” She bit her lip as she carefully considered her words. “Who's the second smartest person in your class?”

“Edgar.” He rolled his eyes in a way that told her he and Edgar were not friends.

“Edgar.” She confirmed. “I need you to pretend to be one step behind Edgar.”

“But I hate him.” He whined. “He thinks he's so great.”

“So, let him believe it. We both know which of you is the more talented mage.” She narrowed her eyes and tapped the side of her nose, as if sealing their secret.

He seemed to really consider her words before responding. “Okay.” He beamed at her again and she wondered if she couldn't just hide him under her cloak and smuggle him home.

The bell tolled then to signal that it was time for dinner. She gave Myles a hug and promised to come back to visit him again soon.

On her way out of the Gallows, she was intercepted by the First Enchanter and, at his request, accompanied him back to his office.
He, rather annoyingly, tried to suggest ways in which she could use her new position to help the Circles mage's. With a polite smile, she told him he should concentrate on doing his own job and accept that she planned to use her position to make the Circle better for both the mage's and Templar's.

She got the distinct impression he bore no love for Templar's, regardless of the individual beneath the helmet, and that was the moment she realised that Orsino might very well be just as much of a liability as Meredith.

After leaving the Gallows she headed to Merrill to see if she knew who Myles' parents where. She assumed they'd like to know how he was doing and it would be nice to be able to pass him a message from them next time she saw him.

When Merrill eventually opened the door, she seemed oddly reluctant to let her in.

“Everything okay, Merrill? You seem a little preoccupied.”

“Um.” Merrill looked back over her shoulder at something Hawke wasn't able to see.

“Should I come back later?”

“It's okay, Merrill.” She heard a familiar voice call out, at which point Merrill fully opened the door to invite Hawke in.

“Uhh...when did this happen?” She looked back and forth between a dishevelled Merrill and her own shirtless brother.

“I'm so sorry we didn't tell you, Hawke.” Merrill sounded distraught. “But it all happened so fast, and we wanted to be sure before we said anything -”

“Merrill.” She smiled warmly at the anxious elf. “It's okay. Believe me, I understand complicated relationships.”

She looked so relieved.
“Is it...serious?” She couldn't completely contain her hopeful excitement.

The pair glanced at each other, and she did not miss their looks of mutual affection.

“Yes.” Carver answered, certain if a little shy.

Merrill blushed and looked at her feet.

After a few invasive big sister questions, and lots of happy congratulations, they moved on to the reason for her visit.

“Do you know the parents of a boy named Myles? He was taken to the circle just a few months ago.”

Merrill looked crestfallen, and her own heart dropped in to her stomach.

“I know his mother, Nymeria. His father...he didn't make it.”

“Shit.” She felt like crying. “Was it the Templar's?”

Merrill nodded. “He tried to fight them.”

“Did Myles...did he see?”

“No. He wasn't conscious, the Templar's had silenced him. I wanted so badly to help, Hawke, but -”

“It's all right, Merrill. I know.” She smiled, weakly. “I had hoped to bring them news of him.”

“His mother is still here, and I'm sure she'd love to talk to you.”
“Do you think you could introduce me?”

“We’ll go now.” She eagerly suggested.

She couldn’t completely hear everything Merrill was whispering to Myles’ mother. She was likely trying to convince her that the shem could be trusted. Eventually she found herself being eagerly ushered inside by the woman, Nymeria, and was immediately bombarded with questions about her son.

They spoke at length about her time in the Circle and how she and Myles had become fast friends, though she decided to skip the part about him saving her from being raped and almost dying in the process.

Before she left, Nymeria handed her a tiny wooden wolf that she said Myles’ father had carved for him. She promised to pass it on to him, along with their love, the next time she visited the Circle.

She developed a routine over the following weeks: she’d stop by the Viscounts office to check in with the seneschal, the Circle to check in with Cullen (Meredith refused to see her) and Orsino then stop for a chat with Myles, try to convince Anders to let her help with his mage underground, play wicked Grace at The Hanged Man and was even attempting to get the bone pit back up and running.

With the Templar’s now watching her every move, she felt it best not to go looking for random jobs. The Chantry would not look kindly on casual murder and she feared she’d only end up inadvertently leading them to escaped apostates.

So instead she sat on her hands and wondered if it was possible to die from boredom. On a positive note though, all of her unspent energy resulted in some rather spectacular sex with her elven lover. At her insistence, he still continued with their old line of work to help the city. It was mostly just jobs which had been approved and passed on by Donnic. Fenris still refused to join the guard, so instead Donnic was attempting to freelance him; in the hopes he would eventually just realise he was doing the guards work and officially join them already.

Hawke was usually the first one home and had been constructing increasingly inventive scenarios with which to greet him. One night, however, she had arrived only a few seconds before him and had no time to prepare herself. He had arrived in such a state of arousal from the anticipation of what awaited, and was so disappointed when he realised she’d had nothing planned, that he’d pinned her against the nearest wall and roughly had his way with her without even sparing the time to undress.
Tempted as she was to be taken by him in such an aggressive way again, today she had plenty of time before she expected him home. She drew herself a bath, scrubbed her skin until it was silky smooth and fragrant, then slipped in to the lacy little number she'd acquired earlier that day. It barely covered anything, but she knew Fenris would enjoy ripping it off all the same.

