The tie was being removed from his hair. He involuntarily stiffened, closing his eyes as Vilkas pulled off his own tunic, moving in front of him.

He needed to be honest with himself, it wasn't that he didn't find Vilkas attractive, he did. That was the problem. The twins shared the same physical beauty, with slight differences of course.

It was what *he* had, that his brother didn't. It was his dominance, his need to be in control.
That coupled with his beauty, he would get lost in this man... the way he had gotten lost in someone else. The thought of this man having control of him, his heart... his body.

It terrified him.

Notes

02/08/20 - Just posted today. Working on Wild and Leverage, then another for this, Taboo, and Haikyuu.

I appreciate all that have followed this for so long and promise to continue.

English was not my primary growing up, and my education was lacking, even in my home country. So, I kind of learned as I wrote. After taking classes a couple years ago, I'm much better, as you can probably see in the later chapters.

I've done a lot of editing, but as I go through I am realizing that I still have much to do.

Errors to some punctuation mostly. I beg that you try to overlook until I can get it all done.

Thanks for reading and for your continued patience.

Of course, I only own my OC's.

**This is a story for fans of Mer. Altmer & Bosmer... like me. It's main focus is my Mer OC, his past and his relationship with the Companions, as well as the Thalmor and others. It delves into the Thalmor and Altmer people quite deeply. Giving a somewhat in-depth and inside view to the Thalmor and the Dominion, showing multiple facets, the good and not so good. Even though my Dovah was raised Imperial, there is literally NO focus on the civil war, as I wanted to write something that was more neutral where that was concerned so that everyone that was into the Mer, Thalmor/Dominion side of things could enjoy.

As I've said in my others, there will be a little divergence here and there as I fit this story into the mix of things, but I will make every attempt to stay true to lore where I can. This starts in the Isles, but the whole story is pretty much a mix of both places.

Most of the story takes place when my main character is about 19 but there are flashbacks to when he was younger. Dragonborn is still the new Harbinger, the story line starts just prior to him joining the Companions. It does not revolve around him, but he will play a heavier role later on.

**Tags** Please read the tags. This story involves slavery and racism/prejudice, and torture. So, if you're going to have any issues with this subject matter, or anything else that's tagged for, you may not want to read.

Also, by no means is anything that takes place in this story to be affiliated or compared to any real events, past or present, or with any real person(s), alive or dead. It is fiction based on fiction. And while my Original characters, their relationships, and the circumstances they are dealing with is coming from my mind, it does not mean that I agree with much of what takes place or is done to them. I am not a racist/bigot, nor do I agree with slavery or ill treatment towards anyone of any kind!
Fillim spoke, rousing him from his thoughts. "You'll see me tomorrow, we just won't be able to speak. He'll be gone again in a few days and then I can sneak back over." Tarenen pushed him away, laid on his back and looked in the other direction.

It was always like this. He would beg him to stay even when it risked their exposure. As soon as he would stress the fact that they were taking unnecessary risks, and that he should leave, Tarenen would pout.

Laying on his side, propped up on his elbow. "He could come back any minute..." he reached his hand over to Tarenen's chest, rubbing light circles across his soft golden skin with his fingers.

Still, he was ignored.

Moving his hand up to his lover's jaw, he turned his face, attempting to look into his green eyes. "You do know what he would do to me if he found us together."

This starts in the Isles, then moves to Skyrim. See the end of the chapter for more notes.

"Sssshhhhh," Tarenen struggled through his own giggles to whisper.

Fillim couldn't quit laughing. "Quit it!"

"Stop it, your mother will hear! How can you shush me when you're the one doing the tickling." Fillim squirmed, trying to get away from his groping hands.

The room was dark, all the candles having been blown out long ago. Wrestling around, the covers pulled completely over them. "I don't think he will be home for awhile yet"

Tarenen pulled the blanket back away from his head. His hair was in tangles, golden skin shining with sweat. Ocean breeze streamed in through the windows, the sheer curtains billowing. It was so peaceful... relaxing.

Straightening back up onto the bed, Tarenen's head next to his on the pillow, just looking into his eyes. Fillim laughed lightly, "What?"

The Altmer's hands came up to his head, tangling his fingers into his deep red locks, pulling him into a kiss. His mouth latching onto Fillim's upper lip and tongue at once, sucking.

"Mmm..." his hands ran up Tarenen's smooth chest, up to his neck. Caressing his jaw, moving up to
the delicate point of his ear, which was growing more crimson by the second. Pressing against each other, both getting hard again. They had waited for this little bit of privacy for so long.

He pulled away briefly, "You need to shave again, I'm going to have a rash..."

His chest all the way to his face was red, not to mention down there. Of course his father would never see down there, and whether he shaved or not, all of his other hair rubbing on him would've made the rash anyway.

Fillim had hair where no other Altmer did... everywhere. His father had demanded when he took him on several years ago, that he be clean shaven everyday.

Facial hair, especially, was found disgusting by Altmer here. It was the look of a savage.

Fillim let out a sigh, "Maybe I should just go... it's late, and if he's not home yet..."

Tarenen's face instantly pulled into a pout, "What's wrong? I didn't mean anything by it, I know you can't help it... I love your hair." Smiling coyly, he pulled at Fillim, wrapping around him. "I don't want you to go yet, I won't be able to see you for days," he whined.

Even in the dark, the drastic difference in their skin tones was visible. Tarenen's soft golden skin and hair so blonde it was a platinum white in color. Fillim's skin was so dark, with just enough golden hue to give it almost an olive quality. His father's golden skin, mixed with his mother's dark tan skin, a lovely blend of the two.

Beautiful, dark red, long hair that he always kept tied back now flowed freely around his face and down between his shoulder blades. Soft hair fanned out over his chest tapering down his abdomen to his crotch surrounding his cock and balls up and around his dark, puckered ring of muscle, and just a slight amount on his arms and legs as well.

Tarenen was absolutely smitten with it. He had been so taken in by how different they were. He thought Fillim was beautiful. His eye's had his father's golden amber color, unmistakable even if the Mer denied him.

Tarenen's were a brilliant green, just like Anariil's.

Their fathers had been the closest of friend's since they were just young Mer. Both from a long line of wealth and power.

Tarenen's father, in the upper echelon of the Thalmor. Fillim's father was royalty. A powerful bureaucrat for the Dominion. With the position he held, the power it gave him, he was nigh untouchable.

He had kept his illegitimate son hidden as long as he could. Not wanting ridicule from his peers, he'd even had him taught in secret, paying scholars and mages to school him privately.

And now that he was of age, he would hire him out to recoup the cost. Fillim would never see a single coin of the gold he worked so hard for. Not until he'd paid off the debt to his father anyway. Both nineteen now, he'd been with them for a period of three years. And Tarenen could only hope that his father would decide to keep him on.

He would never forget the first time he saw him.

He'd just gotten back from his studies, his mother had told him they had a new servant and to steer clear. His father didn't like him fraternizing with the help, always telling him that it was beneath
his station.

His mother on the other hand, was gentle in nature and would always do extra for them when his father was away. It was their little secret. Truth be told, she like him, feared Anariil and took pity on any who happened to be in his path.

On the back of their property, overlooking the ocean, Fillim worked. Tarenen relaxed on the porch with his wine, watching the Mer, enjoying the sound of the waves as they hit shore. His shirt was off, he'd draped it over some of the fencing he was rebuilding for them. Sweat glistened on his dark skin. His long red hair bound with a leather tie, hanging to the middle of his back.

He had hair almost everywhere that was bare. Tarenen barely had hair anywhere, and he couldn't take his eyes off him. He had never seen such an exotic looking Mer.

Suddenly his father had walked out onto the porch, startling him from his thoughts. He just stood behind him, silent. He'd straightened up in his chair, glancing back at him in question. "He looks to be about my age, why haven't I ever seen him?"

His father walked around to face him. 'I shall explain why', then he called out to Fillim. Instantly, he regretted asking the question.

Stopping what he'd been doing, Fillim obediently walked to where they were and stood.

His father had looked at the Mer with pure distaste. 'I want you to stand here for me Fillim, so that I may explain something to my son... a lesson if you will.'

Tarenen's stomach dropped, his chest tightening up as he waited for what was coming. 'My son wants to know why he hasn't seen you before Fillim, you know why don't you.' Anariil turned back to him, gesturing toward their servant. 'See my son... this is what happens when you do not take caution regarding with whom you bed.'

He was sick inside, he felt so bad for the poor Mer. Fillim just stood there, his head up and eyes straight ahead. Walking around the half-breed, his father actually pointed things out as he spoke. 'Look at his skin, he is colored like a Bosmer, not us!'

Pulling lightly on some of his hair, he turned to look at his son. 'His hair color, another giveaway. No well bred Altmer would have dark hair, or hair on their body... their face. It's disgusting!'

He stopped right in front of Fillim, looking him in the eye, 'The only thing you have of your father's are his eyes! You are a disgrace to him! You're mother's kin don't even want you! You're a mutt! Filth! Remember that!'

With that, he had turned and walked back into their home, leaving them standing there... alone. They just stared at each other. He could see the pain that was so very apparent in Fillim's amber eyes, he was trying so hard to hide it. Tarenen didn't know what to say, he wanted to say something... anything to console the poor Mer.

Fillim finally spoke, snapping him out of it. 'May I resume my duties, Master Tarenen?'

His mouth had dropped, hanging open. It had taken him a moment, just trying to speak. Fillim's warm eyes watching him, silent. Finally, and very quietly. 'Yes... you may.'

The Mer turned without so much as a sound and walked back out to resume his work.
Hands shaking, he sat back down and watched him.

He didn't feel superior, he felt embarrassed, humiliated... for both of them.

Fillim spoke, rousing him from his thoughts. "You'll see me tomorrow, we just won't be able to speak. He'll be gone again in a few days and then I can sneak back over." Tarenen pushed him away, laying on his back and looked in the other direction.

It was always like this. He would beg him to stay even when it risked their exposure. As soon as he would stress the fact that they were taking unnecessary risks, and that he should leave, Tarenen would pout.

Laying on his side, propped up on his elbow. "He could come back any minute." He reached his hand over to Tarenen's chest, rubbing light circles across his soft golden skin with his fingers.

Still, he was ignored.

Moving his hand up to his lover's jaw, he turned his face, attempting to look into his green eyes. "You do know what he would do to me if he found us together."

They had often talked of leaving together, but that's all it was. Talk, fantasies. Fillim would always remind him of who his father was. That there was no place they could hide where he wouldn't find them. If Fillim left too, then he would definitely know! That would just be all the more reason to find them. His retribution would be horrible.

Tarenen stared into his eyes, his lower lip quivered, "But I miss you." his eyes pleading. He knew Fillim would give in, he always did. He knew it was selfish, but he couldn't help it. He could never get enough. Having to be just within reach of him for days and unable to speak, stealing glances... afraid that his father would catch on.

Grabbing Fillim's arm, he pushed the Mer onto his back. He willingly opened his legs, allowing him to climb between them. Tarenen lay atop him, with an arm at both sides of his head.

Leaning in to kiss him between words "Quick and quiet, just once more, please."

Slender, but well toned arms slid around his shoulders, legs around his hips. Fillim's cock was already semi-hard, his ass still wet with Tarenen's seed from their earlier lovemaking session. He closed his warm eyes, wriggling around under him.

Tarenen lined up to his tender hole and slid in slowly. Watching Fillim, as his body arched under him. His head back, full lips open, gasping for breath. Moments later he was moving in time with his slow rolling hips.

Tarenen leaned into his ear "I wish I could see you, I'm so tired of being in the dark." The contrast in their skin tones was a major turn on for him. He loved seeing his light, golden cock sliding in and out of Fillim's dark, olive hole.

Just thinking about it could get him hard.

Fillim smiled, his eyes still closed. "You'll see my head on a pike if we don't hurry."

His hands moving down to Tarenen's bottom, fingers digging into the golden flesh. Pushing him into each thrust. Tarenen's head next to his, breathing hard into his ear. Clenching his ass up around the length sliding in and out of him, bucking up to meet him. He knew this would get him off fast. It always did.
A hand quietly reached between them, taking hold of his cock, stroking him with each thrust. Tarenen's body stiffened, struggling with every movement now, "Yess... fuck!"

His face pushed into Fillim's neck, he could feel Tarenen pulsing inside of him. He was so close... so close. Tarenen, still inside him, leaned up on one elbow, and began to stroke his length harder. Covering his mouth with one hand, the other clutching the bed. He had to be quiet. Tarenen slid out, moving down and taking him into his mouth... he let go, his head thrashing against the pillow as he spent himself, Tarenen drinking him down.

Out of breath, wrapped around each other. His whole body tingling, he was a mess. He didn't dare to clean up here, he'd have to put on his clothes as he was. There could be no evidence. He'd have to wash them out after his duties were done tomorrow, giving them time to dry overnight.

His ass was aching so bad, he knew he'd need a potion just to get through his work. He hated having to hurry, as it took away from their time together. But his mind just couldn't let go of the fact that Anariil wasn't home yet, the fact that he could be at the servant's cabin right now waiting for him. If that happened, he wouldn't have an answer to the state his body was in.

If that happened, Anariil would kill him.

Chapter End Notes

The first few chapters are quite severe. Please do not let this sway you, though. Even though this story entails some not-so-nice things, there are some lighter moments and some good times.
Waiting

Chapter Summary

But wasn't that exactly what he had with Tarenen? That thought bothered him, and he pushed it away. At the very least, they could admit their feelings for one another, it was mutual and loving.

Now... now, he wasn't so sure if it wasn't a mistake.

Chapter Notes

**this chapter contains past memories of underage (16 yrs old)**

Older Thalmor male using position of power over his younger male servant. First real sexual experience with another individual. No physical force used. **If that upsets you don't read.**

**********

The feeling that he needed to run from the main house was overwhelming. As soon as he got out into the night, he felt like a mouse under the watchful eye of a hawk. Anariil could be anywhere! Forcing himself to relax, he had to act casual. He couldn't act like he was guilty.

The problem was, right then everything in him was screaming that something was wrong! Anariil was always home before now if he wasn't planning on being gone for the night. For the first time, he contemplated stopping the relationship he had with Tarenen. He loved him, but this was way too risky. His father was smart, they would end up getting caught. It was only a matter of time.

Tarenen's mother knew of their feelings for each other, she had even aided them with information when she could. Letting them know when Anariil would be gone for trips and how long. What would he do to her if he found out that she'd helped them?

Too many were at risk. He healed himself as he left, heading straight for the pond to clean up.

At least he would have an excuse not to be in his quarters if Anariil had been waiting for him. Problem was, he'd been gone at least three or four hours. What excuse could he possibly give? He could say he was unable to sleep, so he went for a walk. Getting sweaty from walking, he decided on a swim. **Yes! That might work.**

Finally reaching the pond, he dropped his clothes on the shore and stepped in. Feeling the need to hurry, but also trying to take enough time to wash away any remnants of sex that still remained. Hopefully it would work. His ass no longer ached after the healing spell was done. But if Anariil decided to eat him, well... that would be a different story all together. Anariil loved eating his ass, it drove him wild.

The first time Anariil had done it, he'd tried smothering his cries with a pillow. Anariil had gotten so irritated, ripping the pillow away saying that he wanted to hear him. That was his ego, needing
to be constantly stroked. Then in the morning Fillim would have to face the female servants, absolutely mortified knowing they'd heard everything happening in his room the night before!

An older Bosmer female and two Kahjiit females, of course they would never say anything to him. He'd get a little grin here or there, maybe a poke in the ribs. But they would keep it light, knowing the position he was in. It was a show of Anariil's power, he knew no one dared utter a word to his wife or son.

Dunking under the water one last time, he walked out. His stomach was a knotted up ball of stress, he knew he wouldn't be able to keep his composure if Anariil was waiting for him. He would turn into a blithering mess as soon as he applied any sort of pressure, and Anariil loved it too. He was so intimidating. He knew the effect he had on him and he used it constantly.

It had been like this from the very start, Fillim was just sixteen when he had been signed over to him by his father. He was to work for Anariil for such a time until his debt to his father was paid off, then it would be between Anariil and himself as to whether or not he stayed on. There weren't many options for someone of his breeding here. Anariil had told him constantly, that he would be doing the same kind of work no matter whom he worked for. He might as well stay where he was treated well.

His first night here had passed quietly, and it had actually made him feel that maybe it wouldn't be so bad here. The other servants were nice, almost motherly and Anariil's wife was very nice to him. He remembered laying in bed thinking, the conditions are good, dealing with Anariil's temper wouldn't be so bad. The servant's cabin was big, he had his own room, privacy.

His second day there, he'd met their son. He didn't seem at all like his father, much more like his mother. Of course he'd been upset at Anariil's display of his poor breeding, though Fillim was used to it by now. Their fathers were long time friends, he was used to seeing Anariil. His disdain for his existence was well known to him. Over the years he'd never missed an opportunity to remind him that he was a blight on his father's life.

Of course, anytime anything was said was just outside of his father's earshot. Filthy looks and remarks, that Fillim didn't dare go to his father and complain about. It wasn't as if he actually had his father's support, and even then it would've been his word against Anariil's.

So many times he'd wanted to have the courage to tell him, That maybe his father shouldn't have chosen his Bosmer servant for a bed partner then, if he hadn't wanted a half-breed for a son! But that was wishful thinking, he was terrified of Anariil.

His mother had died giving birth to him. Everything he'd been told of her by the other servants was that she was a wonderful Mer. Also, that his father had actually had real feelings for her, though he would never admit it. He didn't dare, lest he lose everything. It was simply the society they lived in.

His second night there, things changed.

His work was done, he'd eaten with the other servants and then had gone to the pond to bathe. Getting back to his room, he'd blown out the candle, dropped his breechcloth and laid down. A nice breeze was pouring in the window, he could hear the calming sounds of the ocean past the cliffs. He'd almost been asleep, when his door slowly opened.

At first he thought perhaps a breeze blowing through the house had opened it. Then he saw him standing there. Panic ran through him, his eyes flew open! He couldn't think of anything to do but sit up against the wall, his hands digging into the bed. He couldn't even speak. Thinking, What did
I do? I don't remember doing anything wrong!

Anariil walked in slowly and closed the door behind him. He could see the effect that his presence was having on the young Mer and he either didn't care or was secretly pleased. Probably the latter. More than likely both.

He was wearing a dark blue, silk shirt, completely open and loose fitting, white pants that tied at the waist. His hair was down... it was never down. In fact, Fillim couldn't ever remember seeing him with it down. He was completely confused as he took in his Master's appearance.

Neither of them said a word.

Anariil walked slowly to the bed and sat down on the edge next to him, his bright, green eyes watching him closely.

He was shaking, trying to focus his eyes anywhere but at the Mer sitting on his bed. Anariil raised his right hand to Fillim's leg, and as soon as contact was made he gasped! Trying to remain still, Anariil watched him intently as he ran his hand over his knee to his inner thigh.

As soon as his hand reached his crotch, Fillim yelped, throwing his head back, hitting the wall! Anariil wrapped his long fingers around the young Mer's flacid member, and rising further onto the bed he pushed his way in between Fillim's legs.

His teeth bit into his bottom lip as he fought to keep quiet.

Releasing the young Mer's flesh, Anariil slid his arm around him, lifting him away from the wall and laying him down onto the bed beneath him.

Low whimpers escaped Fillim's mouth.

Face to face with the Thalmor between his legs, he closed his eyes. He couldn't look into his face, his eyes. His whole body was trembling. Anariil lowered his mouth to his ear whispering, "Relax Fillim... I'm not going to hurt you."

He nodded, struggling to calm his breathing, His hands raising up to rest on the Altmer's bare chest. Anariil began kissing along his ear, flicking his tongue along the edge to the very tip. Tenderly kissing him along his neck, to his jawline. His forearm resting alongside Fillim's head, holding him up, the other hand softly stroking his face and ear.

He'd never been touched like this before. Overwhelmed by the rush of emotions coursing through him, keeping his eyes closed he focused simply on keeping quiet... on breathing.

He'd always been afraid of Anariil. This was so different from any way he'd ever acted towards him, or treated him. Even in his confusion, what he was doing felt good. He wanted to respond but was unsure how, unsure of what might anger the Altmer.

He was getting hard, his hands grasping at the warm flesh above him. He opened his eyes as Anariil's mouth moved to his, sucking tenderly on each lip. His tongue sliding between them, finding his. Those green eyes stared into his through heavy lids, Fillim whimpered into his mouth closing his eyes once more.

He could feel Anariil's erection pushing into his groin. He was gasping now, arching his back and moaning as Anariil ground his hips against him.

Anariil kissed and licked as he moved down along his body, nuzzling into the soft hair that ran
down in a line across his abdomen. His whole body felt like it was on fire! Anariil nibbled on him... he left nothing untouched. He was being so gentle.

He wound his hands into golden locks, holding the head that was giving him such pleasure. Other than the suckling and kissing noises he made, his lover remained completely silent.

The Altmer was now on his knees, looking down at him. His hands rubbing into the hair surrounding him, massaging him. His cock had been so hard it was almost painful. He watched as Anariil lowered his head down, taking him in all the way until his face was pressed into all that fine hair, and then he swallowed around him.

Fillim cried out! Arching his back, his hands clutching at the head between his legs! Bucking into the mouth that surrounded him, he was lost.

No longer worrying if his actions would spur aggression, all he could think about was the wet, heat that engulfed him. And Anariil allowed him, as he kept one hand around the base of his slender cock, the other massaging his tight little sac.

What seemed like forever, had only taken minutes. Anariil was sucking so hard, the head of his cock was hitting the back of his throat. Fillim screamed out when he came, his seed flooding into Anariil's mouth. Swallowing it down, he had lovingly licked him clean.

Fillim lay limp gasping to catch his breath, covered in sweat. And for just a moment the Altmer had lain his head against his hip, just breathing, his white, blonde hair wet with sweat, fanned out over his groin.

Getting back up onto his knees, Anariil climbed up over him to look into his eyes, his dark lids so heavy it was a struggle to keep them open. Lowering himself down, he had kissed him oh so lightly on the lips, whispering. 'Goodnight' against his mouth.

He remembered raising his hands to cling to him, and Anariil had very gently taken them away, saying, 'Not tonight.'

He remembered thinking for the first time, how beautiful Anariil actually was. And just as sudden as the feeling had come to him, he found the revelation almost hilarious, but he'd resisted his urge to laugh. *How could someone so vicious be beautiful?*

But considering what he'd just done...

Lifting off from him, Fillim watched silently as he stood and walked out.

He had fallen asleep that night pondering what had just happened, and why. He remembered wondering, *Just how long had Anariil been wanting to do this?*

It had given him hope for his future there, his relationship with his employer if you will. For two years, Anariil had visited him regularly. Some nights he would even sleep with him for awhile, leaving just before dawn. At night their relationship was much different than it was most days. He was almost always gentle with him, a very generous lover.

Anariil had known he was his first... his first everything, and he'd relished it. He had shown him things and done things to him, he never could have even dreamt of.

He looked forward to Anariil's visits, and over time his feelings for him changed. He would never admit it to his face though, for he knew it would never amount to anything but pain. He also knew the Thalmor would never admit to his feelings for him either.
This last year, his Thalmor duties had required longer absences from home. Thus spurring his relationship with Tarenen. With Anariil gone they actually had a chance to get to know each other, and over time things had progressed.

Tarenen was completely different than his father and for the first time in his life, he felt like he could actually love and get that love in return. Not just secretive, physical affections in the night.

But wasn't that exactly what he had with Tarenen? That thought bothered him and he pushed it away. At the very least, they could admit their feelings for one another, it was mutual and loving.

Now... now, he wasn't so sure if it wasn't a mistake.

***********

The cabin was completely dark. Water ran off his body in rivulets, his wet hair dripping down his back. Holding onto his clothes and wearing only his breech, he entered. It was evident that all were asleep as it was well after midnight. He crept through the small house and into his room.

Empty.

Letting out a breath of relief he closed the door and dropped his dirties on the floor, collapsing onto his bed. Feeling like a ton of weight had lifted off from him, he would think on it more in the morning, right now what he needed was rest. He closed his eyes, feeling the breeze coming in through the open window.