Too impatient to simply wait in the bedroom, she lay atop a makeshift bed of pillows and blankets in front of the fire in the parlour. When she heard the outer door open, she assumed a sultry pose and waited.

“Hello handsome.” She purred, as he stepped through the second door from the foyer.

She'd never seen a man look quite so equally panicked and aroused. “Wait!” He turned and shouted behind him, but Donnic and a few other guards soon appeared.

“Shit!” She tried to cover herself with the blanket she lay on, but too much of it was underneath her. She rolled towards the fire, almost sticking her hand in it, before successfully managing to wrap the blanket around herself.

The guards were all frozen in place, seemingly unable to look away from the hilarious sight presented to them.

Fenris was then crouching in front of her, blocking her from view and apparently trying not to laugh. “The Hanged Man was full so I said we could play cards here. I'll get rid of them though.”

“No, don't do that.” She protested. “I don't want to be one of those women.”

“Well, that's very nice of you Hawke, but...” He leaned closer and dropped his voice to a whisper. “Just how do you expect me to concentrate when I know you're wearing that?”

She chuckled. “I can put it back on later.”

“Would you two like some privacy?” Donnic hesitantly asked.
“No.” She popped her head out from behind her elven shield. “There's ale in the study, please help yourselves.”

“Do you think they'd miss us?” Fenris turned his hungry gaze on her as the guards disappeared in to the next room, prying the blanket from her to peer underneath.

“Get off me, you leetch” She laughed. “Go play cards. I'll see if Isabella's up for a drink.”

“Would you...keep this on - underneath your clothes, I mean?” He ran his fingertip down the lace shoulder strap before cupping her breast and giving it a gentle squeeze.

“All right.” She breathed, wanting nothing more than to jump him right then and there; regardless of their guests in the next room.

“I love you.” He kissed her until she ran out of air, then stood and offered her a hand.

“I'll be back in a few hours.” She slapped his arse as he walked away, then secured the blanket around herself and waddled upstairs to get dressed.

When she returned home almost exactly two hours later, slightly more inebriated then intended, she was pleasantly surprised to find Fenris' guests had gone. She sauntered up the stairs in search of her love, jaw dropping at the sight that awaited her.

"Well, hello there." It wasn't every day she was welcomed home by an unclothed Fenris, standing patiently by the fire for her to return.

"Come here." He smirked, beckoning her with the curl of his index finger.

"Is it my birthday?" He so very rarely presented himself in all his naked gloriousness, without at least a little encouragement on her part.

She deftly unbuttoned her robe as she stalked towards him, letting it slide down her lace covered body before stepping out of it completely.
“You look...” He devoured her with his eyes, unable to settle on one area of her body for more than a few seconds, as his hands explored the delicate fabric; teasing the flesh beneath. “Was this expensive?”

“Not overly so. Why -” Before she could finish her question he gripped the neckline on both sides and tore the entire thing open, right down to the dark patch of neatly trimmed curls between her legs. “And that's exactly why I didn't opt for the more expensive number.”

“Come with me.” He had an extremely mischievous look on his face, and she wasn't sure whether she should be afraid or excited.

As he lead her to the bed, the remnants of lace all but fell to the floor until she was completely nude. He instructed her to wait as he made himself comfortable; sitting propped up against the headboard.

“Sit.” He patted the space between his legs.

She squinted her eyes at him suspiciously, but did as instructed. "Like this?" She wiggled provocatively against him.

"No talking." He breathed in her ear, his gravely voice immediately raising the tiny hairs on the back of her neck.

She pulled her waterfall of inky black hair over one shoulder, so that she could feel him skin to skin.

He slowly ran the tips of his fingers up and down the length of her arms, all the while laying delicate kisses on her shoulder.

Her nipples hardened as he lightly traced her collar bones, and she was all of a sudden breathing a little heavier.

One hand moved down to her stomach, while the other lightly grasped her throat, and her first breathy whine slipped out.
Both hands were then sliding down her front, palming her breasts and lightly pinching her nipples, before reaching her thighs and gently coaxing them apart.

She bit her lip as he began to massage circles around her outer labia, though cruelly avoiding getting any closer to the centre of her core.

She was fully panting when one hand caressed it's way back up her body to settle on her breast, and the other began to move dangerously close to the hood of her clit.

She let out a long, approving moan when his hand blanketed her completely, fingertips grazing her lustfully sodden entrance.

She dug her fingers in to his lean thighs as he continued to massage and stimulate her outer labia, all the while neglecting her pearl and driving her wild with aroused anticipation.

His fingers were sliding over her with ease as the evidence of her desire coated his digits with each pass over her perineum. She whined in frustration when his finger almost dipped inside, only to pull back at the very last second.

*Please.* Did she say that out loud?

She felt him smirk against her neck, which he was gently nibbling.

She began unconsciously thrusting, trying to guide his fingers where she so desperately needed them. But he villainously continued to deny her.