Outside, Anariil stood. Silently watching him through the sheer curtains.
Caught

Chapter Summary

The Thalmor's body pushed into his, the hand at his neck now gripping his jaw tilting his head back. Anariil's green eyes bore down into his, their noses touching. Fillim's hands pressed into the wall behind him, he knew better than to speak.

Anariil's mouth hovered over his, "If I find you to be a liar, your punishment will be severe! Do you believe me?"

Fillim knew it wasn't really a question. He strained to nod his head under Anariil's grip, "Yes.." he croaked out.

*******

He woke to Eindre calling him, breakfast was ready. He called back to her, stretching, remembering last night.

Things were getting complicated, he needed to figure out what he was going to do. He couldn't keep this up, the stress was eating him alive from the inside. There was no future with either of them, especially Tarenen. He knew that now.

Even with his superior attitude, he cared for Anariil and he knew that deep down the Thalmor had feelings for him too. But his stubborn pride would never allow him to admit them, and Fillim would spend the rest of his days pining for something that would never be real.

Then there was their age difference. Though Anariil looked young, he was over seventy. If he kept in good health, he could live to be over three or four hundred. Even older than that. Fillim was just nineteen. Was this all there was going to be for his life? If he did stay with Anariil, whose to say he wouldn't tire of him? Then where would he be?

He was in love with Tarenen. He was his best friend, his confidant and his lover. He didn't care about the blood that flowed in Fillim's veins and he constantly fawned over his appearance, Tarenen loved their differences. The problem was, Tarenen wasn't in control of his life, Anariil was.

They would never be able to come forward about their feelings, if they did... Anariil would kill him.

He had told him numerous times during their lovemaking, that he belonged to him. He saw him as a possession. Anytime Anariil had other Thalmor as guests at their home, he would literally make Fillim stop his work and go to the servant's cabin.

At first he thought Anariil was ashamed of him. It was most definitely not about keeping his identity secret. Anariil was the only one who knew who his father was, and from what he and others had told him, he bore him no resemblance other than the shade of his eyes. So there was no way that his father's secret would be revealed.

He would remain hidden until after the guests would leave, and once his wife was asleep Anariil
would come to him. He would be overly affectionate, making love to him until the early morning. Over and over coming so close to voicing declarations, and always stopping just short of saying what Fillim so needed to hear.

Whispering breathless in his ear of how he longed for him, but never that he loved.

Before long, he'd figured it out. He was afraid someone else would want what he wanted, covet what he coveted. So he was kept hidden.

Laying there, the heels of his hands rubbing the sleep from his eyes. Eindre suddenly burst through his door, grabbing his foot! Her voice low, a panic stricken look on her face! "He's coming! Hurry! Get up!" In an instant, she was out of the room. His heart was hammering in his chest. He had to calm down. *What would he want this early? It couldn't be good.*

The minute he entered the cabin, he knew. All noise ceased.

He could literally feel the tension in the air. He hadn't bothered dressing, at this time of morning he would normally be getting cleaned up for the day and getting his clothing ready. He refused to run around like a panicked idiot. Anariil walked into his room, shutting the door behind him.

Standing by his bed, Fillim looked up at him, holding his breeches in his hands, fidgeting with them. Anariil leaned against the door, his arms crossed, jaw set.

He was angry. "Where were you last night?!"

His heart stopped. He couldn't breathe. His mouth hung slack and he just blinked, slowly shaking his head. "I... I... Uh... When?"

Anariil approached him slowly, his eyes narrowing, looking down at him. Ripping the pants from Fillim's hands, throwing them onto the bed!

"Last night, Fillim! Where were you?! I waited here for hours!"

A hand on each shoulder was pushing him back into the wall. The wall stopped his body, but Anariil kept getting closer. One hand now on his neck, "I... I... I couldn't sleep, it... it was too hot. I walked on the beach for awhile and then wen.. went for a swim to cool down. I... I didn't know, Anariil. I promise." He licked his lips, his eyes pleading. His entire body quivering.

The Thalmor's body pushed into his, the hand at his neck now gripping his jaw tilting his head back. Anariil's green eyes bore down into his, their noses touching. Fillim's hands pressed into the wall behind him, he knew better than to speak.

Anariil's mouth hovered over his, "If I find you to be a liar, your punishment will be severe! Do you believe me?"

Fillim knew it wasn't really a question. He strained to nod his head under Anariil's grip, "Yes.." he croaked out.

Anariil's mouth came down onto his in a harsh kiss, his tongue forcing its way into his mouth. Fillim whimpered against him. Breaking away from his lips, Fillim gasped for breath, his eyes closed.

Anariil's lips moved to his ear, "Remember to whom you belong, Fillim!"

It was all he could do to just nod, his eyes remaining closed. His treacherous cock straining against
his breech cloth. Anariil finally stepped back, giving him some room.

He opened his eyes, watching as Anariil's gaze moved down over him to his crotch noticing his erection, one eyebrow arching, the corners of his lips twisting upward into a smirk.

He turned to leave stopping just at the door. Without even looking at him, "After you've prepared for the day, come to the house. I have some work inside for you today."

With that he was gone.

********

Walking to the house, he knew this wasn't over. Anariil knew something was going on. He was being played. There was no choice now, but to end it.

As soon as he walked into the house, he could feel it. The air so heavy with tension, it literally felt as though he would suffocate under it's weight. Taking a deep breath, he went to the kitchen. Tarenen's mother was fruitlessly attempting to busy herself arranging the same flowers over and over, she was visibly upset.

Looking up, her lips pressed thin into a tight smile, "Anariil is in the study, he has something for you." Her eyes almost looked apologetic. He just nodded, his stomach churning, trying not to fret over what might be coming was useless, but there was nothing he could do to stop it.

Fillim walked into the study and froze.

Anariil was leaning against his desk with his arms crossed, glaring down at Tarenen, who was seated before him. His eyes cast to the floor, red from crying. His chin and bottom lip still quivering, hitching in his chest. His shirt was open to the waist, the buttons appearing to have been torn free.

Anariil looked up to him, "Ah!" raising his hand to Fillim. Looking back down to his son, "The other guilty party, has arrived."

Anariil knew! Oh Gods!

He wanted to wretch, right there! Tarenen's trembling hands flew up to his face and he started to sob. Fillim looked from him to Anariil, near panting with fear.

Anariil looked down at his son with disgust, kicking the chair. "Stop your blubbering and get up!"

He now turned his gaze onto Fillim, "Come in and close the door!"

He had never wanted to run so badly in all his life. Walking toward that door to close it... he felt like he had boulders chained to his feet. He turned back to them.

Tarenen stood up, he was shaking. Anariil grabbed both of them by a shoulder, shoving them until they were only one or two feet apart! His furious face, shifting back and forth to look at both of them.

"Fillim!" Grabbing at the torn shirt on his son, he ripped it out of his pants and off from his shoulders! Tarenen just stood there, unable to raise his eyes from the floor, tears ran silently down his face. Anariil now focused on Fillim, taking hold of his arm and squeezing. "Tell me... what do you see?!"
Tarenen's whole torso was red and irritated from last night.

His mouth watering from nausea, he swallowed. Taking a breath, "It looks as though he has a rash, Master Anariil."

Oh Gods... he wanted to drop to his knees right there and beg for forgiveness... anything! He'd seen that same rash on Anariil nightly from their own lovemaking. Why was he doing this? He already knew! Why?!

Anariil looked to him, studying him. "And what do you think might have caused this rash, Fillim?"

Breathing in, it felt like all the air had been sucked from the room and he couldn't get enough.

Shaking his head, looking down at the floor, he couldn't do it, he was terrified. "I... I don't know, Mast-- "

Anariil cut him off, "DO YOU TAKE ME FOR A FOOL!!" He literally screamed!

His face twisted up in rage, as he grabbed Fillim's shirt completely ripping it off! Grabbing Fillim's face, one hand at the back of his head, the other around his jaw! Fillim's hands raised up in defense as he whimpered.

Holding Fillim's face right in front of his. "YOU WERE IN MY HOUSE LAST NIGHT!" he screamed! "BEDDING MY SON!"

Tarenen dropped to his knees, his head shaking back and forth as he watched, his arms hanging limply at his sides.

Anariil lowered his voice, his eyes burning into him. "You were in MY house, last night..."

What he saw in Anariil's eyes, was so much more than just anger at the fact he'd been with Tarenen. It was betrayal, it was jealousy... it was pain.

He couldn't admit to all that though, he wouldn't. It would come out in his rage. It would come out in his retribution.

Now, he feared for his life.

Looking down at Tarenen, he grabbed his arm, pulling him hard to his feet! "Get on your feet!" he spat through clenched teeth!

Turning his eyes back to Fillim with a look of absolute disbelief on his face. "Do you know, that he tried to take the blame for you?? He actually got onto his knees and begged me not to punish you! For this horrible deed that you've done!"

They just looked at each other, Tarenen mouthing the words. 'I'm so sorry.'

Anariil laughed. "You are sorry, aren't you?! You are just like your mother! WEAK!! Hopefully, if you survive the training, the Thalmor will toughen you up!"

Tarenen looked as though he'd been sentenced to death. Fillim was in shock, frozen to the spot. Being in the Thalmor would kill Tarenen, if he survived he would be dead inside. He wasn't like Anariil. He was good, gentle.

Was this Anariil's plan to separate them? To make sure he would have him to himself?
There would be nothing he could say, nothing he could do... his mind was spinning, attempting to encompass what was happening. Trying to fathom what kind of punishment Anariil would make him endure.

Anariil turned to Fillim, a look so cold on his face. "I've thought about this since last night, since I saw you sneaking from my home."

He was going to puke! Tears ran down his face. Tarenen had gone completely pale, swaying on his feet like a drunkard.

"You will be given ten lashes! With *MY* whip!"

A sob ripped free from Tarenen's throat. "My treacherous son will do the honors!"

Tarenen's eyes rolled back as he fell, hitting the floor. He was out cold.

Fillim sank to his knees, his face soaked from his tears! Raising his hands up to Anariil. "Please! please! I'm so sorry..." Grasping at his legs, Anariil looked down at him, his expression blank.

"Forgive me... please..." Anariil grabbed his hands, hauling him to his feet! He fist his hair, holding his face to his. "I told you this morning, my punishment would be severe! Didn't I? But you chose to lie to me! I can no longer trust you."

He released him, "You will never be allowed in this house again! You will go to your quarters and wait to be called."

Looking down at his son on the floor, then back up to him. "Get out of my sight!"
"I will be carrying out your sentence!" Fillim clenched his eyes shut, his hands flew to his mouth, his head between his knees. He just continued, "He's too weak, he's never held a whip... he'd probably kill you and harm himself in the process."

Anariil came to his bed, taking his face between his hands, he whispered, "You will remember this, Fillim, forever... how you've hurt me. You've seen me use my whip... "

******

Completely numb, he was in shock. He had walked from the house in a zombie-like state. Before he could even get to the cabin he collapsed onto the ground. Vomiting between sobs, Eindre had come out to him, helping him up and into the cabin. All the servants had been shooed from the house as all hell broke loose.

Laying on his bed, Eindre the elderly Bosmer female had sat at his side, wiping his face with a cool cloth while he wept. After waiting the entire day in terror, waiting to be called for his sentence, he'd fallen asleep. By the time he woke, it was night.

Laying on his side, he listened to the crickets outside. The morning's events came rushing back to him, all the day's panic rising back up into his chest again. His mind flew to Tarenen! He wanted to see him, he feared for him! Sitting up, elbows on his knees, hands clutching his head. He couldn't cry anymore... he just couldn't. Standing up and snapping his fingers he lit the candles on his small bedside table.

Letting out a deep breath, he turned. Anariil was sitting in a chair just opposite his bed.

Crying out, he jumped back, hitting the dresser!

Anariil just sat there, stone still... staring at him. He wore the exact same outfit he had that very first night he'd come to him.

Dark, blue silk shirt, open. Loose fitting white pants, hanging at his hips. His long platinum hair hung loose around him, his feet were bare and he was holding a bottle of wine.

Just by looking at his eyes, his relaxed expression, Fillim could tell he was drunk.

Just like that first night, so many feelings ran through him, but the feelings he felt now were very different. The urge to crawl to Anariil on his knees and beg him for forgiveness was the strongest. He wanted to cry. His eyes welling up, he sat down with his back to the wall so he could face the Mer. Anariil just watched him as silent tears ran down his face. His throat was so tight, he knew he wouldn't be able to speak.

Calmly, Anariil raised the bottle and took a drink, lowering it to rest on his thigh. His eyes heavy, "I won't take anymore begging... so don't even start."

His speech was slightly slurred. "I want to know something, Fillim... and... I want your honesty on
it."

Fillim just nodded his head.

"I can promise you, it won't have any effect on your punishment." He sighed, "How long have you been intimate with my son?"

Fillim raised his hands to his face, his heart hurt so bad. He was trying so hard to quit crying and he couldn't. Lowering them down, Anariil was watching him, a pained look on his face.

"Close to a year..." The look of sheer agony on Anariil's face broke him, and he started toward him! The Mer put up his hand, making him stay put. Fillim was openly weeping, on his hands and knees on the bed, his head hanging down.

Anariil got himself under control, wiping his hand over his face. He laughed... lifting the bottle to his lips, taking another drink of wine. "I said no begging..."

"Bringing you here was a mistake... it was a mistake. I don't think you understand the magnitude of what you've done, Fillim, the depth of my pain... my rage." He looked up at the ceiling, leaning his head to rest back against the wall.

"I should've never given in to my desire for you, but I just couldn't resist. I have never cared for someone the way that I care for you, Fillim."

His green gaze now leveling onto him. "Nor have I ever wanted to hurt someone so badly, as I want to hurt you right now."

Fillim sat back, hugging his knees, listening to him.

Here was his declaration, finally. Now that things were ruined beyond repair.

"This is exactly why your punishment will come tomorrow, I needed time to collect myself. My wife is consoling my son, he tells me that he loves you. Do you feel the same for him, Fillim? I need to hear it from you."

He had to tell Anariil how he felt, this would probably be his last chance.

"Before I answer your question, I need to tell you something, Anariil. Something I've wanted to tell you for a very long time."

Anariil watching him intently, Fillim took a deep breath. "I've loved you, for so, so long..."

Anariil huffed, looking away. Fillim could see the tears running down the Altmer's face. He knew the only reason he was seeing this was that he was so intoxicated. Anariil would normally never get drunk, the thought of losing control was deplorable. The thought of showing any pain that he might feel... weeping, was deplorable.

"I wanted to tell you so many times, but I was afraid of your rejection! Afraid of being hurt! When you started having to travel more, Tarenen and I became friends... we got close. We didn't plan this, Anariil! I do love him... but I love you as well!"

Anariil looked back at him, an incredulous expression on his face! "You're telling me, that I drove you into my own son's arms?! simply because I couldn't tell you that I love you! The nights we shared... the affection I showed you. It meant nothing?"
Fillim shook his head apologetic, sobbing between his words. "Why... why couldn't you just tell me? Just once!"

He wouldn't answer that, he couldn't. It was too late! What he'd done... with his own son! Anariil continued like he'd said nothing. "You know I stood outside his bedroom window last night, listening to the two of you the whole time. I arrived home and came right over here. At first, I was confused when I found you gone."

He raised the bottle, taking another drink. "Then it dawned on me. I thought there was no way that you would do something like that to me!"

Looking at Fillim, "I still can't believe you did this. The whole time I listened to the two of you together, I realized what a fool I've been! A FOOL!"

Fillim's panic was coming back. "There is no way, I could ever allow you to stay with him, I could never look upon you together!" Anariil's face drawn into a mask of pain. "It would kill me, Fillim!" Draining the last of the bottle, he flung it into the corner! Shards of glass flew as it shattered!

"I will be carrying out your sentence!" Fillim's eyes clenched shut, his hands flew to his mouth, his head between his knees. Anariil just continued, "He's too weak, he's never held a whip... he would probably kill you and harm himself in the process."

"You will receive five lashes, by my hand. My son will stand as witness. Then he will travel to our second home, where he will collect himself before his Mage training starts."

He wasn't even looking at Fillim anymore. "After tomorrow, you will never see him again."

He looked up at him now, standing. "You are not to receive any magical healing afterward, Eindre will be assigned to you to aid in your recuperation. Anyone found healing you by any means other than potions, will be killed."

Anariil moved to his bed, grasping Fillim's face in his hands. His green eyes, staring down into terrified amber, whispering. "You will remember this, Fillim, forever... how you've hurt me. You've seen me use my whip..."

Hyperventilating, Fillim clutched desperately at Anariil's clothes! "I... I love you, Anariil! Please don't do this!" Sobbing and pushing his head into the Altmer's stomach. "Please!"

Anariil pushed him away! Fillim looked up to him as he walked to the door. "After you've healed, you will be exiled. I could never bring myself to touch you again, I can barely look upon you now!"

He walked out to Fillim's screams.

"NO! NO! ANARIIL... PLEASE!!!... NO..."
Fillim swallowed down the last of his wine. He was shaking, hot tears fell from his eyes. Ancano took another drink of wine, a serious look on his face. "He sentenced me to ten lashes with his whip... to be delivered by his son."

Ancano drained his glass, leaning forward. "And did he keep true to this?!"

Fillim wiped his face, shaking his head. "No. I waited all day to be called. He came to me that night, drunk... telling me of how he felt about what I'd done. Telling me that he would be the one to carry out the sentence. Tarenen had no training with a whip."

Ancano's face was now unreadable, "Again, I am unclear as to why you are alive, especially after hearing what you've done. Anariil trained me, he is a master with a whip." His eyes narrowed.

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Five lashes... Five lashes...

He hadn't remembered anything after the third.

Eindre had stayed up most of the night prior preparing potions for pain and healing. Water was boiling, strips of cloth for bandages and broth for strength. He'd been called at dawn, by Anariil himself.

Tarenen was bound by the wrists on the porch, evidently Anariil didn't trust him to not try and interfere. His wife was forced to stay inside.

Fillim would never know if she had been found out by Anariil, the aid she'd given them. He would go to his grave not knowing.

Forced to wear only his breech, Anariil chained him by the wrists to a beam of wood on the very fence he'd built for them. By the time Fillim had passed out, Tarenen had screamed himself hoarse. Eindre later told Fillim, while he lay on his side in bed, that more than five had been delivered but less than ten.

She had also told him that Anariil himself had carried him to his quarters.

*How noble of him*, he thought.

Eindre had dosed him with a pain killing potion as soon as he had come to and she'd been dabbing numbing fluids onto his wounds. He actually couldn't feel his back yet, it was a blessing. He couldn't believe that this was Tarenen's last look at him, that this was the last thing he would remember.

After three days, Anariil had come to visit him... drunk again. He'd told him of his childhood and how much he'd cared for his father. Evidently more so than Fillim's father had ever known. Anariil
had been in love with him, he'd told him how they'd experimented sexually as young Mer.

Anariil hadn't ever had the courage to tell him his true feelings, for he knew that Fillim's father didn't feel the same. Instead of risking the ruin of their friendship, he'd kept quiet.

Fillim's mother had been captured by Anariil himself during a raid he'd led in Valenwood. He told Fillim how beautiful she'd been, and how he'd given her to Fillim's father as a personal servant... a gift.

How Anariil had been livid when he found out that she was pregnant. And how Fillim's father had confided in him. He'd had to endure hearing how much he cared about her. How much he wanted to be with her, but was too afraid of the social ramifications he would face.

He'd also had to help him through his grief when she'd died during labor. How his father was so reminded of her every time he looked at Fillim. This being just another reason why he'd had servants raise him, rarely seeing him.

Anariil had hated him! The result of a love he would never, ever have.

He also told him that he had paid his father's debt two years prior. He had been free to go two years ago.

Fillim didn't understand, he couldn't.

After the first week, Anariil visited him one last time. He healed him, stating that he could no longer bear having him there. He would have the scars for the rest of his life, this was his intent.

He was marked.

********

Travelling by ship, it would take around two weeks to reach the shores of Skyrim. During the trip, he would eat and sleep with the other ship's passengers and would be under the watchful eye of a Justiciar Wizard, traveling to the Embassy to receive his assignment. They would take a carriage from the docks straight to Solitude, where Ancano, his overseer, would meet with their first Emissary Elenwen. That is where they would separate.

Anariil had given him a week's worth of rations, a change of warm clothing, including a pair of fur boots Eindre had made for him, and one hundred gold.

Ancano stayed on deck during cast off, watching as the shores of the Isles got farther and farther away.

Fillim couldn't look. His insides were broken. This pain was a thousand times worse than the beating he'd received. He was sure he would never smile again.

Lanterns were lit below deck as night fell, Ancano finally walking into the small area they would share. There were two hammocks, two chairs and a small desk. Sitting down on a chair, he stared at Fillim as he lay in the lower hammock. "So... what did you do?"

Fillim turned his head, looking at him. "I'm not allowed to say! Basically, I was born... does that tell you enough!"

Ancano burst out laughing, Fillim wanted to turn his back to him. It was going to be a long trip and they would be trapped together, he'd might as well try to be decent. As soon as they got to Solitude
he'd probably never see him again anyway.

Ancano wiped his eyes and cleared his throat, "What I mean is, if Anariil wanted you out of his way, why go to the trouble and expense of shipping you off? Why not just kill you? You do know that he paid for your passage, it wasn't cheap. Most that are exiled are sent off on a small boat with nothing!"

Ancano poured a glass of wine and actually handed it to him, then one for himself. "Come on, it will be a long trip. You will never see him again, and I have no reason to tell him what you say."

Draining half the wine at once and receiving Ancano's raised eyebrows, he took a deep breath, "You can see what I am..." He held out his arms.

Ancano just nodded, "My father, whom I will not name to keep his privacy, had me schooled privately. My schooling done, at sixteen I was signed over to Anariil to work for him until my debt to my father was paid."

He watched Ancano's face, one eyebrow simply arched. Draining the rest of his wine, he took another breath.

"We became intimate my second night there." Ancano's face was unreadable, Fillim raised his glass. Ancano handed him the bottle, after filling it, he resumed. "We were intimate for two years." breathing out a heavy sigh, he drained half his second glass.

"When his Thalmor duties took him away from home for longer amounts of time, I became close friends with his son who was my same age." He paused, running his hands over his scalp. Ancano was completely silent, completely still as he watched him.

"We fell in love..." Ancano's mouth fell open, his eyes widened. "I was his first, just as his father was mine."

He drained the rest of the wine, tempted to just drink it straight from the bottle. "The last year I was there, I slept with both of them, neither of them knowing of the other's involvement the entire time." Ancano's mouth agape, he still had yet to take a single drink.

Filling his glass, emptying the bottle. "A little over a week ago, Anariil had gone to my quarters at night to see me. Unfortunately, I was unaware that he was home."

Ancano's face showing his suspense, he finally took a drink of wine. He was engrossed. "Evidently figuring it out, he sat outside his son's window listening while we made love. Then the next morning, he confronted both of us."

Fillim swallowed down the last of his wine. He was shaking, hot tears fell from his eyes. Ancano took another drink of wine, a serious look on his face. "He sentenced me to ten lashes with his whip. To be delivered by his son."

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Ancano's face was now unreadable, "Again, I am unclear as to why you are alive, especially after hearing what you've done. Anariil trained me, he is a master with a whip." His eyes narrowed.
"He bound his son, forcing him to witness while he whipped me. I received less than ten lashes and was forbidden to be healed by magic. He came to me twice while I recuperated. I asked him to kill me, in fact... I begged him. He said that if he had to live with what I had done... then so would I."
They had just sat in silence, staring at one another. Ancano stood, "May I see your back?" Fillim was completely taken aback by his request. "What for? Why would you want to see-"

Impatient, Ancano waived him into silence. "I want to see your back!" his amber eyes narrowing. Not wanting to deal with another angry Thalmor, he grudgingly got up from the hammock, raising his tunic. Ancano grabbed it, hoisting it over his head, turning him roughly.

Complete silence.

********

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Complete silence.

"Well, are you satisfied?"

Ancano backed away as he lowered his tunic and turned to face the Altmer.

Nothing could have prepared him for the look on Ancano's face. "What?! What is wrong?!!"

Shaking his head, he finally answered. "Nothing..., nothing."

Fillim was completely confused as Ancano turned without another word and started preparing for bed. Fillim, still standing there, Ancano blew out the lantern and got into the top hammock.

"Goodnight Fillim."

The remainder of the voyage was like that. Ancano barely spoke. With nothing but silence, he was forced to dwell on the painful memories of what had happened. When there was only but a day left until they reached shore, Ancano had finally opened up. He told him of the climate he would be facing, he told him about the savages known as Forsworn, bandits, necromancers and the like.

"It is quite evident to me that you have been spoiled." Noticing Fillim's expression at this, "It is also evident that you do not agree. I can assure you, Fillim, you were very well treated for being an illegitimate half-breed."

Fillim's expression failing to hide his irritation, he knew to stay silent. It would be fruitless to
argue.

They stood on deck, holding onto the railing. They could see the shore in the distance, they would dock in the morning. It was freezing.

Swallowing his pride, he turned to Ancano. "Ancano please... help me, I don't even know where to start. " He was terrified. "I've never even seen a Nord."

Ancano just shook his head, fingering the railing. "Anariil didn't do you any favors..." Surprising even to himself, he felt the need to help the young Mer. "You said you were schooled, yes? Did you learn any destruction magic?"

Fillim nodded. "Good, you will need it. Anyone that approaches you outside of a city is a potential enemy! Be ready! Light them up if they act aggressive at all! Be on the lookout for bears, saber cats, and wolves. There are also werewolves and vampires!"

Fillim looked sick.

"Nords are like overly muscled, excessively hairy Mer without the ears and without... sense. I say this because it is rare to see too many of them that have had any schooling. It is not highly valued among their people the way it is ours. They are stubborn and foul tempered."

He felt doomed, he wasn't going to make it. Vampires? Werewolves? He looked back up at the Altmer.

"You will learn their habits and ways the longer you live among them. They also don't have very long life spans, perhaps fifty to seventy years tops."

"Right now, the most important thing to know is this! Stay away from Markarth, it is crawling with Forsworn. Stay away from Windhelm, you will not be well received there. If I were you, I would keep to the warmer areas. No village too small, as they tend to be backwards in their thinking."

Ancano leaned down into his face, his amber eyes narrowing. "And stay out of the war!"

Ancano straightened back up, his long, slender hands, smoothing over his Thalmor robes. Fillim still didn't feel any better, "So, should I just try to find work in Solitude?"

Ancano shook his head. "You don't have the funds to stay in Solitude. I would take a carriage to Whiterun, it is a decent sized city. Mer seem to be well received there, from what I hear there are even Mer business owners there. That is a good sign."

He turned to the young Mer, "I don't really believe in luck, Fillim, or I would wish it to you. Perhaps we will meet again."

Ancano looked out over the water, back towards shore. He would be amazed if he lasted till Whiterun.

Docking at Solitude, he couldn't stop gawking at the Nords working the dock. Ancano had actually laughed at him when he just looked at him, his mouth hanging ajar. Still chuckling, he tapped his finger on Fillim's chin. "Well... at the very least, maybe someone will think you incompetent and take pity." Fillim glared at him, closing his mouth.

Ancano had left him at the stables, walking on to the city gates. Watching the Altmer get farther
and farther away, he felt an overwhelming surge of loneliness. While Ancano hadn't been the best company, at least he was a glimpse of Fillim's home. Trying so hard not to stare at everyone he saw, he stumbled over his words while paying for the carriage to Whiterun. It was going to take about three days to get there.

Great.

He was freezing. He'd donned the warmest of his clothes. Wearing a fur lined, hooded coat, he huddled into the corner of the carriage. Ancano had told him that it would get warmer the farther south they got. He could see his breath... *this* was summer? He wasn't going to make it.

Every once in awhile the carriage driver would stop to allow the horses rest and he would get out and stretch. He stared at everything in amazement, the landscape and the animals. It was like being dropped into another world. He just couldn't get over the Nords, how different they were. He'd seen every type of Mer, Khajiit, even Argonians. He should be able to get used to this, they all just seemed so intimidating, even the women.

Twice he'd had to use lightning to kill wolves that were trying to attack their horses. The carriage driver thanked him. "Yer not from here are ya" glancing back at him.

Great.

He wanted to disappear into the carriage. "What gave me away?" The carriage driver, a blonde Nord, just gave him a hearty laugh. "Ya looked like ya was about to piss yer britches back there... not that I ain't happy for the help now!"

The Nord cleared his throat, "An ya don't look much like any Elf I ever seen neither."

Figuring he would just have to get used to this, "I'm half Altmer and half Bosmer, I just got here from the Isles." Noticing how the Nords look instantly soured, Fillim attempted to back peddle. "Uh... I'm not Thalmor! They uh... they kicked me out! I was exiled, because I'm a half-breed."

The Nord turning briefly to look at him, his expression angry. "Uppity bastards! Kickin out their own! That's about what I'd expect from em!"

It worked! *Perhaps there would be hope.* Ancano had told him the Nords hated the Thalmor.

The rest of the evening passed quietly. They stopped in Rorikstead late, staying at the Inn for the night, then setting off again at dawn. The driver had told him they would be sleeping out doors tonight, they wouldn't reach Whiterun until tomorrow, late. He had advised him to buy a bedroll before they pulled out as they would be sleeping by a campfire. At least he wouldn't freeze.

As the day passed, the carriage driver shared some of his wine with him. It was helping to keep the cold at bay. An entire day without incident, he was actually starting to feel a little more at ease. He wasn't sure if that was a good thing or not.

Other than the moon peeking through the clouds here and there, it was black out. The carriage driver had said he wanted to get to a specific location before they stopped for the night. Fillim's ass was completely numb and he couldn't keep his eyes open. Thinking he might as well try and sleep until they stopped, he spread out his bedroll onto the floor of the carriage and laid down.

He'd been so exhausted from all the stress, all the worry. The sound of the horses hooves and the rocking of the carriage quickly lulled him to sleep.

He was dreaming. He had to be. Leaves were falling, he could hear the rustle and scrape against
the wood of the carriage. He could smell them. High-pitched noises cut through the peacefulness. Something was screaming. It was the horses... the horses were screaming.

Slowly, his eyes opened. *What a strange dream.*

Feeling the wind blow past him, it felt like they were going too fast. Blinking, he was completely awake now. Tree branches were hitting the carriage. He sat up, looking around, his heart hammering, "Hey!" Looking toward the driver, *What was the Nord doing!*

The driver was slumped over in the seat. Fillim leaned over the back, grabbing at his tunic. "Hey!" His hand came back wet! *Oh Gods!... Blood!* He could see it! The tip of metal glinting in the moon light. The driver had been hit with an arrow, the tip was sticking through the back of his neck.

The horses were panting, they'd left the road, they were going through the forest. He had to stop the horses before they crashed! He had to get hold of the reigns! They were jostling around so much he couldn't keep a foot or hand hold. With one leg half over the back, holding on for dear life he kicked at the driver. He had to get him out of the way, almost over... the driver fell out. The body going under the carriage, the horses were making a horrible racket. Everything flying by in a blur, he had to hold on! Trying to reach an arm out to grab at them.

*God's dammit! The reigns, he couldn't reach!* The horses were going crazy, they lurched sharply to the right. The wheels lifted up.

He was airborne.

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When he came to he couldn't move.

His vision swam in and out. His arm was twisted under him. Rocking to his side, agonizing pain shot through him. He had to try to get off his arm. He could feel something cold and hard behind him, feeling around his mind finally coming back. He was laying against a tree and his pants were wet.

The realization hit him that he'd pissed himself and his right arm felt like it was broke. The pain was horrible, his stomach twisted. Using the tree for leverage, he pushed himself with his good arm to sit up. Sitting back against the tree his injured arm hung slack.

Vomit sprayed out of his mouth, splattering down his front and legs. Steam rose up off of him into the cold air.

"You stupid fucker! Great idea! Now we have to find the Godsdamned carriage!"

He froze, his eyes bulging in fear. He could hear them crashing through the brush but he couldn't see anything. *Gods! They were getting closer!* He struggled to get to his feet. Trying to hold onto his arm, he had to keep it steady.

The pain bringing beads of sweat up on his face, his mouth was watering. *He had to run, they would kill him!*

A rush of wind went past him, followed by a gods awful wet dog smell. He turned away from the direction it went in, no longer able to hear the bandits. They were quiet. Something big was moving through the brush.

*As long as it moved away from him, that's all he cared about!*
He was stumbling like a drunk. He had to move faster, but every step was jerking his arm and he fought to keep from crying. Terrified screams pierced through the night! He stopped, wide eyed, he couldn't see anything it was so dark.

Something was panting! Panting. They were screaming. Whatever was out there, with them, roared! In his entire life, he'd never heard anything like that.

It's so close! He was whimpering! Trying to run, tears running down his face! Ripping... a sick, wet ripping sound, over and over. Gods... It's tearing them apart.

Everything went still. No more screams. Nothing.

Oh Gods! Please... Turning, unable to hear anything but his own heartbeat he stumbled on his own feet, the ground swiftly coming up to meet his face. Trying to get onto his knees, he can hear it now. He can hear it breathing. Trying to crawl. Something warm is running into his eyes. He falls to his side as everything begins to go black.

His eyes won't stay open and he can hear his own voice... far away... whimpering... pleading.

He's being lifted. Giant, warm hands. Strong arms, holding him, as the world fades away.
Skjor sat down on the edge of the bed now, inspecting the scars that ran across the Mer's back, from his shoulders to his ass. He looked up at Kodlak, "What does this mean?"

Kodlak just shook his head. "I can't read it. We'll need a healer tomorrow anyway, mayhap Farengar will know."

Skjor looked concerned. "Should we... get the wizard involved? I mean, what if this is something to do with... you know... " Kodlak and Skjor seemed to be the only ones in on whatever was going on.

Vilkas and Farkas were both agitated now, looking between the two older Nords. "What is going on?!" Farkas was shaking. "What do you mean? Know what?! Okay, so... he's been whipped. Why- "

Shit... he was naked, carrying an unconscious, wounded Mer. Knowing he had to stick to the forest, it took him a few minutes to figure out where he was. Irritated that he'd gone this far after the change took him, he'd been out hunting and was a ways from town anyway. He'd sniffed out different prey, but nothing had taken his interest.

He remembered hearing the carriage, someone screaming. He remembered killing the bandits and after eating his fill, he'd changed back. Then he'd heard crying. The poor thing... he couldn't just leave him, he had to help.

Farkas carried him till he got to the stream. He'd left his clothes and armor here when the change took him. The little Mer needed to be cleaned too. He was covered in blood and vomit and he smelled of urine. Farkas didn't mind the smell, but they didn't need to attract trouble. Laying the injured Mer down on the bank, he walked in.

The water felt great and he needed a drink... bad. Needed to get the thick, coppery taste out of his mouth. Not to mention, he was covered in blood and bits of gore. He tended to roll in his prey. Vilkas would get pissed, give him shit about it. But he tended not to fret over what Vilkas didn't like. If he did that, he'd be upset all the time.

Having the mess on his fur didn't bother him. But once he was back to himself, it was uncomfortable, sticky and tight feeling on his skin. Not to mention the fact that he probably looked like a nightmare if someone had seen him.

Getting his clothes and armor back on, he went back to the Mer. Straddling his body, he cradled his head in his hand. He had a tiny cut on his forehead, washing the dried blood from his hair, thinking, *so much blood for such a little cut.* Head wounds were always the worst. His hair was almost the same color as his blood, he looked very interesting.
He inspected the Mer while he tried to get the vomit off his clothing. He couldn't remember seeing one like this, but so many were pouring into Skyrim now. All different kinds. Someone back at town should know.

It was still going to be a bit of a walk, he could only hope the Mer would stay asleep. Farkas was worried about his arm, it had hung at such a funny angle. He tried to keep it tucked into him without putting too much pressure on it. What he needed to do was flag down a carriage, maybe someone with a horse.

He'd been on the road for at least an hour before he heard them. Imperials. He let out a sigh of relief, at least they were Imperials. They were on horses. He stopped, calling out to them he noticed that one was a Mer, and he looked like an officer too. Maybe luck would be on his side.

Farkas told them he was a Companion, that he'd rescued the Mer from bandits. They'd eyed the one he carried with interest, whispering low to one another. No one said anything aloud though. Doubling up, they let him ride, holding his Mer until they got up to Whiterun. Thanking them, he dismounted and walked into town.

It was late, no one was on the street. That was also a relief. The guards nodded to him in greeting, watching him carry his bundle. His dander was already rising, he knew he'd likely catch an earful. They normally didn't bring wounded into Jorvaskr, but he wasn't going to abandon the Mer.

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Walking in the door, Skjor, Aela and Vilkas were all huddled around the fire, mead in hand. All eyes flew to him. Deafening silence. Raising his head, he walked to the stairs like nothing was wrong. He could hear them turning to watch him from where he was. Practically hear the gears turning in their heads. No sooner than he got to the stairs, he could hear the sound of their chairs being shoved back against the wood floor.

*Here it comes.*

Getting to his room, he kicked the door open. He could smell a fight coming, his wolf was pacing, his hackles raised. Setting the Mer onto his bed, he turned... his doorway was full.

As soon as Vilkas entered, Farkas stepped in front of him. He looked up at Skjor, "I want to talk to Kodlak!" He lowered his gaze to meet his brother's... everyone came piling in now. He turned his back on Vilkas and took off his armor, setting it in the corner. Vilkas walked to the bed, looking down at the Mer. Farkas turning back to him, putting an arm up to move him back.

"Tilma!" he hollered. She was already in the room, moving in between everyone. He looked at her, he needed help. He didn't know how to take care of anyone. Vilkas was pissed, he could tell. What else was new, everyone else was just wondering what in Shor's name was going on.

Kodlak walked into the room and he instantly felt relieved. He knew that Kodlak would listen. He could hear Aela telling the whelps to get back to their quarters. Tilma glanced at him, "These clothes, they're not from here, that's for sure... miracle he didn't freeze to death."

Kodlak, taking a closer look now. "You're going to have to cut the cloth from that arm." The Mer's arm was swollen from the shoulder to his hand. It was straining against the fabric. Vilkas unsheathed his dagger, handing it to Farkas. Giving his brother a thankful look, he began cutting the sleeve off.

Tilma helped him disrobe the Mer. The only thing salvageable were the boots, everything else was
ruined. Even if it hadn't been, it was worthless here for this weather. She looked up to Aela, asking for cold water and towels. The huntress, nodding, walked out to get them.

Farkas sat him up like a baby so the tunic could be cut free. As soon as the cloth slid from his back breaths were drawn in all around the room. Everyone looked at each other. Bodies crowded in closer to look. The color drained from Farkas' face.

He stood, still holding the Mer up in a seated position so he could see better. Skjor sat down on the edge of the bed now, inspecting the scars that ran across the Mer's back from his shoulders to his ass. He looked up at Kodlak. "What does this mean?"

Kodlak just shook his head. "I can't read it. We'll need a healer tomorrow anyway, mayhap Farengar will know."

Skjor looked concerned. "Should we get the wizard involved? I mean, what if this is something to do with... you know..." Kodlak and Skjor seemed to be the only ones in on whatever was going on.

Vilkas stood at the back, leaning against the wall, listening as things began to unfold regarding his brother's new pet. His jaw was aching from clenching his teeth. Farkas stood, still holding the Mer up. He was getting more agitated by the second, looking between the two older Nords. "What is going on?!" Farkas was shaking. "What do you mean? Know what?! Okay, so... he's been whipped. Why-"

Kodlak and Skjor looked at him, "That's Ayleid, its writing. Someone carved language onto this boy's back. With a whip, Farkas." Kodlak looking now at Skjor, "We can't keep this from anyone."

Skjor nodded, letting out a deep breath. "Alright... tomorrow, we get the healer and Farengar. Hopefully he can tell us what it means."

Farkas leaned into Kodlak, "Why can't we wait till he comes to? Maybe he can tell us. What if Farengar tells the Jarl? Kodlak, I can't just... we can't just..."

Kodlak patted his arm, "Just relax, no one's going to put him out, we'll figure it out. No need to worry about it right now."

Once he was completely free of clothing, Farkas quickly covered his bottom half with furs. He turned, running his large hands through his hair. "Before everyone starts in, I'd like a drink." Skjor, already having one at the ready, handed him a bottle.

Pulling up a chair near the bed, Farkas sat down. Drinking his mead, staring at the limp body in font of him. Kodlak pulled up a chair next to him, looking at him... a warm fatherly smile on his face. He already knew what the boy would say, what he wanted. His wolf could sense it. He was always proud of Farkas, the boy had a heart to match his size. Problem was, he could also sense what Vilkas was feeling too. There was going to be trouble over this young Mer.

Aela came back, her and Tilma began dunking the towels in the cold water, squeezing them out and draping them over the swollen arm. Farkas finally broke the silence, "I was out hunting, came across some bandits that had killed a carriage driver. I think he was in the carriage when it turned over, he was running from them. He passed out right as I found him."

He looked up at Kodlak, a serious but pleading look on his face. His word right now was all that mattered, "I need to take care of him Kodlak."

Instantly, he could feel Vilkas tense up. Vilkas opened his mouth to protest but Kodlak just raised
his hand, glancing back at him. He remained silent, but everyone could feel the tension mounting. Farkas’ voice almost a whisper. "It's important... he's important. I can feel it. Please. It won't affect my responsibilities, I'll make sure."

Kodlak put a hand on his shoulder, squeezing it. "Alright, boy... alright... we'll not let anything happen to him." Skjor looked uneasy but nodded as he ushered Aela out heading to bed.

Instantly, Farkas felt like an enormous weight was lifted off and his wolf began to calm. He gave Kodlak a light smile, looking back to the Mer. Kodlak stood up, it was late. They would figure things out in the morning. Vilkas turned, giving him a cold stare as he looked down at the Mer. His eyes were open... and he was staring at Farkas.

Farkas was about to lay into Vilkas when he realized what he was staring at. Then he looked down into the most beautiful, golden amber eyes he’d ever seen.

His face was strained, he was in pain and he was terrified. His eyes were huge. He reached out to Farkas, his mouth moving but no sound coming out. Farkas leaned in to hear and so did everyone else. "You're alright, your safe! It's going to be okay."

The look on the Mer's face made his heart ache. Finally, he spoke loud enough to hear. "Is it gone? Is it gone?"

He was panting, Tilma's hand went up to cover her mouth. Farkas leaned down to the Mer, taking his good hand. He nodded, "It's gone... you're safe." He felt sick.

Vilkas looked at Farkas accusingly and turned, walking out. Kodlak, turning to Tilma, "He's in shock, keep him warm and don't leave him alone." He glanced at Farkas, "Goodnight boy." Farkas just nodded.

Tilma finished with his arm, he just stared at Farkas... holding his hand. She leaned down to him, "You have to keep still, yeah? I'm going to give you something for pain and swelling." She looked at Farkas, "I can't give him a healing potion till I find out what's wrong with his arm. It might need to be set."

She held up a bottle, "Help him get this down him, make sure he gets water. NO Alcohol!" Farkas nodded.

Tilma left, shutting his door. "I need you to sit up a little, gotta take this... it'll make you feel better."

He nodded at the Mer, his warm eyes just stared. He lifted under his shoulder, putting the small bottle to his lips. The elf grimaced at the taste, but took it all in. Farkas laid him back down. Getting up from the chair, he took off his shirt and his socks. It was hot, to him anyway.

Grabbing another bottle, he sat back down and adjusted the furs farther up on the Elf, he needed to keep warm. "Are you thirsty?"

He nodded, his voice so soft, "Fillim..."

Farkas, lifted him to drink. "That's your name?"

Fillim nodded, the potion starting to take effect. He was feeling drousy, high. He reached out to the Nord. "I'm Farkas."

Once more, he took Fillim's hand, the Mer's voice slurred. "Please, don't leave me..."
Giving his small hand a gentle squeeze. "I won't. I promise. I'll be here all night."

In the dark hallway, Vilkas leaned against the door... listening.
Reaching under his good arm with one hand and hooking his other under Fillim's ass, he hoisted him onto his lap. Having only a breech on, Fillim's bottom was sitting right on him, he could feel everything. This was gonna get awkward.

The bucket was directly between Farkas legs, he spread Fillim's legs wide, hooking each one over a knee. "Just lay into me" Fillim instantly raised his good arm wrapping it around Farkas' neck, he nuzzled into him. Holding him around the waist with one arm, he grabbed Fillim's stiff cock with his hand and pushed down, aiming for the bucket.

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Farkas had eventually decided to get onto the bed next to Fillim, staying on his side, making sure the small Mer had enough room. The chair had been too uncomfortable. He lay there, looking at him, thinking about him. The more he looked at him, the more beautiful he thought he was. He looked like an Altmer, but much smaller and much darker... with the deepest red hair.

He had to fight to keep his hands to himself, he didn't dare touch. Even though he'd wanted to hold Farkas' hand, he didn't want to take advantage. But he also couldn't deny what his wolf felt. How his wolf felt worried him.

He was worried about the markings on Fillim's back too, they were healed, but they were fresh. Every time he thought of that, he wanted to get his hands on the bastard that done it!

He would just have to have faith in what Kodlak had said... hopefully it would all be okay.

Then there was Vilkas. He could sense his brother's interest as well. They'd never been interested in the same person before. All the women they'd been with in the past had been very different.

He'd never been with a Mer before. He didn't know about Vilkas, but he'd never fucked a male anything before. There'd been a couple of times he'd let guys suck his cock, but that was all he'd actually done. Any offers he'd gotten from men to have sex fell apart as soon as they saw his size.

He was big. Needless to say, it had caused some problems with him having sexual partners. Usually, it was just oral and that was it. And he'd never once had the urge to take another man inside of himself. So, that was pretty much that.

Of course, he and his brother, like many young men, had messed around when they were younger. But that was then.

This Mer, if he ended up feeling for Farkas, the way Farkas was feeling for him, wouldn't be any different. He looked to be around the height of Vilkas, perhaps a couple of inches shorter, but his build was much slimmer. He was well toned but lithie. Those pretty, slim hips and that perfect ass. He would definitely hurt him, and he didn't want that. He couldn't imagine ever hurting this Mer.

This was going to be complicated.
Fillim groaning in his sleep, roused him. He could tell he was in pain. Not just from the sound and the pinched expression on his lovely face, but he sensed it. He felt it.

Looking closely at his arm, between the cold rags and the potion, most of the swelling had gone down. Getting up, he got dressed and went to get Tilma, Fillim needed another potion.

Now that he was up, everything rushed back into his mind. He remembered that Skjor would be going to get Farengar today. His chest tightened up in panic and he took a deep breath, doing his best to push it back. He needed to keep a clear head.

Walking back into his room with Tilma, Vilkas was sitting in his chair, opposite the bed... staring at Fillim. Instantly, he was pissed, the wolf in him fought to lash out. This was his territory! This was his Mer!

He could see his brothers smirk, and Vilkas could sense his irritation without even looking at him. Farkas knew he had to reign it in, Vilkas tended to get a charge out of knowing he could get to him. Well, he had the upper hand. The Mer was in his bed, his room and had held his hand!

Besides, Vilkas had never gone after someone he'd liked. Not yet anyway.

Vilkas looked up at him "So... did you get any information out of him?"

Skjor walked in right as Vilkas was speaking. Farkas sat down on the edge of the bed, he needed to lift him up so he could give the potion to him without spilling it. "His name's Fillim, that's about it. He was pretty out of it."

The Mer was sweating, his face twisted up in his discomfort. Farkas put his hand under his shoulders, talking to him. "You gotta drink this Fillim, okay... it'll make you feel better." Opening his eyes just a crack, he opened his lips to let Farkas pour it down his throat.

Vilkas watched his every move. Just looking at the Mer caused a stir in his loins, those full lips wrapped around the bottle, his amber eyes... so warm. He could imagine holding that perfectly shaped jaw in place while he ravaged that soft mouth. His hands tangling into all that hair, those warm eyes staring into his icy cold ones, while he...

He shook his head, trying to rid himself of the images in his mind. Shifting in the seat, anything to ease the pressure from between his legs.

Skjor grabbed a chair and sat next to Vilkas. "Kodlak and I have an idea." Their attention was now on the older Nord.

"Instead of bringing Farengar here, we thought we would try having someone draw a picture of whatever is on him. I'll take it to him, ask him what it is. He reads Ayleid, so he should be able to tell me what it says."