She was almost sobbing from the tease before he finally gave her pearl the lightest of caresses, then tortuously slowly began to penetrate her with two of his long, slender fingers.

He’d barely touched her and she was already a quaking mess. A mass of shaking limbs and heavy breaths. She was making noises akin to those she usually only produced when he took her forcefully from behind, and yet here they were hardly moving at all.

He kept her suspended on the very edge of bliss for what felt like hours, then blessedly reigned in the
tease and began repeatedly sliding his fingers in and out of her while stimulating her pearl with the heel of his palm.

She was writhing and moaning and gasping for breath with each movement of his wonderfully talented fingers.

He sank his teeth in to the flesh where neck meets shoulder, and put a little more force in to his ministrations.

She felt light headed from all the heavy panting, and just when she thought she might pass out, her climax hit with such intensity that...

"Hawke?"

She came too wrapped tightly in his arms, still panting and covered in a glowing sheen of perspiration.

"Fenris?"

"You passed out." He chuckled, pulling her closer to nuzzle his nose behind her ear.

"How mean are you!?" She whined, turning in his arms to straddle him.

"Did you not enjoy it?" She didn't think she'd ever seen him look quite so smug.

"I - you - you're such a fucking tease!"

He chuckled with delighted satisfaction.

"I should leave you here to deal with this -" She wrapped her fingers around his rock-hard cock. "- all by yourself."
"But?" He raised one entitled eyebrow.

Her nostrils flared as she exhaled loudly in annoyance. "But I need you. Now."

He grabbed a handful of hair and tugged her head back to expose her neck. He ran his tongue from the hollow of her throat up to her chin, before invading her mouth.

She took a hold of him and lifted herself up just enough, before slowly sinking back down on to him. They swallowed each others moans amidst their sloppy kisses as she artfully rolled her hips.

He buried his face between her breasts, muffling a libidinous growl, before taking a nipple between his teeth.

"Fuck, I love you." She moaned, dragging her fingers along his scalp, before pressing her lips to the three dots of lyrium on his forehead.

He haphazardly flipped them so that he was on top, and she wrapped her legs around him as he kissed her sweetly; in stark contrast to the hard pounding that his hips were delivering.

She arched her back, pushing her chest up in to him as he repeatedly hit that sweet spot deep within. She cried his name at her release and she felt him bite down on her neck again, signalling his own completion.

He continued to languidly thrust, and she both marvelled at just how long it took him to soften; as her own climax slowly ebbed away, and worried that he was recalling the same troubling memory he was yet to share with her.

Eventually he was able to look at her, and what a look it was; full of unconditional love and adoration. They remained nose-to-nose as their panting breaths slowed to a normal rhythm, and there they lay, kissing and adoring, until sleep inevitably claimed them both.

She slept in much later than planned the next day; all the late night sex was really starting to mess with her body clock and she decided at least a few early nights a week would be a good idea as she
wondered down to Anders' clinic to, once again, try to convince him to let her join his mage underground. She'd had zero luck on that front since being released from the Circle. He insisted her new position made her too much of a risk: that she was probably being followed and the other apostates in the underground didn't think it was wise to trust her.

His lantern was out when she arrived but his door was unlocked, so she let herself in. She found him hunched over his desk, furiously scribbling out that damned manifesto of his.

“Is this a bad time?”

So focused on what he was doing, he obviously hadn't heard her enter and almost jumped out of his seat when he realised there was another person in the room. “Maker's hairy gonads!”

“Sorry.” She tried to stifle her laugh with a hand over her mouth. “I brought dinner.” She waved the basket of bread, meets and cheeses she'd snagged from the market on her way over, and his stomach promptly gave an appreciative grumble.

He took a deep breath to steady his nerves. “Hello, Hawke.”

“Hi.” She smiled as she took a seat at the desk opposite him and began to unpack her basket. “Would I be correct in assuming you haven't eaten today?”

“More important things to do.” He flippantly replied as he finished the line he was working on, before finally putting his quill down and accepting the proffered glass of watered-down-wine.

“So, about this mage underground.” Tact was never really her strong suit.

“Hawke, not this again.” He whined. “I've already told you: it's not going to happen.”

“But you still haven't given me a valid reason.” She protested. “Anders, I want to help our people.”

He looked pained, as he always did whenever they spoke of this, and she once again wondered what the true reason for his reluctance was.
“Just...keep doing what you can for the Circle. Hopefully you can change things so that we don't have to.”

“What does that mean?”

“I - have already said too much. Please, Hawke, don't bring this up again.”

She stood with so much force that her chair fell backwards. She knew it was childish, but she was just so fed up with his riddles. She grabbed the chunk of soft goats cheese with her bare hand, the majority of it spilling out between her fingers and almost ruining the petulant gesture. “I'm taking this, because I know it's your favourite.” And with that she stormed out of his clinic, leaving a trail of ruined cheese in her wake.

There was a messenger waiting at her door when she arrived home, with a letter bearing the First Enchanter's seal.

“Oh, what now?” She grumbled to herself.
Hawke woke in a cold sweat, loudly gasping as she sat bolt-upright, greedily sucking in air until she realised it was just a dream - though, it wasn't really. Scenes from earlier that day had invaded her subconscious, distorting the fade around her as she was forced to look upon the countless mage's and Templar's who had needlessly perished; all so that filthy maleficar bitch Grace could enact her apparently long-awaited revenge.

Hawke had been completely clueless of the woman's disdain for her. She thought her grateful for letting them escape all those years ago, but it seemed she blamed Hawke for their eventual re-capture; claiming it had been inevitable as she hadn't done more to help them survive on their own.

She breathed deeply, in through her nose and out her mouth, as she recalled the bodies and the blood and the putrid smell of Grace's foul magic, and of Myles' lifeless body. She was so certain the tiny elf was dead, so when Alain said that blood magic was the only thing which might break the spell, she readily agreed.

The Templar's had been slow to arrive, a fact for which she was both resentful and disappointed: If only they had arrived sooner, she might not have the literal blood of so many misguided innocents on her hands - but a part of her also wished they hadn't shown up at all, so that she might have been able to claim that Myles had perished and instead of the Circle send him back to his mother.

She had to explain to the Knight-Captain that Thrask and Grace had been rallying like-minded Templar's and mage's against Meredith, except that Grace had been manipulating them the entire time and sought only revenge for the death of her blood mage mentor. She told him of the plot to lure her to them using Myles as bait, and that as soon as Grace revealed her true intentions infighting killed most of them before Hawke and her small group were forced to defend themselves.

It was a wild tale, even to her, and she half expected that Cullen would not believe it. His reaction surprised her, however, almost as if he'd already had an inkling of the late groups rebellious activities. He shared nothing of his knowledge, of course, and promptly returned Myles and Alain to the Circle with little more than a curt nod in her general direction.

“Bad dream?” A gravely voice spoke beside her, as a warm lyrium-laced hand slid up her bare spine.

“Do you ever get the feeling something terrible is about to happen?” She whispered back, turning to
look at him as he kissed her shoulder.

The room was in complete darkness, save for the faint white/blue glow of lyrium from the tattooed warrior beside her.

“You mean what happened with Grace?” He asked between kisses that gradually crept across her shoulder and in to the crook of her neck.

“No.” She shook her head. “I - oh, I don't know - perhaps I'm just tired.” She flashed him a forced smile when he lifted his head to meet her gaze.

He fell back down on his back and pulled her with him, wrapping her in his arms and cradling her head on his chest. “Rest, then. It's still early.”

He slowly stroked her hair, and even though she couldn't shake the feeling of impending doom, she did eventually drift in to a blessedly dreamless sleep.

She and Fenris had planned to start their day down at the bone pit, to check on the progress of the new team of miners and ensure no giant spiders or dragons needed dealing with, but as soon as they left the estate she could see people speeding towards the Keep.

“What's going on?” She asked a nearby noble.

“The First enchanter and the Knight-Commander are at it again.” The woman all but yelled back as she sped off.

She exhaled, irritably, before proceeding to stand completely still as she tried to decide whether to simply continue with her own plans or attempt to intervene.

“Why are you wasting time even thinking about this? Of course you're going to involve yourself, it's an infuriatingly fundamental part of who you are.”
She turned to Fenris, intent on giving him a mouthful, until the look of utter adoration on his face rendered her mute.

“It’s one of the many things I admire about you.”

His handsome smirk drew a dreamy sigh from her, before she grabbed his hand and they hastily made their way towards the Keep.

She could hear Meredith and Orsino bickering before she could see them, and arrived just in time to witness Anders of all people joining in.

"Anders, what are you doing?" She worried aloud when she saw Justice begin to emerge as he purposefully tapped his staff on the ground.

Everything seemed to move in slow motion after that. Meredith ordered her men to kill the abomination, the sky was swathed in a bright red glow, and then the fucking Chantry exploded! She watched in hopeless horror as the building crumbled and disappeared before her very eyes.

She turned to Anders as the sounds of falling stone were gradually replaced by panicked screams. "Please tell me that wasn't you."

"You've doomed us all!" Orsino cried.

"...annulment." Was the only word she caught from Meredith amidst the chaos.

"You fucking lunatic!" Hawke turned on the rabid Templar. "You would kill them all for the actions of one man? An apostate who isn't even a part of your damn Circle?"

"They have all been corrupted!" She raged, waving her sword around maniacally. She startled when Cullen approached her from behind, but seemed to calm slightly at whatever words he whispered to her. “You'll have to excuse me, I have a Circle to annul.” She sneered, barking “Kill the apostates!” before heading off towards the docks.
She held Cullen's gaze for a few tense heartbeats before he eventually turned to follow Meredith away, then turned her attention to the advancing death-squad the mad bitch had left behind to dispose of them. She wanted to reason with them, but she knew it was useless.

After the Templar's had been put down, she and Orsino turned their attention to Anders.

"Please tell me I didn't help you do this." She begged.

"You helped him!?" Sebastian charged over, seeming to appear out of thin air.

"No!" Anders intervened. "She had no idea, this was all me."