He looked directly at Vilkas. "What?!!"

Skjor grinned, "Kodlak said you should do it. You have the best hand out of all of us." Bumping Vilkas with his elbow, Skjor winked up at Farkas.

Farkas looked at his brother, "Let me know when you're ready and I'll lift him up." His attention now on Skjor, "When are you getting the priestess? We'll have to keep his back hidden."
"I'll do that on the way back from Dragon's reach." Looking over at Vilkas, he was staring at the Mer with a scowl.

The potion worked fast, Fillim was feeling no pain, he was stoned. Farkas was watching him, the little Mer had a grin on his face from ear to ear, turning his head on the pillow, he looked at Vilkas. Everyone was watching him now as this was the first the rest had seen of him being awake and somewhat social.

As he studied Vilkas, the words Ancano had told him kept ringing in his mind. His speech was slow from the meds. "Foul... tempered..." Then he giggled. Vilkas' eyes widened and his mouth dropped open. He was Instantly pissed.

"That's pretty sad brother, when a Mer that no one's ever seen, knows of your shit temper!" Farkas laughed. Skjor was doubled over, holding his gut. Farkas just looked at the Mer then back to his brother.

Fillim was still giggling when Vilkas got up and stormed out.

Skjor just shook his head, wiping his eyes. "He'll get over it... that was great! Famous first words..." He couldn't quit laughing.

After awhile, still red in the face, Vilkas returned with a stick of charcoal and some parchment. Farkas removed the furs and got between Fillim's legs, trying not to look too much. He wasn't happy about having to expose him in front of Vilkas, but the scars ran all the way to his ass. He decided to talk... distraction.

"Skjor went to get the priestess, said there was no reason to put it off. Are you ready? " Vilkas nodded, charcoal stick at the ready.

Farkas leaned down into Fillim's face, "I'm gonna lift you for a minute, just stay limp and lean into me, kay?" Fillim nodded, eyes half closed.

Lifting him like a baby, he leaned him onto his shoulder, taking care not to touch the bad arm. Fillim gasped, the injured arm hanging limply. Farkas whispering into the side of his head, "Sorry."

The Mer was now in a straddle position over his brother, naked. His long red hair falling down his back and into Farkas' face. The giant Nord's arm wrapped around his waist, Fillim, too stoned to care, slung his good arm around his thick neck and nuzzled him.

Vilkas looked up at his brother, his whole face was red. He didn't look like he minded though... definitely not, he was enjoying it. Farkas took a hand and moved his hair aside so Vilkas could see all the marks clearly.

Vilkas' eyes travelled along the backside of the Mer, his whole ass was exposed, and it was right in his face. Nice slim hips, his cock and balls hung, laying right against Farkas' stomach. It took everything he had, not to reach right out and touch that dark skin. That deep, olive toned, tight hole winking at him, surrounded by fine, crimson red hair. He licked his lips.

Forcing his eyes back up, he met his brother's irritated stare. "Gettin an eyeful?! You're supposed to be lookin' at his back!"

He got the stick ready, looking at the marks cut into his skin and started to draw. "That's kind of hard when his ass is right in my face."
It didn't take long. Right after, Farkas got him settled back on the bed and covered up. He was straining against the fabric of his breeches, turning his back to Vilkas he adjusted himself with the heel of his hand.

By the time the day was done, he knew he'd be taking himself in hand just to get some relief. Skjor came in with the priestess and Vilkas discreetly, handed him the rolled up parchment.

She sat down, inspecting the Mer. Fillim just watched her, his eyes heavy lidded while she checked him. "You know he's a mix... Altmer with Bosmer. From his features and eye coloring it looks like he possibly hails from one of the finer blood lines."

She looked at them all briefly, "And yet he retained most of the Bosmer skin tone and hair coloring... small bone structure. That makes me wonder..."

Everyone remained quiet, interested but a little uncomfortable with the fact that Fillim was awake to hear her.

Asking him to open his mouth, she checked inside. "He's got the Bosmer fangs too, interesting..."

Fillim's eyebrows knitted up, his speech slow from the drugs. "You... know I'm... right here!... Right!"

The men chuckled, Vilkas liked his attitude. Feisty.

She looked apologetic, "No offense meant."

Taking his arm, she held it, causing him to hiss in pain. Feeling along the entirety of it, noting the considerable difference in length. She looked up at them now. "His arm is out of socket, and it's broke. Good news is, it feels like a single break. I can wrap it and sling it, but putting it back in socket will be painful. Once I do this I can use healing magic on him every couple of days or so until it's completely healed. Might take around two weeks, we'll have to see. Could be sooner than that. Mer tend to heal faster than us."

Skjor left with the parchment. Farkas sat at Fillim's back, leaning the Mer into him while the priestess took his arm. As soon as she lifted it he cried out. Farkas tightened his grip around him, Fillim turned his face into Farkas neck, squeezing his hand. Vilkas was holding his legs down.

While feeling around his shoulder, she held the arm, turning it. Fillim was crying, sweat shining all over his exposed skin. One quick movement. They could hear the pop. Fillim screamed out, tears running onto Farkas' throat and chest. It was back in.

Farkas continued to hold him while she wrapped the arm, actually wrapping it to his torso, insuring it would stay in place. It would have to stay like that for a few days at least, then he could go to a normal sling. Having him swallow a healing remedy and another pain remedy, Farkas laid him down and sat blotting sweat from his forehead with a damp cloth, while the priestess used magic on him.

Running her hands over his arm and shoulder, the glowing light swirling around him. He seemed much more comfortable now. Thank the Gods.

Tilma was getting some stew and bread ready, they were all starving and he needed a drink. Bad!

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Farengar always looked irritated, and he was always rude. It was this that made Skjor hate having
to deal with him. Thank the Gods it wasn't often. Today, if he hadn't been in the employ of the Jarl, he'd have knocked him on his ass just for talking down to him.

"Look! Can you read it or not?!" Skjor was turning red, all the way up to the bald part of his head. The damned wizard hadn't even looked at it yet. So far, all he could get was a bunch of drabble about how busy he was with the dragon menace taking place! All he had to do was look at a bit of fucking parchment!

Farengar grabbed it out of the warrior's hand with a dramatic sigh. He unrolled it, inspecting it. "It will take me a moment, you might want to sit... have a drink."

Sitting and grabbing a bottle while the wizard went to another room, he could hear him rummaging through something, muttering to himself. Moments later he came out holding some books.

Farengar dropped the books on his desk. Unrolling the parchment, he tacked it down and started leafing through the books. Skjor studied him. The only thing that was visible under the hood of his robes was from the nose down. A constant scowl. He almost reminded him of a smaller version of Vilkas. *Nothing but piss and vinegar runnin' through his veins.*

Looking from the books to the parchment, finally he looked up. "It's a name... you interrupted my work for this?!"

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After filling himself on soup and bread, he'd gotten Fillim to sip on some broth. He'd been sleeping since Skjor hadn't been back yet. He had no idea how long it would take up at Dragon's Reach. Finally, he decided to get into bed with the Mer. Stripping down to his breech, he lay on his side, watching him until his eyes closed.

Fillim's erection was what'd woke him, he hadn't pissed since he could remember. He had to go bad, if he didn't he'd piss all over the bed. He didn't really want to wake Farkas, but knew he wouldn't be able to do it on his own. He was still too doped up from the potion.

Turning his head, he looked at Farkas. He was asleep. Using his good hand and leaning his face closer, he rubbed his arm. "Farkas... Farkas..." Gods he had to go, shit... it almost hurt.

Grabbing Farkas' arm, he shook it. "Farkas..."

Finally the Nord opened his eyes, "Hmm?"

Breathing a sigh of relief, "Farkas, I have to pee really bad... can you help me?"

Farkas grinned, a low rumbling chuckle coming out from his full lips. "Yeah, sure... let me help you up." Farkas climbed around him, got out of the bed and fetched a bucket, from the corner of the room.

Fillim pulled back the furs, completely naked, his cock stood straight up. He was going to start leaking if they didn't hurry. Taking his good arm, he pushed himself up. Wobbling, Farkas grabbed him, he was going to need some help. His speech still off, "I can't... hold myself up, I'm so sorry Farkas..." His face was turning red, he couldn't help it.

Farkas sat on the edge of the bed, his ebony hair was sticking all over in crazy angles. "Here, I'm gonna put you on my lap, mmkay?" Trying not to let the condition of Fillim's cock get to him, Gods... he just had to piss. Nothin to get worked up over.
Reaching under his good arm with one hand and hooking his other under Fillim's ass, he hoisted him onto his lap. Having only a breech on, and Fillim's bottom sitting right on him, he could feel everything. This was gonna get awkward.

The bucket directly between Farkas' legs, he spread his legs wide, hooking each one over a knee. "Just lay back, into me"

Fillim instantly raised his good arm, wrapping it around Farkas' neck, he nuzzled into him. He was also noticing that the Mer seemed to like being held by him. Holding him around the waist with one arm, he took hold of Fillim's stiff cock with his hand and pushed down, aiming for the bucket.

Fillim giggled into his neck, he couldn't help it. "Relax, it'll make it easier."

Farkas smelled so good. Breathing in through his nose, he brushed his lips across the Nord's neck. Farkas was completely quiet.

Everything in him wanted to throw the little Mer down and plow into his tight little ass. He took a deep breath, just then, Fillim's ass started rocking... very slowly.

Shit... he wanted the Mer so bad. Adjusting his hold on him, Farkas slowly started moving his hips up to meet Fillim's downward motions. Fillim's soft lips sucking on his neck.

If they kept this up, he would end up losing it in his breech. It'd been forever. His hand was so big it almost took up the entire length of the Mer's cock. Keeping it pushed down, he started a soft stroke on the length, root to tip. Fillim gasped against him, breathing into his neck.

Constantly brushing his open lips against the Nord's skin, Farkas was aching, straining against his breech, grinding his cock up against the Mer's ass harder.

"Hold onto me." he whispered. Farkas released his waist, moving his hand down his soft, flat stomach. Caressing his hip to his inner thigh, he slid his fingers up under Fillim's balls, pushing until he touched his hole. Fillim moaned out, arching his back. Piss, coming out in a sharp stream.

"Ahh ahh... " He rocked his ass into the probing fingers, pushing his face harder into Farkas' neck. "Yesss... fuck!"

He loved being jacked while he pissed, even better than that was being fucked while he pissed. Something Anariil had gotten him hooked on. Now he wished they were outside.

Farkas stuck two fingers into the stream, wetting them... moving back to his hole. Fillim's whole body was arching, his ass pushing down onto the thick fingers. Farkas pushed one finger into his tight hole as far as he could, pumping the Mer's cock while he pissed. Fillim moaning into his neck. As soon as he was done pissing, he pushed another finger in.

Instantly, he came. The Mer's head pushing back into his shoulder, mouth open in a now, silent cry, his beautiful eyes closed. Farkas covered the slit with his hand, letting the seed coat his fingers. Bringing them to his mouth, he licked them clean. By Shor he tasted good. Fillim lay against him panting, now he really did need to relieve himself... bad.

Fillim's soft lips kissed his neck, "I wanna suck you... please... "

Farkas couldn't even fucking think. Picking Fillim up, he turned laying down onto his back, laying the Mer next to him. Lifting his ass, he ripped his breech off and flung it aside.

Fillim propping his side onto Farkas' hip, took in the largest cock he'd ever seen. Altmer were
known for length, not girth. Farkas had it all. He needed two hands. Getting onto his knees, using Farkas for leverage, he fisted the Nord's cock and brought his mouth down onto his head. Farkas sucked in a breath, shoving his head back into the goose down pillow. Releasing it, he spit into his palm, wrapping his hand around it again and started a slow stroke. His cock was hard as steel, which made him wonder how long it'd been for him.

Suddenly, Farkas' hand was under his stroking along with him. Though Farkas was being a lot rougher than he was. He moved his hand away, watching the Nord work his cock. Farkas squeezed hard coming up to his head.

"I want your mouth... suck me... " he panted.

Fillim lowered his mouth back onto the head, grasping with his lips, sucking, working the slit with his tongue. Farkas stroking fast, squeezing, his back arching off the bed. Fillim moved between his legs, using his one hand to palm the Nords balls, dipping a finger in between his ass cheeks... sliding it over his hole.

Farkas was panting. Fillim kept working his finger back and forth over the Nord's asshole, sucking on his swollen head. "Fuck!... Fuck!..." his hips were coming up off the bed, cum shooting out in thick ropes. Fillim moved his mouth back, just enough to let it coat his face.

Rubbing the rose head all over his mouth and chin, smoothing the seed into his skin, licking it off his lips. Farkas just watched him under heavy lidded eyes, Gods... how did he find this? He was like a gift.

Not caring about laying in a wet spot, Fillim wiped the rest of his face clean on the furs underneath them. Farkas was trying to catch his breath, laying with his arms above his head on the pillow. Fillim lay down next to him, on his good arm. Still feeling good from the potion, he snuggled in. He was so big and warm... and safe, he felt good. Sticking his nose into Farkas' pit, he nuzzled into all the hair, taking in his musky scent.

Farkas started laughing, his whole body shaking. Looking down at the Mer, he mumbled. "I'll help anytime you need to piss."
Owned

Chapter Summary

Fillim's face instantly twisted into a sick grimace. Eyes welling up, his breath coming out in pants. "Where... how do you know that name?" He looked at each of them.

The whole room oozed tension.

Skjor desperately wanted to hand this over to someone else... anyone. He didn't want to have to tell this poor young Mer, what he so obviously didn't know. Fillim looked at him panicked, he took a deep breath and spit it out.

A knock at the door startled him awake. Farkas sat up on his elbows, looking at the naked Mer that was snuggled up to him like a second skin. His mouth curved into a huge grin, hollering, "Just a minute."

Fillim stirred, as soon as Farkas got up, his eyes snapped open. His potion had worn completely off. While not in a lot of pain yet, he did however, realize their state of undress. Farkas was bustling around, trying to get dressed quick.

Fillim pushed himself up. Leaning against the wall, covering himself up with a fur. His mind didn't have time to process everything yet, remembering what had happened before they'd fell asleep. What in Au-riel's name, had he been thinking... This was too much, too soon. He felt completely overwhelmed.

Vilkas, pounded on the door, "What's the hold up..."

Farkas moved the bucket to the corner, the whole room smelled of sex. 'Great!' he thought, the cat'll be out of the bag as soon as he opened the door.

Looking up at Fillim, the Mer was looking down into his lap. His face was bright red and he looked upset... even better... 'Was he embarrassed about what they'd done? Did he regret it?' He was stupid, he should've waited. The Mer had been too doped up, now he was probably regretting what had happened. Letting out a deep sigh, he moved to the door. Before he could get his hand around the knob, Vilkas pushed it open.

As soon as the door opened, the smell of sex, hit him full force. Instantly, he was angry. Angry at the fact, that his brother was already taking advantage of having the Mer in his room, and angry at the fact that he was turned on. Farkas stood aside, letting them enter. Vilkas walked in, Skjor following behind him. Skjor just raising his eyebrows at him, he knew... he could smell it. But he wouldn't act the ass, that his brother was.

There was way too much wolf in the small room, especially with the fact that two of them were irritated. Farkas sat down on the edge of the bed, trying to keep his focus on Skjor instead of Vilkas, who continued to stare him down, with a disgusted sneer on his face.

Farkas finally spoke up, anything to cut through the uncomfortable silence. "Well... what did Farengar have to say?" Skjor, however, looked right at Fillim.
"Fillim," The Mer looked up from his lap, looking at the older Nord. "I'm Skjor" motioning to Vilkas, "this is Farkas' twin brother Vilkas." The Mer just nodded, he looked uneasy. "I know this is probably a little uncomfortable for you, you've evidently been through a lot... we need to find out some information about you. Being that, we've kind of taken you in and all. Farkas here, is the one that saved you."

Fillim nodded, "I know... and I thank you all, for everything." He looked at all of them, trying to scan over Vilkas as fast as possible... he made him nervous. He could feel the tension rolling off the man. He was like a smaller, angry version of his brother. His brother was like a big lovable bear. He tried not to think about that either, he could feel the heat coming back into his face again. "I haven't meant to be a burden."

Skjor just shook his head, "You haven't been, I'm not trying to imply that either." The Nord put his hand to his chin, thinking about what he was going to say next. Looking back up to the young Mer, "You were in some pretty bad shape, when Farkas brought you here, stirred things up a bit... we had to cut your clothes off." Fillim's face was getting darker by the second, he struggled to stay still. Vilkas' eyes bore into him.

Skjor took a deep breath, "We noticed when looking at your back, that you've recently been whipped..." Fillim bit his lip, his hand coming to his mouth. Taking a deep breath, he had to keep it under control. He couldn't lose it in front of a room full of warriors, he'd die.

"Yes... I was... sentenced to punishment." He looked at all of them, trying to act like it was nothing. Skjor and Vilkas looked at each other. Farkas was looking at the floor, like he was just wanted the whole thing to be over.

"Sentenced where?... by who. Fillim, the marks on your back... they're unusual." Skjor looked uneasy. Rubbing his hands over his head, he glanced at Vilkas then back at the Mer.

"Fillim, who is Anariil?"

Fillim's face instantly twisted into a sick grimace. Eyes welling up, his breath coming out in pants. "Where... how do you know that name?" He looked at each of them. The whole room oozed tension. Skjor desperately wanted to hand this over to someone else... anyone. He didn't want to have to tell this poor young Mer, what he so obviously didn't know. Fillim just looked at him, panicked. He took a deep breath and spit it out.

"Fillim, the marks on your back... they are... it's Ayleid. It reads that name."

His mouth hung open, lips quivering. Tears overflowed from his eyes, his hand flew to his face, trying to cover it. He just slowly shook his head... he felt like his heart would cave in. He could feel Farkas' hand on his good shoulder now, he was beside him. He muttered, trying to control his voice, "No! Why...."

Seeing that he was going to need some time, Skjor motioned to Vilkas to stand. Looking at Farkas, "We'll give him some time to calm down, then we need to talk. Kodlak wants to be present... okay?"

After they had left, Farkas edged back onto the bed next to him, he held two bottles in his hands. Fillim, was trying to get himself under control. Wiping his arm across his wet face, he took one of the bottles. Farkas just stared quietly, his nose and eyes were so red. "I don't know if you drink mead, but that's all I've got. It'll make you feel a little better." Fillim tipped it back, it was actually pretty good. He'd never had anything but wine, but right now he was glad to have anything.
Both of their heads laid back against the wall, while they drank. Farkas really wanted to talk about what had happened between them, but he knew this wasn't the time. Fillim was an emotional wreck, he turned his head to him. "They're gonna want to know what happened Fillim..."

At least the hitching in his chest was gone. Probably the mead, it worked fast on those that weren't used to it. Farkas had built up a tolerance, all he drank was mead and water...mostly mead.

Fillim downed the last of the bottle, breathing deep. "I think I can talk now." He looked at the Nord, "I trust you Farkas."

A single tear snuck out of the corner of one eye. "There are some things... some things, that I would rather just share with you for now." He looked down at his lap, "But I will tell them the most important parts... I am honest Farkas, okay? I'm not bad." He was fighting tears again! Gods damnit! He just wanted to be done with this! How could he ever be free with Anariil's damned name carved into his back...

Farkas brought a hand over to his face and gently wiped some of the tears away, he felt so bad for him. He knew this had to be hard, "I believe you Fillim, I know you're good... I can sense it." He just smiled, he wouldn't talk to him about that yet either... This was going to be complicated.
Chapter Summary

After reading the same line three times, he gave up. Slamming the book closed, he opened his bottle. Watching the flames dance in the fireplace, all he could think about, was the reaction on the Mer's face.

The fact that he didn't know... the fact that someone would have the audacity, to do that to another! He couldn't imagine what it would feel like, having someone's name carved into his flesh. He couldn't imagine what the Mer was going through.

He would want the one dead that did it.

*********

After reading the same line three times, he gave up. Slamming the book closed, he opened his bottle.

Watching the flames dance in the fireplace, all he could think about was the reaction on the Mer's face. The fact that he didn't know... the fact that someone would have the audacity, to do that to another! He couldn't imagine what it would feel like, having someone's name carved into his flesh. He couldn't imagine what the Mer was going through. He would want the one dead that did it...

Knocking roused him from his thoughts. Blowing out a deep breath, he took a drink. "It's open!"

Farkas peeked his head around the door, he took another drink. "What is it Farkas..." Walking over, he sat on the bed. His hands folded, he looked to the ground. "I need a favor..."

The look on his brother's face told him he needed to ease up. Whatever happened, he was trying to help the Mer, he was doing the right thing... being there for him. Farkas had a big heart, he'd been hurt in the past because of it too. Hopefully this wasn't going to be one of those times.

Taking another drink, he silently looked at him.

"He doesn't have anything to wear... you're the only one that comes close to his height..." Quietly, he got up and walked to his dresser. Pulling out a set of clothes that would be warm enough for the Mer, he walked over to Farkas and laid them on the bed.

"Anything else and he owes me, got it!" Taking his seat back in front of the fire, he looked at his brother. He could tell he was upset, none of them were looking forward to hearing what the Mer had to tell them. But if they were to move forward... it had to be done. It was the only way.

*********

Farkas had helped him get cleaned up and dressed. It was good to have clothes on again... warm clothes, even if they were a little big. Fillim brushed his hair out and Farkas tied it with a strip of leather. Putting the fur boots on that Eindre had made him, had brought tears to his eyes. His only reminder of home... if you could call it that.
The mead had helped him relax. Farkas had told him that he wasn't in any trouble, Kodlak was like a mentor to everyone. He told Fillim how he'd been like a father to them when Jurgen hadn't returned. He wanted to help Fillim too.

After a few deep breaths, they walked out of Farkas' room and headed down the hall.

Skjor and Vilkas waited with Kodlak in his sitting room, each with a tankard. They would need it. Vilkas already knew, he would more than likely need more later. Two sat on the table, waiting for Fillim and Farkas as well.

After a few moments, Farkas walked in, Fillim at his back. The Mer looked like he was being walked to the block. Vilkas could tell, he was making every attempt not to latch onto his brother. Just to have something to hold onto, for securities sake.

Fillim moved a chair next to the one Fillim would be sitting in, so that his brother could sit by him. He knew he would need the support, and having Farkas close to him, would help.

Kodlak smiled at him, that made him feel better. Skjor introduced him, "Fillim, this is Kodlak. He's our Harbinger, he helped you the night Farkas brought you here... you may not remember."

Fillim smiled back at him, "Farkas explained it to me, it's nice to meet you. Now that I am more myself." Farkas led him to a chair and sat down next to him.

He knew they deserved answers, and he knew that he would feel better with it off his chest. "First, I feel the need to thank you all for everything you've done." Looking at all of them, each one in a chair circled around Kodlak's table.

"It's important to me, you've taken in a stranger... needless to say, I'm not used to hospitality of any kind." Some eyebrows raised a little at this, but they remained silent. Taking a drink of his mead, he took a deep breath. "I was born into servitude, in the Isles." He looked down, fingering the handle on the tankard.

"My father, is an Altmer bureaucrat for the Dominion... my mother was his Bosmer servant. At the age of sixteen, he signed ownership of me over to a friend of his. A Thalmor officer, to work off my debt to him, for having me schooled... that being the only reason I know you're tongue." He took another drink of mead.

"You're telling me... your father, your own father, sold you!" Vilkas' face red with anger, he couldn't keep quiet. "You're telling me... your father, your own father, sold you!"

Skjor started to put a hand up to settle things down, but Fillim just shook his head at him. "It's okay," Looking at Vilkas now, "First, please... Not all Altmer are like this. It's important for you to know that, if you don't already. In the Isles, society functions very strictly, and very differently from others. Especially amongst the wealthy or upper class families... Royalty. This is one of the reasons why so many, from what I've been told have left. Especially the younger Altmer."