"Then you need to die," Sebastian raged, but she stepped between the two of them. "You would protect him!? After everything he's done?"

She silently pleaded with Sebastian, unable to articulate her reasons for wanting to protect her foolish, foolish friend.

"He just committed genocide, Hawke! He murdered Elthina!"

"I know, I'm so sorry Sebastian -"

"Kill. Him."

"No."

"So you're just going to let him get away with it? Elthina respected you, Hawke. She deserved better than this."

"He won't get away with it. But I can't decide his fate right now - and we may need a healer for what's coming."
"If you let him live, Hawke, I will kill him myself."

"How Andrastian of you." Anders muttered to himself.

"Do not test me, demon!"

"Will you stay and help us, Sebastian?" She gripped his shoulders, desperately. "Please, I need you."

He took a few deep breaths, each one calming him a little more. "I will stay...if only to ensure that he does not try to escape."

"I can't believe you actually went through with his plan; after everything that psychopath did!" She heard Orsino quietly scalding Anders.

"Who are you talking about?" She asked, surprising the pair who hadn't noticed she was listening.

"She doesn't even know, does she?" Orsino seemed genuinely shocked.

"Will someone kindly tell me what the fuck is going on?" She was in no mood for more secrets.

"Anders told you about his little mage underground, I presume?" The First Enchanter began.

"Of course." She confirmed.

"Did he happen to mention they were made up almost entirely of resolutionists?" He angrily probed.

She pinched the bridge of her nose and sighed. "Andraste's knickers, Anders. Well I guess that finally explains why you insisted I couldn't be a part of it."

"Oh, that's not all." Orsino continued.
"Orsino, don't: I'm begging you." Anders quietly pleaded.

"Tell her who their leader was, Anders - right up until he lost his head."

Quentin. "No." She shook her head as though it were possible to shake the images from her mind. "You're lying - he's lying - tell me he's lying." With each word her certainty dissolved in to desperation.

"Hawke -"

"Oh my Maker." She curled in on herself as she tried to resist the urge to vomit.

"Hawke, I only found out what he was doing at the exact same moment you did, I swear!"

"Stop." She wasn't sure if she was speaking to Anders or the voices in her head, covering her ears as she tried to retreat in to the deepest recesses of her mind.

"Please, Hawke, you have to believe me. I never would have had anything to do with him if I'd known what he was up to."

"Please." She pleaded, cradling her face as she began to hyperventilate. She squeezed her eyes shut tight as she tried to calm herself, but the sounds of his incessant pleas made it impossible.

"Hawke?" He placed a hand on her shoulder, and she snapped; her overwhelming grief giving way to a violent rage.

She span around, dagger in hand, and instinctively sliced open his throat from ear to ear. As he fell to the ground, desperately clutching the gaping wound, she knelt on one knee beside him; watching unflinchingly as his blood covered the ground beneath him.

When Fenris spoke and began to rush towards her, she shielded herself and the dying mage in a static cage so immense that it completely concealed them from view.
She moved closer, now on both knees, never breaking eye contact as he raised a hand to cup her cheek. "I'm...so...sorry." He managed to croak, wiping away a single errant tear with the pad of his thumb.

She placed a hand on top of his, resting the other on his chest, then closed her eyes...and focused on his wound.

He let out a startled gasp, breathing deeply as his near fatal injury began to knit back together.

"Why?" He whispered.

"Because I'm not you." She simply stated.

He looked even more wounded than when she'd cut him.

"Here's what's going to happen." She began, leaning close to whisper in his ear. "You're going to lie here and pretend that I actually killed you - and when the coast is clear, you're going to disappear...for good."

"I know I don't deserve your forgiveness..." He rubbed gingerly at his throat.

"Forgiveness?" She seethed. “I will never forgive you for harbouring that monster.” She shook her head, looking at him as though he were something she'd stepped in. “No, you don't deserve a quick death - I want you to live with your guilt until it festers and you are incapable of feeling anything else - perhaps then you'll understand what that man did to me.”

He let his hands fall limply to his sides, his expression pained, before he closed his eyes and played the corpse.

"Goodbye Anders." She let the static cage dissipate, finally revealing herself to the concerned faces around her.
"Hawke!" Fenris was the first to reach her, wrapping her in his arms and pressing his lips to her temple. “What happened?”

Her only response was to look at Anders lying convincingly dead at her feet, the copious blood easily disguising his discreetly healed wound.

Fenris looked at the mage for a few seconds, then back at her. "Are you all right?"

She'd expected him to make some comment about how he'd deserved it, but his concern for her apparently eclipsed his hate for the abomination.

"We've wasted enough time." She spoke, loud and confident. "We need to quash this dick head's rebellion before any more innocents get hurt."

“I hope you have a plan, Dimples.” Of course Varric was here too, he always seemed to know where the action was.

“Where did Orsino go?” She asked nobody in particular.

“Back to the Gallows to protect the mage's.” Sebastian answered, looking very pleased with the surprising turn of events.

“Good. We need to do the same.”

“You want to fight the Templar's!?" Fenris retorted in shock. “Hawke, we need to leave this place immediately!”

“I'm hoping we won't have to fight.” She answered, choosing to ignore his later comment. “I know there are many who share our opinion of their Commander. If we could just reason with them...”

"You think they'd stand up to her?" Varric questioned as Fenris quietly seethed.

"It has to be worth trying. We need to reach the mage's before the Templar's do, try to convince them
that not every Templar wants them dead. If I can't -" She shook her head. "This will be a blood bath."

So off they headed to the docks, picking up the rest of the gang on the way, in the hopes there was still a boat they could commandeer.

She briefly wondered if she shouldn't have taken Fenris' advice and fled the city as she stared on at the horror Orsina had become. She'd tried to talk him down, but his hate for Meredith had corrupted his mind beyond reason.

She had Merrill focus on protecting the mage's who saw Orsino's mistake for what it was and wanted no part in his madness, while she and the others focused on cutting him down.

It wasn't an easy fight, having no idea where his weak spots might be, but eventually they wore him down until he was nothing more than a squealing little monster, easily dispatched by a few stomps of her boot. She just hoped she had enough energy left to fight the Templar's - if it came to it.

She instructed the mage's to barricade themselves in as she and her companions made their way out to the courtyard, where the remaining Templar's were waiting - far more than she had anticipated, too.

"Those who have chosen to stay do not want to fight." She channelled her inner Champion. "They don't deserve to be put to death for something they didn't do."

"They? Are you not one of them?" Meredith sneered in response.

"Revoke the rite, Meredith." She implored. "We don't want to fight, but we will if you force us to defend ourselves."

"My decision is final!" She raged. "Kill them all!"
Hawke braced herself...but nobody moved.

“What are you waiting for!? Kill the Champion!”

“Knight-Commander.” Cullen stepped between them. “This madness has gone too far.”

“My own Captain.” She paled. “They got to you didn't they? The blood mage's have addled your brain!”

“You've lost your mind!” Cullen shot back. “You are no longer fit to lead us: I relieve you of your command.”

“You ungrateful little shit!” She spat. “I made you what you are! And this is how you repay me!?“

She could sense Meredith's attack before the mad bitch even began to move. She blasted Cullen out of the way with as much precision as she could manage under such pressure, trying not to cause him injury but also making sure he was out of reach of the Knight-Commander's swing.

She cleaved her sword towards his head as her spell began propelling him away from her, but it just wasn't quite enough. The very tip of her sword connected with his face, though blessedly it seemed he was to get away with just a flesh wound.

“If you are so set on a fight...” She began, redirecting Meredith's attention back on herself, expertly twirling her daggers as she confidently approached. “Then a fight you shall have.”

The Knight-Commander let out a fearsome battle cry, burying her sword in to the ground before flying inhumanly through the air and landing on a perch just out of reach. What happened next was something she knew no one who hadn't seen it for themselves would ever believe. Statues came to life to fight for the Knight-Commander. Hawke had to use magic to take them down, her blades having little effect on their impenetrable shells. Wave after wave descended on them, until Meredith became too impatient and rejoined the fray.

“Protect the Champion.” She heard Cullen issue the command as she battled Meredith, her companions spread thin, still fighting the statues.
Considering her level of exhaustion, she was holding her own against the Knight-Commander, meeting her blow for blow - at least until the cunt delivered one of her debilitating silences.

She grit her teeth as she fell to her knees, the press of both daggers only just keeping the woman's sword from cleaving through her shoulder. Meredith growled as she put all of her weight in to the lyrium infused sword, piercing slowly through the leather of her armour.

She clenched her teeth and let out a pained growl as the cold metal made contact with her skin, slowly tearing through until it was deep enough to draw a steady stream of blood.

“Hawke!” She heard Fenris shout, but he was so far away and surrounded by his own attackers.

She locked eyes with Meredith, almost certain she was about to loose her arm, but instead she lost her sight when blood splattered her face.

The pressure was instantly gone, so she hastily wiped the blood from her eyes to prepare for the next attack, but it seemed it wouldn't be coming. The Knight-Commander lay prostrate, reaching for the sword she had somehow dropped while Carver towered above her, giant maul in hand.

She took a closer look at Meredith, noticing the gruesome gash on the side of her head. She was mumbling incoherently as she grasped the hilt of her sword, using it to pull herself up on to her knees. She sounded truly insane as she begged the maker for more power, and just as she looked to be regaining her footing, she let out an ear splitting screech then turned in to a fucking statue!

A hand appeared before her, helping her to her feet. She leaned against a body for support as she steadied herself. “Did you just save me, little brother?”

“And don't you ever forget it.” He smugly replied.

She laughed until movement aggravated her injury, crying out in pain as her wound gaped open.

“Hawke!” Fenris ghosted across the battlefield to her side as the Templar's took down the last of Meredith's lyrium charged statues - which were becoming docile without their puppeteer. “Are you injured?”
“Merrill!” Carver shouted.

Merrill had her healed up good as new by the time the fighting was completely over, and Fenris wasted no time in scooping her up in his arms to steel a passionate kiss.

“Where is the First Enchanter?” Cullen interrupted.