Taking another drink, "My father loved my mother, but their society, would have never allowed them to be together. He couldn't acknowledge that I was his son... he had me schooled privately. Most with my breeding wouldn't have been given any of the opportunities that I was... Many of them would have been taken at birth, simply to hide the father's indiscretions... I think you can figure out, what would've been done in that instance. Either that, or the mother would be sent away while pregnant. Banished... Any measure would be taken, to preserve the father's name, family and status."
All of the men in the room bore an array of emotions on their faces. It was a mix... rage, disgust and sympathy. He could tell Vilkas, especially was livid and was having a hard time keeping it to himself. Fillim tipped his tankard, this was becoming a habit too... oh well.

"I resided with the Thalmor family for three years." Looking down, his face red. "I became... close, with a family member. Unbeknowst to my... employer. If that's what you'd call him." He took a deep breath, "An affair started, he eventually found out. For my breach of his trust, I was sentenced... and whipped. The family member was bound and forced to witness."

At this, Vilkas was on his feet. Turning his back to them, he walked to the other side of the room, paused to collect himself and then turned, his jaw clenched. Fillim's feet were now in the seat with him, Farkas' hand was resting on the edge of his seat. His hand came up to his face, rubbing his forehead.

All he could do was keep his eyes in his lap, his face burned. "After I healed, I was exiled... I sailed here on a ship with a Thalmor Justiciar on his way to the Embassy. We arrived in Solitude, that was where we separated."

He looked up at them now, "Please believe me, I have no affiliation with the Thalmor! I'm considered trash to them..." Looking around at all of them. He was pleading, "Look, if I can't stay in Whiterun... I have nowhere, I can't ever go back! They would kill me!"

Fillim looked like he was going to cry again, Farkas looked at the other Companions with panic in his eyes. Trying to keep his voice even, "I saw the first Nord I've ever seen, like... a week ago, when we docked. I'm not a warrior, I won't make it outside of a city. Please... there are things I can do, I'll earn my keep! I'm a hard worker..." The room was silent.

The Nords looked at one another, Kodlak cleared his throat. "I don't believe you are with the Thalmor, I don't think anyone here does." The old warrior blew out a deep breath, downing the last of his mead. "I'm not the kind of man that could put you out either, but I have to discuss this with the rest of the members." Motioning to the others in the room. "Why don't you go back to Farkas' room for a bit, while we talk. He will fill you in when we are done."

He swallowed, trying to control his breathing. Standing, Farkas faced him, giving him a silent nod. He turned to leave...

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Sitting in front of the fire, a million thoughts running through his mind. The main thing, trying to pull it together. He had to show these warriors that he was capable of more than weeping and needing someone's care!

What Ancano had told him of the Nords kept coming back to him. It angered him! These men, one of whom had saved his life! Had taken in a total stranger, nursed him back to health, and now it looked like he may even be accepted enough to stay. They didn't seem to care about the fact that he was of mixed blood... or that he was even Mer! It made him want to give Ancano a piece of his mind.

They had called Aela in, the members of the circle would decide. After giving her the story and his situation, she didn't mind. It had no bearing on the circle and as long as the responsibilities of the group were being taken care of... what did it matter. She called Tilma in to join them. The old woman always needed help and she was sure she could find things for the Mer to do. They all knew she was overwhelmed.
They were in agreement, he would stay.

As soon as Farkas heard whelps quarters mentioned, he spoke up. "He can stay with me."
Eyebrows shot up, Vilkas already knew that would be the case. Skjor started to open his mouth and immediately shut it. They'd all had their bed partners, he was no different. More often than not, Aela was in his room... he had no reason to dispute it. Besides, it was one less bed taken if they got a new recruit.

Farkas and Vilkas both came back to the room. As soon as they entered, he shot up from the chair. Farkas motioned for him to sit back down, a huge smile covering his face. Vilkas, looking at him, just shook his head and rolled his eyes. Fillim could swear that he looked happier too, he just wouldn't let on. So that's how it was with this one... he didn't like to show his feelings.

The air in the room was lighter, before he'd even heard anything, he felt better. They both sat, so they could all talk.

Vilkas started, "Looks like we're going to keep you. You'll be staying in here with Farkas, if that's alright." his face bright red, he just nodded. After that, Farkas got up and started getting his armor on, looking at Fillim. "I've got a job in the hold to do, I'll be back by early morning. Vilkas will get you settled, okay?" Fillim, trying to hide his nervousness, just nodded. Trying to repeat the mantra in his mind. 'Keep it together... keep it together...'"Farkas all packed, he turned to Fillim, "You'll be okay, you can eat with Tilma till I get back. Then I'll introduce you to everyone." On his way out the door, he glanced at Vilkas. "Be nice!" Vilkas just rolled his eyes. Fillim swallowed.

They were alone...

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Vilkas just looked at him, "So...you said you have some talents... what can you do?"

Fillim took a deep breath, "Well, I'm a good smith... I can make anything, been doing it since I was little. Ummm, I'm good at building and repairing, I'm good at alchemy. " He fingered his growing beard, realizing how badly he needed to shave. "I can even clean and mend clothes and I'm a good cook... I mean... pretty much anything."

"We've got two smith's, I don't know if either of them need help. That's something you'd have to take up with them, once you are able to get out and make yourself known to the townsfolk that is. Tilma can use your help, she has more than she can handle. So, she'll be instructing you once your arm is healed. She also said she'd be by to fetch you for dinner, you probably need some medicine by now anyway."

Fillim was silent... Vilkas seemed deep in thought, he just stared at him. "I find it hard to believe that you don't know how to fight..."

The fingers on his good hand, busy worrying the edge of his borrowed tunic, he looked up at Vilkas. "I know I must seem like an oddity to you, or maybe even a disappointment? But, I was a slave Vilkas... I wasn't allowed to learn how to wield weapons, only to make them for the Thalmor. I'm Mer, I know magic... it's in my blood. That's it... if my father hadn't had me taught in secret... I probably wouldn't know how to use that either."

Vilkas stayed quiet for a minute, just nodding at him. Then he stood, Fillim did as well. Only about a foot apart, Fillim felt so intimidated by him... he was trying not to show it and failing miserably.
"Vilkas... I... I want to thank you, for the clothes." He looked down.

Vilkas, bridging the gap between them with one step. Lifting his hand to the Mer's chin, he gently, but firmly lifted his face so he could meet his gaze.

Fillim trying to control his breathing, as the Nords ice blue eyes burned into his. "I know, Fillim, that you've been through a lot. But..." Moving his arm around the Mer, he ran his hand across the length of one of the scars on his back. He gasped, it felt like every hair on his body was standing up at the Nord's touch. "I know, that there is more to this" rubbing lightly on the scar "than you are telling..." Their faces just inches apart, his good hand on Vilkas' arm trying to support his stance, their legs touching. "Sooner or later, you will tell me. Are we clear..."

Fillim nodded lightly, Vilkas released his hold on him and turned to leave. Pausing at the door, "You're welcome."
The fact that his body would forever bear that despicable prick's name! The unmitigated gall he'd had, to do such a thing. To mark another as his absolute property! His mind swam with all the time spent with him over the last three years... the things they had done.

The power Anariil had over him, and he'd loved him. The fact that he'd actually loved him!

He wanted so desperately to go outside, just to breathe fresh air. But, the thought of coming face to face with so many he didn't know, instantly put that to rest.

Glancing over at the table, Tilma had left him a bottle of wine. He'd get drunk, that's what he'd do.

Sitting down, he pulled the cork out of the bottle with his teeth and filled a goblet. Holding it high, "Cheers!" he said to the crackling fire. Downing the contents, he poured another.

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The rest of the afternoon had passed, thank the Gods, rather uneventfully. Tilma came for him at meal time, she showed him where the kitchen was and that was where they ate. She stocked him with several more pain and healing potions, telling him the priestess would be there tomorrow to work on him some more.

Knowing things were pretty fresh still and that he really wouldn't be up to much until his arm was functional, there was no need to go any further with details until he could help. She sent him back to Farkas' room with his meds.

He sat in front of the fire, the potion was kicking in. He'd tried to push his thoughts back, he'd tried to be strong... he just couldn't. The pain in his heart was killing him, everything that had happened, everything that he'd lost. Tears streamed down his face, he rocked back and forth in the chair, his good hand clutching his head.

Tarenen... what was happening to him? What was he going through? He hadn't even been able to say goodbye. Getting up from the chair, he paced the small room. Gods! He was so angry at Anariil! He wanted him dead!

To think that he'd had feelings for him, to think that he'd been so twisted up inside, his need for affection had been so great. Anariil had used it! He'd used it! Used me!

And then to act like he'd been the one betrayed!

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He couldn't dwell on thoughts of Tarenen, he'd never see him again. He could only hope that he made it through his training and would eventually find some happiness, some kind of life.

They were both so young, they still had their whole lives ahead of them. He was sure that Tarenen would find another, even if he chose to be with another male. It was common among their people, not really looked down upon. There were others, that had their marriage's for show... to bear an heir. In most of those though, both would have their affairs and simply coexist. He felt bad for Anariil's wife.

He had often wondered if she knew of he and Anariil, that they'd been together. Sipping on his second goblet of wine, the Thalmor and uppity ones, they tried to act like he was trash. But who was the first one they would fawn over as soon as no one was looking?

Anariil had openly shown his disdain for him, then only to turn around and act like he was his own little secret treat. What a farce!

Looking into the fire, sipping his wine. Remembering back to the first time he'd ever been approached by a male, it had been at his father's home. It'd been two years before his schooling was done, two years before being given to Anariil.

He had lived in the servant's quarters, having been raised by them. Though he'd worked on the property and in the house, during times when his father's co-workers or guests were present, he was to stay in kitchens, or in the servants quarters. His father had made it very clear that under no circumstances, was he to be seen by anyone other than himself, Anariil, or the other servants.

He didn't want to chance someone seeing their resemblance, and making the connection.

It was nighttime, and his father was throwing a party. All the upper echelon were there, Thalmor and Dominion alike. He'd woke up and was thirsty. It was safe to go in to the kitchens, as guests were never allowed there. Quick-like, he'd sneak in, get a drink and go back to his room. No one would be the wiser.

He threw on his breeches, bare-chested and bare-footed, he tip toed in. At fourteen, he already had a lot of body hair for a Mer, which made him appear older. If it weren't for his long hair, perhaps he would've looked even older. The Bosmer females kept his hair trimmed, but wouldn't cut it. They loved playing with it, brushing it for him at night after his bath. Hanging to his middle back, it was down, disheveled from being in bed.

The kitchen was empty. Walking to the corner where the pump was, he could hear the music playing, multiple Mer talking and laughing. Holding the bucket under the spout, he worked the pump till the crystal clear, cold water came gushing out. He filled the bucket, and setting it down, he turned to grab a cup.

An arm clad in black leather, rose up, blocking his path. Gasping, his heart had leapt into his throat. Turning, a Thalmor in full dress uniform was directly in front of him. With his back up
against the counter, there was no room to flee. The Thalmor brought up his other arm to rest his hand against the counter, completely blocking him in... and stepped closer.

The male's silver hair was down, his green eyes staring at him. Fillim could tell he was drunk. His expression was relaxed, and he smelled of spiced wine.

Fillim swallowed hard, the Altmer stepping into the gap between his legs, his body now just inches from his. He lowered his head slightly, raising a hand to play with Fillim's hair. "Well, well... aren't you the lovely one?"

Fillim's back ached from pressed into the counter, trying to control his breathing. He didn't dare scream, lest everyone come running. Then his father would be furious! He had to figure this out on his own, hopefully without angering this Mer.

The Thalmor raised a lock of his hair, bringing it up to his face... he smelled it, touching it to his lips. "I see that Telindil has been keeping the best for himself... perhaps he would share with a friend?" His face was so close, his breath ghosted across Fillim's skin. The Thalmor cocked an eyebrow as he fingered the lock of hair in his hand. "Do you think?"

Trying to talk his way out of it, he raised his hands to the Mer's chest, pressing lightly, the male's smile broadening. "Tel...Telindil, wi...will be angry."

He didn't look like he believed him. In fact, the more he spoke, the bigger the smile got on the Mer's face. He felt like a fly, stuck in the spider's web... and the spider was hungry.

The Thalmor actually chuckled, amused. The hair still in his hand, he brought it up to Fillim's chin, lifting. Bringing his face closer... Oh Au-riel! He's going to kiss me! Fillim panicked as the male's lips touched against his.

A throat cleared behind them, and instantly the Altmer's eyes widened, his advance halted! His father's deep voice sounded off throughout the room. "He's a little young for you, isn't he!"

A look of pure rage flashed quickly over the Thalmor's face, then was replaced with a nice polite smile, as he straightened and stepped back, away from Fillim.

His father's eyes flashed to him, quickly glancing over him, perhaps to see that he was alright? "Go back to your quarters, I'll deal with you in the morning."

Fillim grabbed the bucket and the cup, leaving without so much as another glance at his aggressive admirer.

He didn't hear the rest of the conversation between them, but he remembered thinking about it while he lay in bed that night. It had taken him awhile to realize that the feelings he'd experienced while the male had him pinned, were much more than just fear. He'd been excited, turned on even. The male had been intimidating, but also very attractive... seductive. He hadn't hurt him in any way, he hadn't been rough.

Fillim had wondered over the years, what might have happened had his father not walked in when he did. How far would things have gone? Deep down, he thought he may have even enjoyed it.

The next morning, his father hadn't mentioned it and never did. It was like it had never even happened.

Draining the last of his goblet, he watched the fire. He was numb. He didn't remember his eyes closing, or the hands lifting the empty goblet from his lap.
Vilkas looked down at the Mer, such a mix of emotions ran through him. Letting out a deep breath, he lifted Fillim and laid him onto the fur covered bed.

Taking one last glance back at him, he shut the door and went to his room.
Taking It Slow

Chapter Summary

Looking at him, watching him... it was evident, that Farkas felt something for him too. After all, he was going to be living in here with him, sharing a bed. By who's request was that?

It frightened him a little, he was still dealing with so much. He needed to heal.

He also needed to come clean, at least to Farkas, about his relationship with Anariil.

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Feeling fur underneath him, his eyes opened. He remembered getting drunk, but he didn't remember getting to the bed. He remembered mulling over useless things in his mind. It had evidently done some good, his heart felt lighter.

Turning his head... Farkas lay beside him. Watching the man sleep, he felt better knowing he was near. He hadn't heard him come in, that made him wonder how late it was. He had said yesterday that he'd be back early. All he could do was look at him, take him in.

He felt good around him, he felt safe with him. He had saved his life and then stepped forward in his behalf, so he would have a place to stay. Not to mention what had happened between them. Just thinking about it made his face heat up, even with Farkas asleep, he felt the need to hide his face in the furs.

He couldn't deny, he had a definite attraction to him as well. Farkas was beautiful, he was kind, affectionate and understanding. Gods... was him being found by this giant of a man, was this his second chance, at some happiness and love... after all that had been taken from him? After all that he'd never had?

Looking at him, watching him... it was evident, that Farkas felt something for him too. After all, he was going to be living in here with him, sharing a bed. By who's request was that? It frightened him a little, he was still dealing with so much. He needed to heal. He also needed to come clean, at least to Farkas, about his relationship with Anariil.

That brought his mind to Vilkas. Fillim's whole situation was complicated. But that man... he was complication, all on his own... complication. He could feel it in his every fiber, and he also wanted to know his past. He knew, Fillim hadn't told them everything.

A big, muscled arm circled around him, gently pulling him closer. Au-riel... how just his touch made him feel, he had to fight the urge to nuzzle him with his face. That's not all he wanted to do. This would be hard, he had a tendency to try and handle his hurts with sex. A few years with Anariil...

He didn't want to do that now, he wanted to make sure he was wanting it for the right reasons. He also didn't want to rush things.

That would be hard too, he was getting hard just cuddling with him. Looking up, Farkas was
watching him... watching him go through his inner debate. Farkas turned onto his side, he stroked his hand lightly along Fillim's hip.

His voice was low, thick from sleep. "You're a hard sleeper... I know I made noise, gettin my armor and gear off. You didn't stir one bit."

Fillim stuck his face into the Nord's chest, he laughed "I got drunk last night, I don't think anything would've woke me... I don't even remember getting to the bed."

Farkas' deep rumble when he laughed, just made him want to snuggle him more. Then he stopped, taking his finger, lifting Fillim's face to look up at his. "Why'd you get drunk... did anything happen?"

Fillim, just shook his head, "No, I... I was just remembering things. It'll get better with time." Looking into each other's eyes, he could see that Farkas understood. His large hand moved from under his chin to his hair, letting his fingers get buried in it. Bringing his face closer to Fillim's, "What happened before... between us. I.. I think you feel like I do? At least I hope you do. Am I right?"

His face was on fire, the way Farkas had a hold of his head, he couldn't hide his face the way he wanted to. "Yes, I do... I just need to take things slow. Okay? It's not that I don't want you... I do, I just..."

Pausing, deep in thought for a moment. "I know you need time Fillim, we can go as slow as you need to." His voice lower now, "Just... you have to know, I like to touch. That's how I am. If that bothers you, you'll have to tell me."

Fillim just swallowed, giving a little nod. His face was getting closer by the second, "Can I kiss you... Fillim..." He barely got the nod finished and Farkas' mouth was on his, his arms pulling his body into his. Trying to be careful of his hurt arm, the hand in his hair pushing his mouth harder into his. His tongue, darting out, touching... teasing Fillim's.

Fillim whimpered into his mouth, breathless, Farkas pulled back. Pulling him further into the embrace, he just held him.

Nothing else needed to happen, this was enough, just to have the Mer near him.

He was content.
Gratitude

Chapter Summary

He felt sick, as if having to come face to face with everyone wasn't enough. "What do you mean, she's already been paid. Farkas..."

Gods, he had nothing, he already owed them so much. Damn it!

He pulled away, laying on his back, looking up at the ceiling. His good hand fingering the cloth of his borrowed fucking breeches, trying to keep his voice even. "Who paid it?"

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Nuzzling his face into Farkas' pit hair, he could tell the Nord had a huge smile on his face. Grabbing some skin between his teeth, kneading it. Farkas jerked, mumbling low "Hey, watch it." Starting to laugh. "You're crazy, bein in there, I need a bath bad." Fillim propping up on his good elbow, "No, I love your smell... just let me roll around in it."

It was funny, his strong musky scent and a little bit of wet dog... for some reason, it drove him wild. Grinning up at him, his tongue sticking through his teeth a little. That got him laughing even more, "Yeah, you tell that to my brother... that you love my smell. He'll say your nuts too."

He laid his chin on Farkas' chest, the Nord's big hand rubbing over his back, "We should probably get up. We need to see the priestess." The thought of leaving, going outside... good, but at the same time, bad. "You know, I'm well enough... I can start healing myself. I mean, she's not doing this for free, right?" He didn't want them covering his cost, he definitely couldn't pay them back, or pay her.

Farkas turned back onto his side, "She's already been paid Fillim, and besides, you need to get out of this room. You need to meet everyone, get some sun."

He felt sick, as if having to come face to face with everyone wasn't enough. "What do you mean, she's already been paid. Farkas..." Gods, he had nothing, he already owed them so much. Damn it! He pulled away, laying on his back, looking up at the ceiling. His good hand fingering the cloth of his borrowed, fucking breeches, trying to keep his voice even. "Who paid it."

Putting an arm around him, pulling him back into his body. He could tell Fillim didn't want to face him, so he held him there. "Look at me..." Fillim's eyes bore into his chest, so this is how it would be... He didn't want to be aggressive, but he wasn't beyond getting a handful of the Mer's hair and forcing him to. He was starting to see a little of their age difference here, temperament wise at least. "Look at me!"

Amber eyes raised to his, Fillim's mouth pressed into a thin line. It didn't anger him, he would be firm with him when he needed it, but it also made him want to rip the breeches off of him and do other things. The stirring in his own breech put that thought to rest. "My brother and I paid it." Fillim's face instantly screwed up, he was trying to pull away. Letting out a breath, he grabbed a handful of Fillim's hair, forcing his head to stay in place. "No you don't... you're going to look at
The pout on Fillim's face turning him on even more, "I'm gonna throw my weight around a little right now, just because I can!" Fillim's eyebrows pinching together. He pressed on, "And I'm only gonna say this once. If I want to do something for you, I will! You'd better get used to it, cause I'm probably gonna be doin a lot." He let loose of his hair, the Mer's head instantly lowered. His forehead resting against Farkas' chest.

His arm still under the Mer, holding him close. At least he wasn't trying to pull away, Fillim's voice low, almost a whisper. "Why did your brother help pay..." He hooked his other hand under Fillim's leg, hoisting it over his. Feeling his erection through the breeches, so... he'd been just as turned on, by his little display of power as he was.

Kissing the top of his head, his hand still hooked under his knee. "He helped me, because he wanted to," Fillim pulled his good hand out from under him, putting it to his chest, fiddling with his chest hair. He could tell this was going to escalate, moving his hand from under the knee to his backside. He could feel the Mer's breathing speed up against his chest, "Why did he want to..."

Alright! "Fillim, he paid it because... because he's interested in you!" Fillim froze, there went the mood. Instantly, he buried his face into the Nord's chest, his fingers clutching into the hairs. "No..."

He hadn't really wanted to go into it with him yet, he was still mulling it over in his own mind. He knew that he and Vilkas would have to work something out, but he didn't even know how to broach it with Fillim yet. He'd thought that maybe Vilkas would have done something... maybe made a move while he was away. When Fillim didn't say anything he'd figured Vilkas was just taking his time, of course that was the right thing to do. With the Mer recovering and still so upset over everything, but he knew it would be just a matter of time.

What he did know, Vilkas wasn't going to give up. There wouldn't be a power struggle, there would be compromise. They would do whatever was needed to keep the peace, but whatever arrangement they came to, it would be done discreetly and fairly. For everyone's sake.

Speaking into his chest, "He scares me..." Now that, he was not expecting. Farkas, still holding him, pushed back just enough to look into his eyes. "You have no reason to be, he would never harm you."

He couldn't understand, how could Farkas be okay with... how could he not care. "You told me you cared, earlier... you said..."

Here it came, how was he supposed to do this, when he didn't even know exactly how things would be himself. "Listen, I do care... you know I do. To me you're mine." Putting a finger under his chin, pushing up. He needed to see his face, needed to see that he understood.

"I know this seems really complicated, Fillim... it's not. Look, anyone other than him, I’d be breaking them in half. He's my brother, I know when he's interested in someone. He's definitely interested." Propping up on his elbow, rubbing the Mer softly. "I'm not gonna let you go, not for anything. But I'm not gonna fight him over you either.

"Let me ask you something... have you ever loved two people at once?"

His voice broke, "Yes... I have." Au-riel, how could this be happening... how could this be happening again..
He needed to know, "Fillim, what scares you about him?" Vilkas was just smaller, grumpier, but most of it was noise. His bark, was always worse than his bite.

Biting at his lower lip, "He's... well, he's intimidating. I mean, he seems really mean."

Farkas burst out laughing, his whole body shaking the bed. "He's not mean, he's a blowhard."

Giving him a quick kiss, "I promise you Fillim, you have nothing to worry about. I would never let anything hurt you... ever."

He sat up, swinging his legs over the edge. The mood was lifting, he could tell by the young Mer's face. They needed to get out, "Come on, let me help you clean up and we'll get out of here. Take a tour of the town."

Fillim climbed onto his lap, wrapping his good arm around Farkas' neck. He smiled, "Alright..." With the Mer nuzzling into his beard, he was loving this... loving it.
"New Blood huh... what'd I miss."

"Nord... got a good arm, seems decent enough. But showing up out of no where." His eyes directly on Fillim now... "With all the trouble brewing in the land, makes me wonder who we can trust."

Fillim knew it was directed at him, he glanced at Farkas. The big Nord just winked at him, 'So glad he was at ease about all this.'

**I don't think I ever mentioned. Farkas and Vilkas are around 30 in this fic, reasonable age I'd say. So 11 years older than Fillim.**

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While they got cleaned up, Farkas told him of the members he hadn't met. Of course, since he'd been here, all the other members had tried getting glimpses of him. Ria had gotten a better look then anyone, the night he'd brought him in. She'd had her head stuck in the door before Aela could shoo them all away. Since then, the whole place had been buzzing, with talk about him.

All the whelps had questions. It wasn't like them to simply take someone in, without making them a member. That would never be the case with Fillim... even if he ever showed an interest, Farkas would never allow it. He wasn't made to be a warrior, some just didn't have it in them and he was one of them.