“Don't ask.” She rolled her eyes in annoyance as she thought about the stupid man's misguided attempt to help his fellow mage's. “Maferath's balls, Cullen, your face!” She kept one hand glued to Fenris and reached out with the other to heal the Knight-Captain, but he quickly recoiled.

“No! Please, no magic.” He held up his hands, warning her to stay away. She knew a little of what he had experienced at Kinloch, and was probably remembering that all too well after battling those of the mage's who'd resorted to blood magic instead of following her.

“Knight-Commander.” Rylen approached. “Medics ready for you.”

“Knight-Commander?” She asked, smirking slyly.

“You have an opinion, I take it?” He groaned.

“Only that it's about damn time.” She honestly approved.

“So, what now?” He was asking her?

“The mage's will surrender - provided I can assure them the rite has been revoked.”

“Of course.” The poor man sounded exhausted. “And what about you? Will you also submit yourself to Templar custody?”

“I beg your pardon?” She choked.
“Hawke, look around. The Knight-Commander is dead and the Chantry destroyed. I can't just let you walk - at least not until a thorough investigation has been conducted.”

“You cannot have her.” Fenris snarled as he stepped between them, her living and immovable shield.

She was readying a defensive spell when she spotted it, a discreet wink from the new Knight-Commander.

“Fenris.” She placed a hand on his arm, turning him to look her in the eye. “It's fine, I'll happily answer their questions. I'm innocent.” She smiled, but her eyes gave him a conspiratorial look. “I'll be out in no time. Why don't you go home and wait for me there?”

He frowned but relented, drawing her in to a tight embrace to whisper a quick “If this is a trap, I will return and kill everyone” before pulling away and heading back to the docks with the rest of the gang in tow.

They'd been waiting almost an hour for Hawke to appear. He was certain she'd been attempting to reassure him that she had a plan, though he had no idea what it was. He felt so helpless.

He couldn't wait any longer, he had to go get her.

He pulled open the door and practically ran in to a Templar. He snarled as he reached for his sword, but then a familiar voice stopped him in his tracks.

“Ma lath, it's me.” The Templar reached for her helmet and pulled it off, cascading long inky-black hair around her shoulders and down her back.

“Hawke?” He breathed in relief, but then his eyes travelled down her arm and on to the tiny elf boy holding her hand, and his tone changed to that of chastising annoyance. “Hawke?”

She merely smiled, sheepishly, and shrugged.
“You better come inside, then.” He brooded before stomping back inside himself.

“Hawke!” Everyone seemed to shout at once.

“No time to chat.” She immediately silenced them all. “Cullen allowed Carver to sneak me out but they’ll be expected to come after me as soon as someone else finds out I'm gone.” She took a deep breath. “I have to leave Kirkwall...right now.”

It killed her to admit it, but there was really no other choice. With Anders gone, she’d almost certainly be made the Chantry's scapegoat.

“Where are we going?” Isabella and Varric spoke at once.

“No.” Her voice broke. “Not you...just me.”

“And me.” Fenris grasped her free hand, lacing his fingers between her own.

She looked up at him and smiled. She knew he would never let her leave without him, but it was still a relief to hear him say it.

“We're outlaws now. We'll be hunted - I don't want that for any of you.”

“But won't the Templar's come for us if they can't find you?” Merrill pipped up.

“No. Carver says I'm the one they want. None of you will be held accountable.”

“So, is this...goodbye?” Merrill's lip trembled.

All Hawke could do was nod.
Bleary-eyed, heartfelt goodbyes ensued, before she pulled Merrill to one side.

“I have a huge favour to ask of you, Merrill.” She looked down at the tiny elf beside her. "I've been telling Myles here all about the Dalish. He's eager to see them for himself.”

Merrill simply smiled, then crouched down to Myles' height. “Feel like going on an adventure?”

He eagerly nodded before turning to give Hawke one last hug.

“You be brave, you hear me? Merrill is going to take you and your mother to some old friends of hers. It won't be an easy life, but you'll be free.”

“I'll miss you.” His tiny little voice finally coaxed out the tears she'd tried so hard to hide.

She quickly wiped her face then turned to take one last look at her friends, the greatest anyone could ever ask for.

“Did you get everything?” She asked Fenris as he reappeared by her side.

“Coin, clothes and camping gear.” He affirmed. “You ready?”

“No.” She nervously laughed. “But let's go anyway.”

She promised to write to everyone as soon as they were safe and able, then she and Fenris fled towards the wounded coast.

They'd travelled throughout the night and almost the entire next day before exhaustion ultimately won over, then set up camp for the night.
“Tent's ready.” Fenris announced as he took a seat on the grass beside her.

She could feel his eyes on her, though her own were fixed on the sky, entranced by the beautiful full moon.

“Fenris, there's something I need to tell you.”

“You saved Anders?”

“How -”

He tapped his ear. “Elven hearing.”

“Are you disappointed in me?” She picked nervously at her fingernails, unable to look him in the eye.

“No.” He shook his head. “I know it can't have been easy.”

He swept her hair back over her shoulder, before gently brushing the pad of his thumb over the shell of her ear.