Skjor and Aela had basically told them enough to shut them up, this is how it would be. Of course, Njada had rotten shit to say about it, nothing new. She never had anything good to say... ever. Sometimes they all wished she'd get laid, maybe that would calm her a little. Of course, they didn't really want to wish that on anyone either.

It was no secret, she had a thing for Athis, and he had a thing for domineering, bitchy, women that regularly felt the need to beat the shit out of him. Just thinking about it, he wanted to laugh. He could picture it... someday, someone would walk into the whelp's quarters and she would be holding the poor Mer down, fucking him. Poor Athis.

Even though he'd never brought a male in to share his bed, he knew no one dared say anything. With the exception of her. She may not say anything in front of him, or even Vilkas, but she had no problem running her mouth when they weren't there. He warned Fillim to steer clear, and to let him know if things got too bad. Thank the Gods she was out on a job today.

He was hoping that having another Mer in their faction would make Fillim feel better, Athis was
decent, Farkas liked him, but he could be pretty arrogant. They all just overlooked it, for his sake...he was already her whipping boy, he didn't need shit from anyone else.

Oh well, the circle all accepted Fillim and that's what mattered. Pounding on his door stopping their conversation, "It's open." Vilkas stepped in, closing the door, then leaning his back against it. Just from his presence, Fillim's heart had sped up. Doing his best to maintain composure, he tried to act normal, making minimal eye contact.

"Hope you didn't have plans... we've got new blood." Moving away from the door, he took a seat in one of the chairs, across from Fillim. Though Vilkas continued to look at his brother, color was still flooding the Mer's face.

"New blood huh, what'd I miss."

"Nord... got a good arm, seems decent enough. But showing up out of no where." His eyes directly on Fillim now... "With all the trouble brewing in the land, makes me wonder who we can trust."

Fillim knew it was directed at him, he glanced at Farkas. The big Nord just winked at him, 'So glad he was at ease about all this.'

Vilkas caught it as well, his mouth going into a smirk. Farkas talked while getting into his gear. "So...what's the plan, what do I need to do." Knowing he needed to buck up, he took in a deep, but silent breath. No matter what happened...he knew he'd be alright.

He was starting to wonder if Vilkas could sense his fear, that seemed crazy, but maybe if he just tried to act calm. That sounded easy, but looking back at him while he filled in his twin... the man literally exuded ferocity.

He could see it, plain as day. Just watching them together was like watching a study in split personality. The larger twin, while he had the size and strength to crush someone with a single blow, was largehearted and kind. He had a generous, nurturing nature, unafraid to show his feelings.

The smaller twin, while still a decent sized Nord, strong and capable... was closed up and complicated. Afraid to show his true feelings... and angry. They were like night and day, so much a part of each other, yet so opposite... so different.

Farkas was ready, he'd heard enough to know he'd be gone at least overnight. 'Great.' Then, as if things weren't uncomfortable enough, Farkas grabbed him into a hug. Vilkas just sat there, watching as his brother leaned in and kissed the Mer. Quickly, but tenderly, "I'll be back in a day or two, Vilkas will be helping you..." Lifting his head to look him in the eye, "It'll be alright, why don't you step out for a moment. I'd like to talk to my brother."

Quickly walking out, he turned to pull the door shut, his eyes locking with Vilkas' right before the door closed.

Farkas sat on the bed, across from his brother. Elbows resting on his knees, hands slightly clasped. They looked at each other, letting out a long breath. "When I get back, we need to talk about him... and us..." He cleared his throat. "I told him."

Vilkas stared at him, "Told him what, exactly."

Farkas rolled his eyes, trying to keep his voice low. "Shit Vilkas! I told him that you were interested."
Vilkas nodded, fingering the armrest of the chair. "What did he say?"

"He's afraid of you! Look, all I can say is this... I think he definitely finds you attractive but, he's afraid of you Vilkas. You need to ease up, he's not a piece of property to be passed back and forth. His feelings need to be taken into consideration here!"

"I know that, and I will... ease up. I'll do my best." They were both standing now. "But I'm telling you, there is more to him than he's telling Farkas. Something doesn't sit right, and I will find out what it is." Judging his brothers look, he raised his hands. "I'll be nice, maybe the boy just needs to grow a little more back bone though, huh."

"He's got enough backbone for me, just the right amount! He's been through a lot Vilkas, he's a good kid. He just needs some time to adjust, he just got here." Running his hands through his hair, he wasn't even ready to think about it yet. But, he couldn't help saying it, just in case. "If anything happens... you know, I don't want it to happen in my bed."

That pissed him off a little, "Give me some fucking credit Farkas! Like I'd do that!" His brother just looked at him, nodding. They walked out together.

Fillim was leaning against the wall, next to the door. He perked up as soon as they walked out, Vilkas could hear his heart, racing like a jackrabbit's. The apprehension coming off of him in waves.

Vilkas realized that even as quiet as they were trying to be, he probably heard everything. He crossed his arms, waiting...

Reaching out, taking a bit of his tunic with his fingers, he pulled Fillim closer. "I'll be back soon, alright." Leaning down, he kissed him again. He didn't care who saw their exchange of affection, everyone would just have to get used to it. Pulling away, he turned and left.

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Vilkas, however, was not ready for everyone to be in his business. Giving the Mer a solid looking over, "This way."

Walking down the hall, he could hear Fillim's light footsteps behind him. He opened his door and stood aside for the Mer to enter first, his amber eyes cast to the floor. Such a solemn look... Letting out a deep sigh, he walked in behind him and closed the door.
It was what he had that his brother didn't. It was his dominance, his need to be in control. That coupled with his beauty, he would get lost in this man... the way he had gotten lost in someone else.

The thought of this man having control of him, his heart... his body.

It terrified him.

As soon as he walked in, he could see another huge difference in them. Another clue to Vilkas' personality, what he was really like. His room was spotless, and from what he could see right then, very organized. His curiosity was taking over, actually helping him to keep calm. He needed to take this opportunity to learn about the Nord, the more he knew, the better they would probably get along.

Vilkas closed the door, "Why don't you have a seat, we need to talk."

Fillim took a seat, his free hand fiddling with the armrest. Expecting Vilkas to sit down with him, he was shocked when he didn't. Going over to a wardrobe, he began rummaging through it. After a few moments, he walked over to Fillim with a set of clothing. He dropped it in his lap, then pulling up another chair, sat down across from him.

They sat there staring at each other for a moment, he could tell Vilkas was mulling over what he planned to say. "My brother says you fear me..." Fillim's eyes got huge, he swallowed. Vilkas could smell it on him, fear, nervousness... everything that went with it.

Reclining in his chair, "Fillim, I am honest when I say, you have no reason to. What I will tell you... I am very different, as you may have already gathered, from my brother."

Fillim quietly watched him, "Regardless of what you think my intentions are, I will not touch you... in that manner, until you let me know that's what you want. But you will spend time with me while
Farkas is away, we will be getting to know each other."

He rubbed a hand over the shadow on his face. "And you will bathe, regularly... at least while you are with me."

That shocked him a little, although he was used to bathing daily in the Isles, that was something he hadn't done since he'd left his home.

"I am very close to my brother, but... well, let's just say this... cleanliness, isn't one of his priorities." After that mornings leisurely talk in bed, that seemed almost hilarious. He started to laugh, then looked away trying to stifle it.

Vilkas smiled with him, "I see you understand what I say."

He liked Farkas' easy attitude on things. It was a change from the strict, somewhat rigid way the Thalmor households he'd worked and lived in were ran. And, he liked how he smelled when he was sweaty... dirty, it was a turn on. Farkas had only bathed once that he'd noticed since he'd been here, going on a week. Not too bad.

Of course, he wasn't going to tell Vilkas that he thought his brother's body odor was hot. He'd just keep that to himself.

Vilkas on the other hand, just from looking at him, his room. He'd definitely be able to compare it to the Thalmor households he'd lived in. Maybe not quite as rigid, but very well kempt.

He stood up, "Well, lets go. Grab your clothes." Fillim got up, a surprised look on his face. "I... I thought you wanted to talk?"

"I do, but you are going to take a bath before seeing the healer. You're not going anywhere like that." He looked down at himself, trying not to be self conscious.

Watching the Mer run though his gambit of emotions and thoughts. "Fillim, when is the last time you had a real bath... it'll feel good." Fillim knew he was right, looking up from the floor, he nodded.

He blew out a deep breath, "Alright, I'm ready." That very thought caught in his throat.

He stared, panic rising in him, as Vilkas started removing his armor. Piece by piece, laying it on the bed. A thin tunic and breeches were all he had left on. Looking at the Mer, his eyes literally bulging, as he stared at him. "What!... how am I to help you with all that on? I'll get wet enough as it is."

"Bu... but... but, you said... you said that." Taking a deep breath, "How can you help me, without..." Damn it! 'I don't need help! I'm grown, I can bathe myself!' The fist on his good hand was clenched at his side.

Vilkas completely ignored him, "I'm cutting that wrap off." Fillim, now left utterly speechless. Gawking at Vilkas, his mouth open, eyes wide. Walking towards him with a dagger, instinctively, he attempted to back away. Vilkas nonchalantly pulling him back, lifting the tunic up onto his shoulder, over his head. Letting it drop to the floor, he started cutting away at the wrapping.

Talking while he cut, "If you don't start using this arm, it will stiffen. Then you'll have one hell of a time gaining your strength back." Pulling away at the bandages, as soon as his flesh was exposed, a sour smell wafted out. Both of them grimacing in unison. He definitely needed a bath.
With all of it gone, he held his arm close to him, a little apprehensive to move it. Especially, remembering the horrible pain from it being out of socket, broke... and reset. Vilkas gently, rubbed his arm. It felt funny, it had been so tightly wrapped against his body, he hadn't had any direct sensation to it. "Now, you're not going to do any lifting with it for another day or two, but you need to get used to moving it again."

Not wanting to piss him off by questioning him, but. His voice low, watching the Nord as he inspected his arm. "Vilkas... are you sure we're uh... that we should be doing this? You know, with my arm."

A quick look of irritation went over his face, he turned, grabbing some furs and evidently a clean set of clothing for himself. "Yes, Fillim... I'm sure. I spoke with the priestess earlier today, you can trust what I do."

He heard what Vilkas said, but his attention was focused on the clothing Vilkas was holding. Being pushed out the door, "Are... are you taking a bath too? I mean..." He was also being ignored... again.

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The bathing room was just a hallway away, Tilma had gotten it all ready. He'd visited her before seeing his brother. It took time to heat the water, fill the large tub. They walked in, him pushing behind the constantly blabbering Mer. The room was damp from steam. Leaving Fillim to look around, while he set their clean things on a nearby bench. Fillim stood, taking it all in. He'd never seen anything like this. It was so different from homes in the Isles.

The tub was massive, of course it had to be. Nords tended to be large. It was metal, but not steel... pewter, maybe. Sitting on huge, clawed feet. A trough ran from the bottom, going out a hole in the bottom of the stone wall that had been cut out for it. Exiting the building, the water dumping somewhere outside.

Instantly, his mind came back to what was going on... the tie was being removed from his hair. He involuntarily stiffened, closing his eyes as Vilkas pulled off his own tunic, moving in front of him. He needed to be honest with himself, it wasn't that he didn't find Vilkas attractive, he did. That was the problem. The twins shared the same physical beauty, with slight differences of course.

It was what he had that his brother didn't. It was his dominance, his need to be in control. That coupled with his beauty, he would get lost in this man... the way he had gotten lost in someone else. The thought of this man having control of him, his heart...his body. It terrified him.

Even though Farkas, held the position of authority in their relationship, it was different. Vilkas was the perfect example of the Alpha male, pure dominance and confidence.

Vilkas gently pulled his hair to the side, he fought to hide the shiver, that ran down him at the touch. Instinctively, his good hand went up to the Nord's chest, simply for balance. The hands at the ties to his breeches briefly pausing. Now, it was a fight not to concentrate, on the warm skin under his hand. A fight, to not fiddle with the hair that graced his flesh.

He had to keep his eyes closed, he couldn't watch... He couldn't look at him. Just what was happening, he was getting an erection. He let out a soft breath, fighting the overwhelming urge to not only hide his face... but to lay his head onto the man in front of him, to lean into him. This was going to be embarrassing.

Gods... he was taking forever with the ties.
Vilkas' breathing slowed, watching the Mer as he loosened the ties to his breeches. Just taking him in, his eyes were closed, color flooding his cheeks. His long blood red hair, falling over his shoulder almost to his stomach. Pulling the breeches open, the bulge in his cloth was evident. He pushed them onto his hips, allowing his hands to skim across the dark skin there. He held onto it, pausing. Struggling to do the right thing, his mouth was watering. His hands, slightly digging in around those slender hips, looking up at the Mer's face again...his eyes were still closed, his lips apart as he breathed.

Just looking at his face, he wanted to wrap his hands up in all that hair and take his mouth with his own. He wanted to claim him.

Taking a deep breath, he pushed them off, letting them hit the damp floor. Undoing the cloth, watching the Mer intently. He swallowed as Vilkas pulled it slowly from between his legs, he was stiff.

Vilkas was so close, that his cock landed against him.

Complete silence... he stood there for a moment. Fillim's face almost looked pained, visibly trying to control his breathing. His hard cock laying against him, the hand on his chest, now clutching his skin. Not touching him further, was taking every ounce of strength he had. Of course he was doing this to himself, he knew the Mer could've bathed all on his own. But he needed to know if Fillim had any desire for him, any at all.

Now he knew the answer.

Slowly, he moved his hands between them, Fillim's breathing sped up. Undoing his own breeches, he pushed them off, his hand brushing over the hard flesh against him. An audible gasp coming from the parted lips before him. Fillim gave up, his head dropped to Vilkas' shoulder. He could barely contain himself.

That was the sign he had waited for. Leaning down, putting his lips against that soft, pointed ear. A low whine escaping the Mer, he whispered, "Fillim... do you want me."

He couldn't even speak, his head pushing harder into the Nord's shoulder. Leaning his whole body against him, "Look at me, Fillim... tell me." He couldn't open his eyes, he felt drugged... just being this close to him. Raising his head just enough, brushing his open lips against Vilkas' neck... his tongue darted out, tasting him.

That was it! He couldn't hold back. He had to have him, he didn't know where to start... he wanted all of it, right now! His arms wrapped around the Mer, pushing him harder against his body. Running his hands down his back, to that gorgeous ass. Fillim just leaned into him, his right arm tucked into him, his good hand fumbling, trying to undo Vilkas' breech.

Running his hands all over Fillim's ass, taking a cheek in each hand, squeezing. Fillim groaned. Finally, releasing Vilkas' cock from the confines of the breech, he spread his legs slightly, allowing it to fall.

Finally, with nothing between them, just feeling each other's flesh... warmth. He had to taste him. Gliding his hands up, over his skin, he wrapped his fingers into that long hair. He wanted to look into those warm eyes, to see his face as he made him his. Pushing him away, just enough, he tilted his head up. Facing him, feeling each other's breath, his eyes finally opened. Just enough to see that amber glow, his lips parted. Vilkas' mouth crashed down onto his, Fillim whimpered against him. Hips coming together, wrapping his hand around Vilkas' aching cock, he squeezed.
Growling into his mouth, it was close to being savage, the way he kissed him. All teeth and tongues, no finesse. He didn't have the strength to even hold himself up. If Vilkas hadn't held his head, he would've fallen by now. Both breathing hard, Vilkas pulled away. It was time to get into the tub. The Mer could barely stand and as much as he wanted him, he stunk.

He needed to get clean, then they could continue. They had all afternoon... all night... then tomorrow. Carefully, he turned Fillim so his back was against his front. "Together now." They both lifted a foot into the tub, then the other. Vilkas sat first, guiding Fillim down into the water, in front of him. Taking in his succulent, little ass as it lowered into the water. Resting his arms on the edges, he let the Mer get settled in between his legs.

The hot water felt amazing, Fillim completely relaxed into him, watching the steam rise into the air. Vilkas' knees up, one on each side of him. His erection pushing into his back. His own, against his stomach, threatening with each breath to breach the surface of the water. Slowly moving his right arm, hissing through his teeth at the soreness. He latched onto the leg beside him.

Loving the languid way Fillim lay into him, almost catlike, stretching until his toes touched the other end.

Vilkas smiled, resting his face against the head on his chest. "I told you it would be sore..."

Fillim's good hand stroking Vilkas' other leg, "Do you always have to be right."

A deep chuckle, jarring him, making the water ripple. "Yes, yes I do."

Fillim just smiled to himself, relieved... the bridge had been crossed. The weight was gone, they would be able to ease into each other. In more ways than one.

Chapter End Notes

I also felt the need to clarify, bathing to them means taking an actual bath. Even though Farkas hadn't bathed, he had still cleaned up. I just kind of assumed this as I didn't want to talk over every minute detail on those things. They mention getting cleaned up, using a basin in the room to clean the majors. I don't think I need to explain that. Whew... With that out of the way, we may move on.

*Lyrics - Chokehold by Adam Lambert*
He knew exactly what he was doing... the effect he had on him. And now, he knew he could do it anytime he wanted. It would be dangerous to love him, the kind of feeling that terrifies you... and yet, you still can't help giving in to it.

Succumbing to it.

When it came right down to it, he wasn't ready. He wasn't ready to be with either of them. He knew that. He definitely wanted them both. But, he wanted them for different reasons.

Farkas... Farkas was his security blanket, he was his savior. Big, warm, cuddly and safe. Even when he put him in his place, he was gentle. He knew he was safe and that Farkas would never hurt him. He was sexy in a down to earth, raw kind of way. A relaxed way. Being with Farkas was easy, loving him would be easy. That didn't mean he was ready for that either, he wasn't. But his heart... it was kind of doing it's own thing. Being surrounded by these two men... two men that wanted him. Coupled with the fact that for the first time, he was getting so much that he'd never gotten.

Vilkas... The attraction he had for him, it reminded him of the attraction he'd had for Anariil. He would never tell Vilkas that, but it was true. Sheer power, control and dominance. He had a dark beauty to him. He'd dreamt of Vilkas taking him, having complete control over his body. The way he'd dreamt of Anariil taking him, long before he'd ever touched him.

Over time, he'd come to the realization that he loved to be dominated. Not hurt, mind you, but dominated. Of course, Vilkas was much different than Anariil, he was good. Controlling, but good. And the fact that domination was all he'd ever known...

Just his display in the bathing room had proven to Fillim, the kind of power he had over him already. And Vilkas knew it. That... that, reminded him of Anariil!

Promising not to touch him in that way, then seducing him. Turning him into a mindless, speechless, rag doll. Simply from undressing him.

Vilkas was demanding, he liked being in a position of power. While they had been in the tub, he'd taken complete control. As if Fillim were his to command, his plaything. He'd chosen just the right scented oil to bathe him in. He'd been so sensual, the way he'd washed his hair, his body...
The Nord had explored every inch of him, feeling and caressing his skin while he washed him. Running his tongue along his sensitive ears while he stroked him with one hand, the other constantly rubbing against his hole. Never penetrating, but just enough constant friction to drive him wild, making him cum in his hands. Watching his face, the whole time.

He knew exactly what he was doing... the effect he had on him. And now, he knew he could do it anytime he wanted.

It would be dangerous to love him, the kind of feeling that terrifies you... and yet, you still can't help giving in to it. Succumbing to it.

He had left him reeling. Then, he had dressed him and braided his hair. Of course he'd loved every second of it, being catered to this way. But what scared him, was what was coming later.

He'd taken him up into the main part of Jorvaskr, Fillim had wanted to cling to him out of nervousness. But, afraid Vilkas would get angry, he'd tried to back off. Only to have Vilkas grab little bits of his clothing, pulling him closer.

Giving only brief introductions, to the other members. He'd literally felt the man stiffen, anytime another male was close to him. This could be a problem.

Going to the healer had been interesting, they'd walked slow, it was beautiful out. He'd had to stop, taking time to let his eyes adjust to being outside. He was feeling better, he only had a few more sessions after this and he should be well. He was well enough now, to start helping. Vilkas had told him that would begin tomorrow, they had plans tonight. The only response he got out of that was Fillim's loud swallow and red face.

The healer had said exactly the same thing Vilkas had. He could say that him visiting the healer before hand, was just him looking out for Fillim. But, it was still him, needing to have control...

He'd shown him around town, Fillim loved all the water. Hearing it was relaxing, it was truly a beautiful place. Then it was time to go back home.

Fillim knew what he wanted... expected.

Going back to his room, he'd told him he wanted him to steer clear of the newcomer. He didn't fully trust him yet. He'd just nodded, saying okay. It was better to simply agree on some things, he wasn't ready to see the man's temper just yet.

Fillim had gotten out of his boots, setting them neatly next to Vilkas'. He'd said he was bringing back dinner, they would eat in his room. Then what... he knew what. He was already craving the feelings the man stirred in him, but afraid at the same time.

Fidgeting nervously, on the bed. Undoing the braid, he shook his hair out. It was still damp, but the way Vilkas had played with it. He knew it was a weakness of his, he wasn't sure what else to do. How much was enough... or too much. This was another thing he hadn't had to worry over with Farkas, they just seemed to flow with each other, naturally.

Vilkas came back into the room, carrying a tray. Stew and bread, wine for Fillim and mead for himself. He'd thought of everything... Fillim jumped up, closing the door behind him. He could tell Vilkas noticed his hair, as soon as he'd walked in. He decided to play dumb.

They ate in silence, Vilkas' eyes constantly roaming over him. The tension in the room mounting, he felt like prey, under the watchful eye of a predator.
Setting their bowls and the tray aside, Vilkas reclined on the bed, barefoot... holding the bottle of mead. His tunic unlaced, black, curly waves of chest hair exposed. He patted the empty spot on the bed next to him, Fillim could feel the heat flooding his face. He got up, holding his wine, and walked to the bed.

Setting the wine on the nightstand, he noticed a vial. It hadn't been there before, at least he hadn't thought it had been. He sat, bringing his knees up to his chest, hugging them. Giving Vilkas a shy look. The nord watched him, a smile coming to his face.

Letting out a sigh, he took a drink. "After our time in the bathing room, you're still playing shy?" Turning his gaze directly on him.

Fillim thought his face would catch fire. "It's not... It's not shyness, so much as... well." He turned his face away, hearing Vilkas set his bottle down. "It's how you make me feel..."

Vilkas just stared at him, moving his arm around him. "Come to me... tell me, Fillim." His voice low, he was being pulled onto him. Straddling him, Fillim wrapped his arms around the nord's neck, looking down at his chest. Anywhere, but those icy eyes.

"How do I make you feel." His low voice, now almost a purr.

Already, he was near panting from lust. His cock straining against his breech, to oblivion with it all! He spit it out. His voice, so full of need, it sounded foreign to his own ears. "I want you..."

Giving Vilkas an almost pained look, wrapping his hands into that thick black hair, crashing down onto his full lips.

Vilkas grabbed onto his tunic, pulling so hard it literally ripped into two parts. He pulled away from Fillim's mouth. Arms wrapped around him, pulling him closer. His mouth latching onto his neck, biting and sucking. Fillim's head thrown back, whimpering, as he was ravaged. Rocking and grinding down into him. His right arm still protectively held close. The hand trying to undo his breeches. Vilkas rolled him over, on top of him now.

His teeth were bared, he looked wild. Pushing Fillim's hand away, he ripped the ties, pulling harshly at the material until it gave. Pulling the breeches and cloth off at the same time. Fillim was too turned on to be scared. He watched through heavy lidded eyes, as the Nord threw his own clothing to the floor.

Fillim instinctively reached for the vial, he knew what it was for. Vilkas' cock standing straight out, already leaking. Grabbing an ankle in each hand, he spread the Mer's legs, pushing them forward. Fillim hurriedly, dumped the oil onto himself and Vilkas, spilling it everywhere. Pushing two fingers into his ass, trying to ready himself. This was going to be rough.

His ankles were already sore from the grip he had on them, three fingers... Vilkas bore down on him. Letting loose of his legs, he lined himself up, rubbing the head of his cock against that tight little, dark ring of muscle. Wrapping his arms around him, holding on. He slowly, pushed in, Fillim was crying out, his fingers digging into his back. His legs wrapped around Vilkas, the Nord's hands were tangled in his hair. His mouth in his ear, panting... He was all the way in.