Her heart beat faster at the contact and she smirked as her forlorn thoughts changed to something entirely different.

“Have you ever made love under the light of a full moon?” She tilted her head and raised a questioning eyebrow.

“Is that a proposition?” He asked, as he returned her cheeky smirk.

She bit her lip and coyly shrugged her shoulders, before he leaned in close for a bruising kiss. She whined, petulantly, when he suddenly broke away and told her he'd be right back.
She leaned back on her hands to further examine the stars in the beautifully clear night sky as she waited for him to return. He didn't take long, though instead of retaking his place by her side she heard him settle just a few feet behind her.

“Hawke?”

She frowned at the nervousness of his voice, before turning to face him. “Is that...” Her mouth completely dried up as she tried to make sense of what she was seeing. “...are you?”

Fenris was on one knee, both arms outstretched, hands cradling something which was clearly very precious to him.

“Elodie Hawke...”

“Oh my Maker.” She exhaled in a hurry, clapping both hands over her mouth in shock.

“Meeting you was the most important thing that ever happened to me. Nothing could be worse than the thought of living without you. So would you do me the great honour...” He paused for dramatic effect "...of agreeing to be my wife?” He slid a silverite band, holding one perfectly sized emerald, on to the fourth finger of her left hand.

Rendered incapable of speech, all she could do was repeatedly nod as her lip trembled and tears of absolute joy fell down her pleasantly flushed cheeks. She wrapped her arms around his neck, kissing him with all the passion he ignited in her.

He wiped her cheeks with his thumbs and kissed the tip of her nose. "Do you have any idea how long I've been wanting to ask you that?"

"Seriously?” She loudly whispered, not quite having regained her full voice just yet.

"I've thought of little else for the better part of a year."

She pulled him in to a tight embrace, marvelling at the ring on her outstretched hand. "It's beautiful." She breathlessly adored. "I hope you didn't spend too much." She half-heartedly chastised. "You
know I'm just a simple girl."

He loosened her arms around his neck to pull back just enough to look her in the eye. "Hawke, I'm pretty sure you have underwear that cost more than this ring."

"That underwear, as you so inadequately describe it, was just as much for you as it was for me."

"And I thoroughly enjoyed seeing you in it - though, admittedly not as much as I enjoyed taking it off you."

“You mean tearing it off and completely ruining it?” She dead-panned.

He kissed her once, then tucked her hair behind her ears. “Now, I believe you mentioned something about fooling around in the moonlight?”

She needed no further prompting than that, pressing herself flush against him as their lips crashed together. Clothes were wildly discarded as they were almost completely swept away by the moment, until he lay her down in the grass and time seemed to stand still.

He caressed her face as he gazed adoringly down upon her. “Never in my wildest dreams did I ever imagine I could love someone this much.” He breathed in awe.

She swept her palms along his athletically muscled back, bringing them to rest on the nape of his neck. “I know exactly what you mean.”

She gently pulled him closer and slowly kissed him, drawing his bottom lip between her teeth before gasping as he fluidly sheathed himself.

The movements of their hips were perfectly attuned to their languid and indulgent kisses, their fingers burrowing ever deeper in to each others hair.

As their pleasure began to approach the precipice, she found herself being rolled on top. They giggled as they readjusted their positions slightly. Hawke pressed both palms to his chest and sat up straight, rolling her pelvis just so. She moaned, wantonly, when his hands clutched on to her ribs just
below her breasts. He clearly expected such a reaction, smirking to himself, knowing full well what that did to her.

Eventually his hands drifted down to her hips, thumbs nestling in to the seam where hip meets thigh as his fingers splayed wide over the swell of her backside.

After just a few more slow but powerful gyrations, she felt his fingers digging in to her flesh as he came at the same precise moment as she did. She continued to grind herself against him as he repeatedly spilled inside her, prolonging her climax for as long as she could possibly sustain it, until she collapsed in a sweaty heap on to his chest.

As her frantic panting slowly settled, she became aware of a pack of wolves howling in the distance. “Do you think they heard us?” She laughed, causing him to hiss when the contraction of her pelvic muscles expelled him from her.

“Perhaps we should move inside before they decide to join us?”

With a lot of effort, she pulled herself off of him and offered him a hand to help him stand. Hand in hand they leisurely strolled, completely nude, back to the tent. She lay on her back and held open her arms, inviting him to lay his head on her chest.

They snuggled in silence for a while, though it seemed sleep wasn't close for either of them.

“Do you have any idea where we're going?” He quietly asked, before pressing his lips to her breast.

“I worry we'll be recognised wherever we go.” She sombrely admitted.

“Somewhere remote then?”

She smiled to herself. “I think I know just the place.”

The following morning they continued their journey along the coast, towards Ostwick. It would take a couple of weeks on foot, but it was the closest port where they might find a ship to take them to Gwaren.
And that's it for part 1. Stay tuned for part 2 (coming soon). I think we'll have 1 or 2 chapters pre-inquisition before we get to Skyhold.

If you haven't played Inquisition and don't want any spoilers, feel free to stop reading now.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!