His deep voice, growling into his ear. "Wait!... wait..." He couldn't move, it was too much. It'd been too long, the elf was so fucking tight... Gods! he felt he would lose it if he moved at all.

This, at least giving Fillim some time to adjust to his size. The burn was subsiding, but he felt like he was being split apart from the inside, he'd never taken anyone this big.
Slowly, Vilkas rocked his hips, moving in and out just slightly. Fillim's head was pushed back into the pillow, mouth open, his eyes squeezed shut. He was trying so hard to be quiet, breathing through it. He didn't want everyone in Jorvaskr to know they were fucking.

Keeping his face buried in all that red hair, building up to good pace. Each downward thrust giving off a loud slapping noise, as his skin connected with the Mer's. Fillim had evidently given up on trying to be quiet, he was moaning and crying out with each thrust. Just hearing him sound like that, was driving him crazy. He wanted to brutalize that mouth of his. He wanted to bite him, chew on him. But he didn't dare even look at him, for fear of losing it.

Growling into his ear, grinding hard into each thrust. The Mer's cock being slammed into his stomach, he could feel the blood running down his sides from where Fillim's nails dug in. Moving his hands out of his hair, grabbing onto his hips. He dug his fingers in, holding him there as he shot off inside of him.

Kissing the Mer's ear, out of breath, he could feel thick wetness between them. Fillim had cum and he hadn't even known it, slowly, he eased out. The Mer sucking in air between his teeth, "Are you alright?" He just nodded. Inspecting his bottom as he moved, there was a hint of blood, not too much. He would have to be more careful next time. He'd been so wrapped up in him, he'd lost control.

Laying on his back, giving himself a minute to come down. He grabbed the bottle off the nightstand. Fillim turned to his side, snuggling closer to him. Within minutes he was asleep.

Putting an arm around the Mer, Vilkas lay there, watching him as he slept. The only thing he could think about, was the fact that his brother would be back tomorrow.

The fact that he wouldn't be all his.
Chapter Summary

Fillim sensing his closeness moved closer to the door, keeping his back to him. "Well, maybe YOU should get used to NOT having everything YOUR WAY!"

Taking another step towards the door, "You don't just get to tell me NOT to be mad at you and have it work!"

Taking another step. "If you don't give me some clothes so I can cover up, I will walk out of here naked Vilkas! I swear I will!"

Chapter Notes

Vilkas is a bit of a prick here, he doesn't really mean to be. (I still love him)

**also important, when I say (act) regarding Vilkas, I mean deliberate action, not faking it.

**********

Smelling food, he stirred in the bed. He hadn't remembered anything after the sex was over. Rolling over, laying on his back. Trying to stretch, wincing from the pain. His whole body hurt, remembering things now, maybe he needed to look in a mirror. He was almost afraid to.

Fillim's ass was killing him, he needed to heal himself. Under the furs, trying to be as inconspicuous as possible. His legs spread, he lightly ran his hand over his aching hole. It would help him get through the day at least.

"Time to get up sleepyhead." He sat at the small table in the corner of his room, a tray lay on the table loaded with food and what smelled like tea.

Vilkas was watching him.

As soon as they'd made eye contact, the Mer looked away. He was doing something under the covers, evidently trying to hide something from him.

Vilkas stood and walked to the bed, Fillim instantly stopped doing what he'd been doing. Looking at him demurely, "What?"

Not yet in his armor for the day, he climbed onto the bed with the Mer, laying down next to him. Fillim brought his hands above the furs, his fingers fidgeting with each other nervously. "So... What is it, you don't want me to see?"

"Nothing." Turning his face away, his cheeks burning. Putting a hand to the side of his face, pushing it back towards his. He looked into Fillim's warm eyes, "When will you be done with this
shy act, Fillim."

Now he was pissed, and a little hurt. Knocking the hand away from his face, glaring at the Nord. "It's not an act! Can't I have a moment to heal my ass in private!"

Bringing both hands up to Vilkas' chest, he pushed. He was mad, he didn't want him this close right now.

Mistake.

His face pulling into a grimace, sucking in air through his teeth from the pain. Instantly pulling his weak arm close. Fuck! Would this ever get better.

Vilkas put his hands up, but kept them off of him. "I'm sorry, I didn't realize... I didn't mean..." Blowing out a breath, "Fillim, I'm sorry. Are you alright? Will you be alright, I mean?"

Just looking closer at him in the light, he could see bruises. Around his lips and jaw. Gently, taking his hand back to Fillim's face. The Mer just lay there, silent. A pouting look on his face. He looked so young, he'd helped him shave the day before. The Mer was right handed and hadn't had the strength yet to shave without cutting himself.

Of course, his brother wanted him to grow it out. Fillim had obliged, but having no experience in keeping a beard groomed, it had gotten out of control. So, he'd given in, when Vilkas wanted to shave him. He'd always been clean shaven before anyway. Vilkas had been satisfied, of course he had. He was getting his way. Saying, 'Farkas would just have to get used to it.'

Amongst other things.

He could see now, the complication arising from this three-way relationship. Vilkas was steadily trying to move things in the direction he wanted them in, taking control. Farkas, being easy going, was going to get less and less, if he didn't do something about it. He himself, didn't want to be used as a pawn. He didn't want Farkas hurt.

As much as he wanted Vilkas, as attracted as he was to him. He had grown more attached to his brother, spent more time with him. Farkas cared about how he felt, he didn't just act, pushing and controlling like Vilkas. Right now, he felt like his relationship with Vilkas was based solely on attraction, desire and demand. Vilkas knew what he wanted and he demanded it, pushed it, controlled it. He gave, but it was still in a dominating manner.

If this was going to work, they were going to have to work on that. He definitely had his work cut out for him. In the mean time, he'd have to let Vilkas know he couldn't just push him around. He had feelings, wants and thoughts of his own. And right now, his feelings were hurt, his body was hurt, and he wanted some fucking privacy to deal with it.

"I'm fine!" Pulling away, he turned and sat on the edge of the bed. Vilkas sat up, looking him over. From the backside, he could already see what looked like dark purple hand prints, around his hips... darkening, where he'd dug his fingers in. His stomach was knotting up, he'd evidently been rougher than he'd realized. His wolf had taken a bit of control.

Getting up, he walked around the bed. He wanted to see the front of him, the rest of him.

As soon as Vilkas came around the bed, Fillim was up. Wincing as he walked, he crossed the room, completely naked. Facing the door with his arms crossed, head raised defiantly. Vilkas looked at his back in shock, trying to figure out where all the attitude was coming from.
Fillim cleared his throat, "May I have some clothes please..."

It was almost comical, he was giving attitude, unbelievable. He had half a mind to say no, if he was naked, he had to stay in here with him. Giving them an opportunity to work out this problem, whatever the problem was. Blast if he knew. He thought he'd be able to escape this temperamental bullshit with a male. Evidently not.

Walking over to him slowly, "I will give you clothes, but I want to see you first Fillim! I want to see that you're okay."

He stiffened. "I'm fine! You don't need to see me!... I don't want you to see me! Or don't I have a say in anything!"

Softening his voice, he could tell the Mer was angry, that's not what he wanted. Regardless as to why. "Why can't I see you..."

Fillim's voice cracked. Damn his eyes, why couldn't he get angry without blubbering like an idiot. Trying to put as much force into his treacherous voice as possible, "Because I'm mad at you, Vilkas!"

He let out a deep sigh, coming closer. "Well... maybe, I don't want you to be mad at me."

Fillim sensing his closeness moved closer to the door, keeping his back to him. "Well, maybe YOU, should get used to NOT having everything, YOUR WAY!"

Taking another step towards the door, "You don't just get to tell me NOT, to be mad at you and have it work!"

Taking another step. "If you don't give me some clothes, so I can cover up, I will walk out of here naked Vilkas! I swear I will!"

Vilkas came up from behind him, he bolted for the door, just getting his hand around the knob. Vilkas grabbed him around the waist, he turned him and latched onto his wrists. Fillim screamed!

Vilkas, holding his wrists, walked him backwards, into the wall. Stopping as soon as his back touched it, he let loose of his wrists and closed his body in around him. He was going nowhere.

Fillim turned his head to face away from him, he was crying. Tears hitting his bare flesh, his mouth quivering. "You have NO right!" His body shaking... his words were coming out in a jittery mess.

"You have no right to do this! You can't just make me do whatever you want! Fa... Farkas would never do this to me!"

Vilkas' face instantly turned red with anger. Clenching his teeth, he backed away, but put his hand against the door. The Mer was going no where like this. "Fine! But you're not making an ass of yourself, walking out of here naked!"

Fillim walked to the bed, sitting on the edge, he covered himself in furs. Hanging his head, so his hair would surround his face, shielding him from Vilkas' view. Tears, landing on the furs. Hiding in his hair was a habit he'd had since he was young. It had also had numerous different effects on Anariil, whenever he dared to do it. Right now, he didn't want to see Vilkas and he didn't want Vilkas to see him.

It took everything he had, not to just break down and bawl. He wanted Farkas...
Fighting to get control of himself, just thinking over what had just happened, he was getting angry again. The hitching in his chest calmed. He listened, waiting to see what Vilkas was going to do.

Vilkas stood there for a moment, looking at the Mer, trying to get his temper under control. Finally, he stalked over to the wardrobe, pulling out an outfit. Tossing the clothes on the bed, he stood there... watching. Fillim didn't move, he just sat there.

After a few minutes, "Aren't you going to turn around?"

Vilkas crossed his arms, "NO! I'm not! When do you plan to stop this childish behavior!"

"When YOU stop being a PRICK!" Holding the furs tighter around him.

Vilkas started laughing, it seemed so stupid, all of it. "Well... you're going to have a bit of a wait, then." He was laughing even harder.

Fillim just let out a deep breath, "So will you, I guess." He didn't find it funny, not at all.

Realizing that he was probably, just making the situation worse, he stopped laughing and walked to the bed, sitting beside him. His hands resting on the edge, looking down at the floor. "Fillim, I haven't ever been, in a real relationship. I've had partners. Some men... some women. None for nothing more, than mutual sex. I've never wanted a relationship, until now."

Letting out a sigh, he wasn't used to sharing his feelings... his brother, was the better at that. And he'd seen where it had gotten him, on several occasions. And, he'd never felt the need, to be on the receiving end, of that kind of pain.

He knew he needed to fix this, even if it meant swallowing his pride. "I tend to be aggressive, that is my way. That doesn't ever mean, that I intend to hurt you. I have to learn this, being with someone... it doesn't just come natural to me. " He turned on the bed, facing the Mer. Trying to see through the veil of red hair he was hiding behind.

"I can't tell you that my nature will change, it won't. But I can tell you, that I will try, to get better at this... if you can have patience with me."

Leaving the bed, he got onto his knees, in front of the Mer. Leaning into Fillim's knees, resting his hands on either side of his bottom. He looked up under his hair, at his face. "Do we have a deal?"

Fillim spread his legs a little, allowing Vilkas to settle in closer to him. He nodded, he knew Vilkas was just trying to make it better... at least, he was trying. Wrapping his arms around the Nord's neck, Vilkas pulled him closer, holding him.

Putting his mouth against Fillim's hair, "I'm sorry... can I please see where you are hurting, Fillim. I'm just concerned for you."

"Okay." He pulled away, enough to move his hair out of his face, giving Vilkas a quick kiss on the cheek. And stood up.

Vilkas backed away, enough to look at him. When he could fully see the extent of the damage, he about groaned. There was a full hand print around each ankle, so dark it almost looked black. His thighs and lower abdomen were covered in bruises and his hips bore a hand print, on each side. That didn't even cover, what was around his neck. Bruised bite marks, not enough to break the skin, but enough to show what they were. And numerous reddish, purple suck marks.

He looked like he'd been in a fight... attacked.
That was exactly what had happened, Vilkas had lost control...
Rules & The Truth

Chapter Summary

"Then let's sit back down, because that brings me to the second part of this conversation." Vilkas just let out a sigh, "Alright." They walked back to the table.

He was looking right into his eyes, he was starting to get nervous... wondering if he really wanted to hear this part. "Vilkas, I realize that you and Farkas both want to be with me. And I want to be with both of you... but, I can't feel like I'm someone's property anymore."

*********

Vilkas had apologized, over and over. And he told him it was okay, over and over. But, now... he wanted some space. He needed some space. He hadn't been ready to be with Vilkas like this, not to this extent. He'd gotten used to Farkas over days, he'd gotten attached to him. Farkas was different.

Then to get pushed to his brother, when he didn't even know him... when he'd been so apprehensive. What had scared him about Vilkas, also excited him. But, after the sex was over... he didn't really want to be ruled over. The time he'd spent with Farkas had shown him he could have a mutual, loving relationship. That's what he wanted.

If he'd gotten a chance to get to know Vilkas ahead of time, maybe he would've been more prepared. Maybe he would've felt like he had more of a choice in the matter, felt is really the key word there. Because, as it was... he didn't seem to have one.

When Farkas had first told him his brother was interested, he'd been terrified. Terrified, because he knew the draw Vilkas held for him, was the same thing he was trying to heal from... become whole from. It also meant that his chance of having a normal, loving relationship for the first time, was dwindling.

He couldn't count his relationship with Tarenen as normal. The only time they got was hurried, secretive, and sexual. Even though it was loving, it wasn't by any means a normal relationship.

It was evident to him now, what had happened from the start. Vilkas, regardless of the fact, that he knew Farkas wanted him, had forced his own interest in Fillim over his brother's. As soon as Farkas realized Vilkas wanted him as well, knowing he would have a fight on his hands, he caved. He wanted him, but because of the love he had for his brother, would be willing to share his potential mate. Instead of fighting with him.

Fillim wanted to get to know him, he needed to get to know him. Develop feelings for him, the way he had for his brother.

He knew they were different, that was fine. That was good. But the way things were, he felt like he was settling into something too similar to what he'd left. At least the part where he was property and didn't have a choice or a voice.

If this was going to be the situation, things had to be handled differently. Everything that had just
happened, proved it.

He needed to talk to him about it. He needed to talk to them both about it, but he would start with Vilkas first. When Farkas returned, he would talk to him privately. In his entire life, he'd never had a say in anything, that had ever happened to him... he would start having a say, right now.

He got dressed, drank a healing potion and they had sat down to eat.

Staring into the cup of tea in his hands, "Vilkas I... I need to talk to you." He looked up at the Nord, he hadn't said a word since they'd sat to eat. There had been nothing but uncomfortable silence.

"I need to talk about this and I'd like you to let me finish, before you say anything."

Vilkas looked worried, that's not what Fillim wanted either. Hopefully when he was done, everything would get better.

"When I first arrived here, you told me that you knew, there was more to the marks on my back, than I let on." Vilkas nodded, this wasn't what he thought the talk would be about, but now that he was ready to open up... He listened.

"I was sixteen when I was given to Anariil. The second night I was there..." He wasn't sure how this was going to go over... there was no sense in worrying over it. Best, just to get it over and done with.

"The second night I was there, he came to my room and... and he was intimate with me." He could literally feel Vilkas stiffen from across the table, he was afraid to look. So he didn't.

"Now, he didn't hurt me, but... had I had a choice, I would've never been with him. I wouldn't have initiated contact. I say that, Vilkas... because, he'd acted like he hated me from the time I was born. When he came to me, I was afraid. I would have never thought he would have those desires for me, or would want to touch me. He always treated me like trash, so needless to say I was confused." He took a sip of his now, cold tea. It didn't matter. It was something to do with his hands and something to get the sour taste from his mouth.

He ventured a look at Vilkas, he could tell he was furious, but he stayed silent. Fillim, was more worried over what he would think of him once he finished.

"This continued almost nightly for two years. When the civil war started here, he was called away for longer periods of time for his duties. That was when his son and I became close. We were the same age and... at first, it was just friendship. But over time it turned into something more." He got up, walking over to the dresser, grabbed the bottle of wine from the night before and poured a glass. Vilkas just watched him, as he downed it.

Pouring another, he walked and talked, sipping his wine. "For almost a year, we kept our relationship a secret. Knowing Anariil's penalty would be horrendous if we were discovered. I would sneak to the main house and spend time with him while Anariil was away. When Anariil was home... he would visit me at the servants quarters."

Vilkas finally spoke, "Did his son know? About you and his father?" Fillim noticed he now had a bottle of mead.

"No. Anariil kept it from them the entire time." Vilkas looked confused... "Them... you mean, he had a wife and he was sleeping with you?" Fillim just nodded his head.

"Not all, but some of the upper classes still marry just for heirs... for bloodline, for show. It's what's
expected. Not all, but some. Many of them have good marriages, love their wives. Any same sex marriages are usually among the younger Altmer, even though many of the older generations, indulge in these types of relationships... most keep it private. Fear of social repercussions.

Fillim had definitely noticed, that neither Vilkas nor Farkas, seemed to care who knew of their relationship, with him. That, at least made him feel better about things. At least social acceptance, wouldn't be such a weight on his shoulders here.

"His son... Tarenen, told me they hadn't shared a room in years. He said he knew his father had lovers, he knew they were all men. He told me he'd caught him once, Anariil didn't know. Tarenen kept it secret."

"Evidently, Anariil took another Thalmor onto his boat. They were making love and Tarenen came onto the boat looking for his father and saw through a window. He'd gone back to the house, acted like it never happened."

Vilkas stood now, walking closer to Fillim. "So... the relative you mentioned, when you were talking with us all in Kodlak's room, that was his son. He bound his own son..." Vilkas couldn't even imagine someone doing something so horrible, better yet, to their own child. The more he knew, the more he wanted things to work between them... the worse he felt about last night.

Fillim downed the rest of his wine, "And forced him to watch... after I'd been whipped, he was forced to join the Thalmor." Leaning against the dresser, he set the empty glass down. Raising his hands to rub his forehead, Vilkas walked to him. Standing in front of him, he pulled him closer, holding him. Fillim's head, resting on his shoulder. "I'm so sorry, Fillim"

Speaking into Vilkas' tunic. "You don't feel any different about me?"

Vilkas pushed him back, so he could see his face. "Why would I... no, I don't feel any different about you! I still want you!"

"Then lets sit back down, because that brings me to the second part, of this conversation."

Vilkas just let out a sigh, "Alright." They walked back to the table.

He was looking right into his eyes, he was starting to get nervous... wondering if he really wanted to hear this part.

"Vilkas, I realize that you and Farkas both want to be with me. And I want to be with both of you... but, I can't feel like I'm someone's property anymore."

Vilkas was immediately offended. Moving closer across the table, "We don't... I don't think..."

Fillim held up his hand, cutting him off. "I didn't say that, I don't think either of you do. But this arrangement, makes me feel like it. Now, last night... Vilkas, I wanted you. I did. I didn't necessarily want it to be as rough as it was, but I did want to be with you." Vilkas just looked down, folding his hands.

"First, I got to spend more time with Farkas. He saved me, brought me here. Vilkas, I have... I have feelings for him." He could see the look of hurt cross over the Nord's face. Fillim reached out, taking his hand.

Vilkas understood, he did. Farkas had gotten to spend more time with him. He'd been jealous of it. That, probably being the main reason he'd rushed things.
"Vilkas, I want to have those feelings for you. But we have to take time, we have to get to know each other. Can we... can we do that?"

"Don't you think I want that?... I want that." His face holding a look of pleading, that was breaking his heart. But he needed to hold his ground, he had to.

"We have to decide things together Vilkas. I can't feel like a puppet, like I'm under someone's control. I understand you're more aggressive, I get that. It's one of the things I like about you, but I don't want to be controlled all the time."

Vilkas was silent, but he nodded. He would work on whatever the Mer wanted, as long as he didn't lose him. He wasn't used to feeling this way, and it was scaring the hell out of him. Before, he hadn't cared how often he saw someone, it was just sex. This, all of it, seemed foreign.

"And things have to be equal! Things have to be fair! When Farkas gets back, I want the three of us to sit down and talk this over. And, I will have a say in everything, that applies to this relationship... everything."

Yeah... that, he wasn't so sure how well that one would work. But, it was worth a try. He also knew, that there would still be friction. He wanted things to get better between them and he wanted things to be as amicable as possible. This would be a lot easier with his brother... he could feel it.

Fillim stood up, "Now, I'm tired of not working. I'm going to go see Tilma and see what she has for me to do."

Vilkas got up, he looked unsure of what to do. He was still trying to process everything that had just been said.

Fillim stepped closer, wrapping his arms around him. "Can I have a kiss?"

Vilkas pulled him in closer, "Always..."
Welcome Home

Chapter Summary

Farkas backed away, his face a constant fluctuation of hurt and anger, disbelief... back to anger, no... rage!

"What!... What did he do to you!"

Fillim just shook his head, "He... He didn't mean to Farkas! He... he was sorry. Please!" Tears were threatening all ready. Farkas started for the door, Fillim dodged him, stepping in front of it. He held his arms out, "I won't have any fighting!"

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It was actually great to get back to work again. He couldn't stand just sitting, it gave way too much time to think. At least now, he felt like he was making some headway with Vilkas. They were getting along better and he actually had hope for their relationship. For the first time ever, he was beginning to feel happy... free.

He loved spending time with Tilma, she was motherly. Or he guessed, grandmotherly, once he realized her age. And she was telling him about the twins... their secret of course. She had helped raise them.

This was getting more and more interesting by the minute, learning about their relationship.

They were close in the extreme, she figured it was due to being twins. He'd heard of that, twins having a strange closeness, almost psychic. She'd said that there had been several times when they were little, one would feel the other's pain. One would get hurt and the other would experience it, even from a distance.

But with this closeness came rivalry and competition. They were boys after all and the fact that Farkas was the larger, unnerved Vilkas to the extreme. This seemed to only increase as they aged, knowing he was the more intelligent of the two, Vilkas would figure out ways to dupe his sensitive brother into things that he knew would get him into trouble.

Finally after the adults realized what was happening, Kodlak had a sit down with Vilkas and Skjor had one with Farkas. Kodlak of course, talking about maturity and wisdom. Skjor on the other hand, told Farkas to fight fire with fire.

He loved both the boys, having been a father figure to them both as well. But he was tired of seeing Farkas with his feelings hurt, coming up with the short end of the stick. Because of his love for his brother and his sensitive nature, he would always give Vilkas the benefit of the doubt... and end up getting screwed.

This had to stop. Farkas' only weapon was his size and strength. The next time Vilkas got shitty about his lack of wits, he needed to challenge him in something he knew he'd lose at. Having his ass handed to him a few times, was all it had taken. Eventually, Vilkas let it go. His pride couldn't handle him being bested, especially in front of anyone else.
Today, with no armor to clean, no repairs needing done. He would be helping her in the kitchen, cleaning and preparing food. On a normal basis, he would be cleaning armor, weapons, doing any repairs that needed done and running things back and forth to Eorlund.

If he had a lack of those things to do, he'd be helping empty chamber pots and cleaning and cooking. He didn't mind, anything he did here was easier than what he'd done growing up. But even then, every chance he got, he was in the kitchen.

He loved being in that atmosphere and because of it, he'd catch crap. He'd get called names, picked on by the other servant boys at his father's home for his love of cooking and the like. He didn't care what they thought, he still loved it.

He didn't see it as a female's work... It was simply work. He'd rather know how to do everything, than just a few things. It made him more of an asset. At least that's the excuse he'd given, to the ones that had given him grief over it growing up, it was true... but he still loved it. He'd never heard a single complaint from any of his bullies over his cooking. Everyone fighting for seconds and thirds.

Besides, he'd been raised by females. This made him feel even more at home. He could see a relationship forming with her already.

They cleaned the kitchen and then set to preparing roasted beef and soup. He was setting some loaves in the oven, while she cut vegetables.

"This thing that's happening between the three of you... it's got Skjor and Kodlak concerned some." He turned to her, listening.

"Nobody wants to see any of you hurt, but... we especially don't want to see Farkas hurt. That might sound one sided, I don't mean it to be. I care about both the boys like they were my own. But, he's been hurt several times, real bad. He's so giving and loving... and gullible. There have been several women that he got real attached to, none of them from here, thank the Gods. But, he lost a lot, money too. "

"Tilma, I would never... I really care about Farkas. He's the best thing that's ever happened to me." He moved next to her, cutting vegetables along side of her now.

"I care about Vilkas too, but it's different. They are so different. At first I could see Vilkas trying to control the situation. Not really trying to move his brother completely out, but... he wanted the same thing, just like he forced his way in. He didn't give Farkas an option."

He stopped cutting, looking at her. "What I couldn't believe was the fact that Farkas, rather than have an altercation with Vilkas, simply gave in."

She knew of the wolf blood, of the circle. Of course, she couldn't divulge anything to him. There had always been a struggle over Alpha position. Them being men instead of animal, meant they had to go about things a little differently, needless to say, it complicated things. Kodlak, of course held the top position, but when it came to other things... well, they were seeing a bit of that, right here with this.

She would skirt around it, "Well, that's probably because nothin like this has ever happened to them. They've never been interested in the same person before. Maybe he figured he'd see where it all went, if the three of you could work it out, then no one had to lose."

Going over to the massive cooking pot, dumping the vegetables in. "You know, that boy... Farkas,
he's not as simple as they would think. He's got a depth to him... an insight of the like I've never seen. He may not have the hard edge to him that Vilkas does, or the book smarts, but... I'll tell you somethin, the night he carried you in here. He looked over you like a mother hen, I've never seen him so taken by anyone. He told Kodlak there was somethin special about you. He said he just knew... he could feel it."

*********

Farkas could smell dinner as soon as he walked in. Dropping off his gear in his room, he headed to the kitchen. Stopping just outside the doorway, he could hear Fillim's voice. Tilma talking to him, "Well, I can see you know your way around the kitchen... you can help me cook anytime sweetie."

He peeked around the corner just then, to see Fillim give her a quick kiss on the cheek. He stepped in, "I see how it is... I'm gone for a couple days and your cheatin on me already." Laughing, Tilma reached over to slap his arm.

Fillim's face lit up, he rushed into his arms. Farkas squeezed him, picking him up for a moment. Watching them, all she could do, was smile. "Get out of here you two, dinner will be around an hour or so."

Looking at Farkas, "You need a bath somthin fierce boy. I'll get it ready... go on." She shooed them out.

Walking hand in hand, down the hallway. Fillim heard her leave the kitchen, heading to the bathing room. "Can I sit with you... while you take your bath? I missed you."

Farkas squeezed his hand, he didn't want to be away from him. Now, he was concerned about the meeting between the three of them. That could wait till tomorrow. He wanted an undisturbed night with Farkas, just the two of them.

Farkas was nothing but smiles, winking at him. "I don't care, you can wash my back for me."

Fillim just giggled, he would like that.

Everything was alright... Farkas was home.

Getting into the room, as soon as the door was shut, Farkas pinned him to it. Putting one massive hand around his neck, tilting his head back. He brought their mouths together, his tongue opening Fillim's lips. The hand remaining around his neck, as Farkas had his way with his mouth. He loved it, the feeling of that power, but oh so gentle. His arms wrapped around the Nords neck, Farkas moved from his mouth to his pointed ear. Running his tongue along it, nibbling on it. Fillim squeaked out, "I missed you so much."

Farkas just gave a deep rumble against his ear, backing away to look at him. His eyes heavy, "I missed you too." They needed to get out of here, before he lost his willpower.

"Come on, lets get what we need for that bath." Fillim reaching down to adjust his erection with the heel of his hand.

Farkas leaned in, kissing him again, lightly. "I'll take care of that while we're in there, if ya want." Giving him a sly smile.

Fillim thought he would melt, his cheeks and ears burned. He smiled down at the floor, pushing Farkas toward the wardrobe.

They walked into the bathing room, Farkas locked the door. He didn't want any interruptions.
Dropping his clean stuff on the bench, he looked up. Fillim was undressing, he watched as he pulled at the ties on his own clothes. The Mer was definitely becoming less shy. He wondered if that had to do with his time with Vilkas, while he was away. He forced it out of his mind. He didn't want to think of them together, he wasn't ready.

Looking back up, Fillim was completely nude. And he was black and blue...

Farkas' mouth fell open, he circled around him, looking him up and down. As soon as he saw the look on Farkas' face, he remembered. 'Oh shit!' He instantly brought his hands to his mouth, 'Oh Gods...' It was too late, he was naked, he could see everything. The healing potion had only done so much, he felt better, but it would take awhile for the bruises to go away.

Farkas backed away, his face a constant fluctuation of hurt, anger, disbelief, back to anger, no... rage.

"What!... What did he do to you!"

Fillim just shook his head, "He... He didn't mean to, Farkas! He... he was sorry. Please!" Tears were threatening all ready.

Farkas started for the door, Fillim dodged him, stepping in front of it. He held his arms out, "I won't have any fighting!"

Fillim couldn't take the look on his face, he was yelling now.

"YOU'RE DEFENDING HIM!... YOU'RE DEFENDING THIS! " Holding his hands out, pointing at the bruises.

He turned away, he couldn't look at it. He was going to cry, his voice cracking. "You've got fucking hand prints on you Fillim! Hand prints..."

They hadn't even gone so far as to make love yet. He'd been taking his time, thinking about Fillim. He couldn't take this... he wanted to pound his brother into mush!

"Farkas... he, he really didn't mean to... he was so sorry. We had a long talk, it'll never happen again. He promised."

Farkas moved away, he could hear Fillim putting his breech back on. He bolted for the door, throwing it open, he rushed into the hallway, completely naked. He could hear Fillim screaming behind him, running after him. He didn't care, he could smell where he was.

He was right! This would never happen again!

Pushing through the doors, he charged up the stairs! Instantly, chairs pushed back, gasps escaped mouths. Skjor yelling, "Farkas! What the Fuck!" He looked around the dining room, looking for him. His arms out, hands stretched out into claws. Fillim was clinging to his back, crying, his feet skidding along as he tried to pull him back and failing.

Vilkas knew. He stood and backed away from the table. Skjor looking between them, Farkas eyes going yellow, his face in a snarl, showing his teeth.

'Fuck!' He looked at Aela, motioning to Fillim. "Hold him back! Keep him away!" She nodded, moving behind Farkas, she pried the Mer off, keeping her body in front of his. There was going to be a fight!
Skjor screamed at the whelps to get outside, they all ran for the exits. He was going to have to break this up... if he could. Farkas lunged toward the table, jumping on top of it. His gums bled as his fangs threatened to push out. Fighting to reign it in, he couldn't transform with Fillim there. His eyes a deep yellow, he glared at his brother from the table top. Vilkas had backed away, but now, stood his ground. He knew what would happen as soon as he saw him, he knew he had this coming. No matter how much he'd apologized to the Mer, no matter that he'd accepted his apology.

This was between them... he and his brother.

Jumping down from the table, he was on him! His huge hand closing around his brother's neck! Lifting him off the ground, with all his strength, he slammed his back into the wall. The beams shook, dust flew and settled onto the floor. Skjor was standing as close as he could, waiting to see if it would get to the point where he needed to intervene further. He knew, they needed to settle this. All the members of the circle, knew it would come to this...

Vilkas didn't fight him. Farkas was in his face growling, his voice growing deeper. "IF YOU EVER TOUCH HIM LIKE THAT AGAIN... I WILL RIP YOU APART!"

They looked into each other's eyes for a moment. Then, as fast as it had started, it was over. He dropped him and backed off, his ebony hair flying as he shook his head, letting out a huff of air. He'd made his point, he turned and walked over to Fillim. He hadn't seen much with Aela shielding him, but he'd heard.

He picked Fillim up, cradling him and walked downstairs.

Vilkas straightened his clothing and sat back down, as if nothing had happened. He wasn't going to make a scene and further the situation. They would work it out.

Skjor called everyone in from out back. Aela took her seat next to him, her hands clasped in front of her mouth, in attempt to hide her smile. He nudged her with his elbow and cleared his throat.

**********

Without saying a word, Farkas carried him to the bathing room.

He was his! No one... No one, would ever treat him that way again!
Kissing him again, he spoke against his mouth. "I'm not going to break Farkas, you can touch me."

Looking into each other's eyes, "I don't believe you..." he whispered. "He broke you..."
His chest rose and fell rapidly, more tears fell.

The door to the bathing room was still open. Carrying him, he'd needed those few minutes to calm himself. He walked in, pushing backwards to close the door. He wouldn't lock it. If Fillim wanted to leave, it would be his choice. He wouldn't force anything on him, ever again.

Forcing this three way relationship had been wrong, he knew that now. Seeing the bruises that covered him. He should have listened when Fillim told him he was afraid. But no, he was too worried over his brother's feelings. His brother's feelings over his own... over Fillim's.

Looking at him, this was the proof that he'd made the wrong choice. Again!

Setting him down, he just stood there, looking at him. His heart was so heavy, he had done wrong by this Mer he had sworn to protect. As soon as he tried to talk, hot tears flooded his eyes, falling down his face. "Fillim..."

He looked down, his voice wavering. "I'm, so sorry... I should've listened to you." Shaking his head.

Fillim just walked into him, wrapping around him. "Don't... okay, just..."

Looking up at Farkas, he was so torn up. He knew what he was thinking. He knew. "Come on, let's get into that nice, hot bath. Relax... okay?"

Farkas just nodded, he was right. It would make them both feel better.

Farkas settled in first, hissing through his teeth. Gods! the water was hot. Tilma must have felt they needed to be cooked. Fillim, got in facing him, straddling him. Sitting on his lap, resting his hands on his chest. They just looked at each other for a moment. He noticed Farkas' hands were hanging onto the edge of the tub.

"You don't want to touch me?"
"I'm afraid to. You're hurt everywhere... I don't want to make it worse." More tears made their way down his face. He was so angry, not just at Vilkas, but at himself. He couldn't stand seeing Fillim this way. Angry at the fact, that not only had Vilkas done what he'd done. But that because of his physical condition, it would greatly reduce anything they could do, now that he was home. If they wanted to do something that is. He had, wanted to do something, now...

Thinking about it pissed him off all over again. Pissed him off to the point of absolute savagery! He hadn't come to blows with his brother since they were teens, but right now... Everything in him wanted to go back upstairs and finish what he started. Beat him bloody.

Looking away, he let out a huff of air. Fillim knew what he was doing. He was working himself up all over again, moving a hand from his chest and putting it to his cheek. Gently, but firmly, turning his head back to face him. He leaned in, kissing his mouth. Farkas' hands gingerly touched his back. He could tell, he was afraid to apply any pressure.

Kissing him again, he spoke against his mouth. "I'm not going to break Farkas, you can touch me."

Looking into each other's eyes, "I don't believe you..." he whispered. "He broke you..." His chest rose and fell rapidly, more tears fell.

"Farkas, please don't. I'm sorry..."

He cut him off, "You're sorry, for what!"

Fillim, sat back, looking at him, sternly. A mix of anger and hurt, "If you let this dominate our time together, then he's got control even when you're here!"

"How can you expect me to just let this go! Look at what he did to you!" Thinking about what he was doing while he made the marks, just about made him cringe! He shook his head, trying to escape the mental image.

"If I hadn't been so weak willed... if I had've just told him no! That you were mine! None of this would've happened!"

"Fillim, I wanted to be the first with you... the only one with you. I wanted it to be right, I wanted us to take our time."

Wiping his tears with his thumbs, he leaned in, hugging him. Farkas, gently wrapped his arms around him, letting out a deep sigh. Fillim nuzzled his ear, whispering. "What you did, wasn't weak willed. You did what you did, because you have a huge, loving," he kissed his ear tenderly, "caring, heart." Kissing his ear again, "And I love you for it."

Fillim moved back to his lips, kissing him. Farkas' eyes heavy, looking at him under long, black lashes.

"Did you hear that..." Closing his eyes, laying his mouth to his, "I love you Farkas." Moving his hands up to hold the Mer's head, trying to hold it together and failing. He held their faces together, tears falling into the bath water... all he could do was breath against his mouth. He couldn't believe... it couldn't be real, he couldn't be real. After everything, "I love you Fillim." His voice was wrecked. Fillim clutched him, his own tears falling. He cried... his whole body jerking with each sob. Finally... finally.

Farkas kissed his lips, watching him cry, holding his face. "I love you, Fillim." Releasing his head, Fillim settled into his shoulder.
Huge arms wrapped around him, being held... loved. He'd never felt so whole, as he did right now. Just being with this man.
Easy... For Now

Chapter Summary

He knew the Mer was close, he wasn't ready for it to end just yet. He stopped and moved his hand away. He pushed Fillim back, so he was sitting straight up. "Rest your hands on my knees, I wanna do something different."

Grabbing the soap, he lathered the cloth up so it was dripping with bubbles. Keeping their cocks together, he wrapped it around both of them. Barely squeezing at all, he started an easy stroke, up and down.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

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Their tears had dried. Still straddling Farkas, his arms wrapped lovingly around his neck. He sat back, looking him in the eyes. Giving him a quick kiss. "Hold onto me, so I can wet my hair." Farkas held his arms, while he bent backwards, dipping into the water. He came back up, steam rising up off of him.

Grabbing a cloth from the side, he dipped it into the water and rubbed all over Farkas' wide chest. Moving forward to bring it behind his neck, Farkas twitched against him. Trying to concentrate on just washing him failing instantly.

All he could concentrate on now, was the fact that their cocks were crushed against each other. And he wanted him, even as sore as he still was, he wanted him. Letting Farkas fuck him wasn't an option, not yet. Not with his size. That would have to be something they worked up to. He definitely wanted that beautiful cock though. It was beautiful, just like him.

Bringing his arms back around his neck, he nuzzled him. Both of their breathing had increased, grazing his lips against his lover's neck, he started a slow rock with his hips. Their cocks sliding together, Farkas let his head fall back, eyes closed, mouth open. Running his hands up and down Fillim's back, sliding them down to his ass.

Keeping one hand softly caressing his wet skin, the other crept between his cheeks. Gently moving back and forth between them, his middle finger gliding over his hole. Fillim whined, throwing back his head, his hair falling almost to his ass.

His eyes cracking open, watching Fillim's face. What he wanted was more hands, a hand to be everywhere that he wanted to touch, right now. Fillim rocked against him faster, he applied more pressure against his hole. He didn't want to penetrate him, he was more than likely sore. But just enough pressure to do the trick. Just enough friction. The faster he went, the more pressure he applied, the louder Fillim got.

He knew the Mer was close, he wasn't ready for it to end just yet. He stopped and moved his hand away. He pushed Fillim back, so he was sitting straight up. "Rest your hands on my knees, I wanna do something different." Grabbing the soap, he lathered the cloth up so it was dripping with
bubbles. Keeping their cocks together, he wrapped it around both of them. Barely squeezing at all, he started an easy stroke, up and down.

Just the friction from the cloth, was almost unbearable. But feeling the hardness of the other cock against his, it was too much. Fillim, moaned out loudly, with each stroke. Each time he'd start to stiffen, Farkas would stop and squeeze lightly, holding them. It was complete torture for him too, but he loved seeing the elf come undone.

He couldn't take it, "Please... please, hurry. I can't wait!" He started thrashing into his hand, rubbing against him. Dropping the cloth, he gripped them with just his hand. Still slick with soap, his large hand sliding over them, squeezing as he got to his head. Fillim's hands digging into his legs, head thrown back, mouth open. He cried out, pulsing into Farkas' hand.

Falling into him, his breathing slowing down. Nuzzling into his neck, his favorite spot. He kissed him and moved his hands between them. Wrapping both hands around the Nord's, he stroked with him. From base to tip, Farkas was so rough with his cock, squeezing so hard. Moving faster, his hips thrusting, moving Fillim completely up and out of the water.

Farkas was completely silent, Fillim was making more noise than he was. Just getting the man off, was breathtaking. The massive body under him tensed, he let go and slid back, bending down, between his legs. Wrapping his mouth around the swollen head, he sucked.

Farkas arched his back and cried out, "FUUUCK!..." Fillim swallowed him down, Farkas hands lightly running over his hair. He sat up, a grimace on his face. Farkas was still trying to catch his breath. "What's the matter?"

Sticking out his tongue, "Soap! Ewww.." Farkas laughed, his body jarring him around, sending ripples through the water.

"Well, next time you cum, it's gonna be in my mouth." He reached over the side of the tub, for the bottle of mead resting on the floor. Handing it to Fillim, to help wash the taste out of his mouth. "I love the way you taste."

He playfully moved his hips up and down, holding onto to Fillim. He drank his fill while riding his Nord. The floor was soaked, Fillim looked around. "Its a good thing our clothes were on the bench. Look at the floor, you're making more work for me." winking at him.

Fillim resting his bottom on the edge of the tub, so Farkas could slip under to get his hair completely wet. Sliding his hands over his ebony hair, water running down his face. "I'll help you. I don't want you to be busy tonight." A thoughtful look coming over his face, sitting up straight, he grabbed him off from the edge. "Is it okay if I hang around with you tomorrow? While you do your work?"

Face to face, their arms wrapped around each other. Fillim resting their foreheads together, "I'd love that, as long as I get to take a bath with you every time..."

"Deal. We're ah... we're gonna eat in my room tonight if you don't mind. I just think it's best we give everyone some time." Fillim just nodded. He was definitely in no hurry to face everyone again, especially after showing his ass off to half of them. More than just his ass to Aela. Not that she cared, but it was the principle. He hadn't been able to get his breech on in time, when Farkas had hit the door. He'd had to drop it and run after him. Farkas hadn't evidently cared what he showed.

Giving him a kiss, he got out to dry off. Giving him the room he needed to bath properly. He
looked forward to a private dinner, some wine... maybe some more lovin. Sounded good.

Chapter End Notes

Bath time is so much fun. :D
The Faithful

Chapter Summary

He needed to shut up, he didn't want to ruin this opportunity! He'd been a bandit before he was approached by them. He was starving, had bounties on his head. They'd paid his debts for him, and now he could afford to stay anywhere he wanted.

He was taken care of, even if he did have to lay down for one of the males here and there, who cared? It was better treatment than he'd ever gotten before. He'd be set for life.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

**********

Ancano had gone to the Inn to write his letter. Anything to get out of that wretched excuse for a room he'd been given at the college.

Of course what did he expect? They knew why he was here, just as well as he did. He would've been shocked to receive proper treatment, although it would have been appreciated. He laughed out loud at his own thought, drawing the attention of the resident Altmer by the fire.

After first arriving, he'd joined in good conversation with the Mer, then he'd let things dwindle down so he could pull away. He had turned around on the bench he sat at and settled down to wait for the Thalmor courier. They had their own, he wouldn't trust just any Nord with their information. Of course he didn't look like a Thalmor, he wasn't even Mer. They had numerous operatives among Skyrim's own people. There were many willing to sellout their own, for the right amount of coin. They even had a guard or two in every decent sized city.

Stormcloak and Imperial alike.

This courier was Nord, but he was trusted. He would gather information from each of their operatives from every city he visited and pass it along, until it reached the higher ups. It had proven quite useful, having eyes and ears in every corner of this land, even among the officers of both sides. Skyrim's own people, having no idea who they were really giving their information to.

His courier walked in, stomping the snow off his boots. He would act at first, like he didn't know him. He walked to the bar and ordered a drink. Ancano paid little mind, rolling the pad of his index finger over the rim of his goblet. Nelacar finally got up and walked into his room, 'Good... one less witness to worry over.'

Ancano moved his legs over the bench and faced the fire. Balancing his wine on his thigh, he stretched his long legs out in front of him and crossed them at the ankles. Completely relaxed. The Nord wandered over to the fire, taking the seat closest to him, they would pretend to strike up a conversation.

He'd gotten word from one of the guards here, that the courier had some useful information on the
half-breed and the Dragonborn to boot. Two birds with one stone. Even though the Dragonborn had been an Imperial sympathizer thus far, it still didn't hurt to have him watched.

Right now Riverwood was a hot spot, the Blade member they'd been waiting to find for so long had been under their noses the whole time. He wouldn't worry over that though, he had his own fish to fry. And right now, helping Anariil in his little endeavor was keeping him entertained.

After a few minutes and probably realizing he would hear nothing useful, the barkeep/owner, had gone down to their living space.

The Nord leaned closer, "Your half-breed made it to Whiterun, he's in the company of the Companions... in fact, two of them. Word is, he's sleeping with two of the members that are part of the Circle. Brothers..." They both took a drink, the Nord eyeing the cellar stairs and Nelacar's doorway. A smile coming to his full lips, his blue eyes wrinkling up at the corners.

Ancano watched him curiously. He was quite attractive for a Nord, and thus far he'd been open to another male's affections. And just from watching him speak, watching his expressions, he truly seemed to enjoy his work. He would make sure he got extra. A lot extra...

This would definitely help the time pass.

Leaning even closer to the Thalmor, "They've let him stay, not as a member mind you, but he works for them. One of the informants said that's never happened before, got a lot of info from one of the whelp's. She's evidently jealous, liked one of the brothers that he's fucking. She said he's being shared between them and that it looks serious."

He chuckled in a low voice, watching Ancano, as he rubbed his knee lightly against the Mer's stretched out thigh. "He's a bit of a whore, isn't he? Makes me wonder why you didn't just keep him."

Ancano sat up slightly, reaching out an arm, he wrapped his long fingers around the Nord's throat! Not squeezing enough to hurt, but just enough to show he meant business.

Ancano's eyes narrowed, his voice low and menacing. "You're not being paid to wonder, besides... the half-breed doesn't belong to me, and I have you. Don't I!" The Nord swallowed under his grip, attempting to nod his head.

Ancano stood and the Nord followed his move, leaning down into the blonde's face, lightly rubbing his lips against the man's. He enjoyed the feel of his beard... the way he blushed, every time intimate contact was made. Speaking low to him, "You've done well, get a room... a meal and
get comfortable. I'll sit out here to write and then I will join you once I know we won't be noticed."

The Nord immediately went to the bar, hitting the bell on the wall, for the owner to meet his needs.

He sat back down and prepared to write. Anariil would be interested to know this. It would just fuel the fire already raging in him. He understood the length of Anariil's desire to hurt him, especially after he'd betrayed him so. Taking his son's innocence, then lying to him for an entire year, sleeping with them both. If it had been him, the half-breed would be dead. End of problem.

He had yet to find a piece of ass that was worth a fraction of the trouble his superior was going through. He couldn't believe Anariil actually loved him, as far as he was concerned, that had been his first mistake. But he was willing to do anything to help, not only an old friend and since he still hadn't retired, a superior, in something as personal as this.

He looked over his shoulder, the Nord had gone into the room and the owner was now serving his food. After a few minutes, he would hopefully go back down below, or Ancano would cast an invisibility spell when his back was turned and join him.

Just being here a short time, he'd only been with this man once. It had been quite pleasurable, finding a Nord that liked a dominating touch. That didn't happen too often. These new recruits of theirs were proving to be quite invaluable. The more desperate the situation they were in when they joined, the more appreciative they were to their masters. Willing to do most anything...

Rulindil's pet Gissur, had been a delight after almost a fortnight on the ocean. He and Rulindil went way back, friends since childhood.

He'd always been one to share his toys.

***********

Inking the quill, he set it to the piece of parchment to write.

Anariil,

I've just received word that Fillim reached Whiterun safely. He is already in a relationship with not one, but two Nords... brothers. Members of the Mer killing Companions. Just like our Nord Dragon hero of old. Who seems to have just joined the faction as well.

From what I am told, they have taken him on and he will be staying with the two men permanently. They don't seem to mind sharing a partner, these barbarians will never cease to amaze me.

He moves fast, and doesn't seem to mind spreading his little cheeks, for anyone that will offer him aid. I firmly believe what you are doing is right in what you have suffered. I will be waiting for further instructions and will help you in any way possible.

~Your ever faithful Comrade ~

Ancano

***********
The owner was nowhere in sight, and evidently Nelacar had also retired for the evening. He folded up the letter and sealed it. Not even needing the spell now that all witnesses were gone, he quietly opened the door to the Nord's room.

The blonde was just how he wanted him, spread out, naked on the bed. Long hair undone, falling over his shoulders to meet the honey colored curls that graced his muscled chest, his blue eyes roaming over Ancano's form.

A wicked smile graced his lips as he closed the door.

Chapter End Notes

I don't believe the rooms at the Inn had doors, they do in this story. How ludicrous... no doors. I feel the need to clarify, I thought this should be obvious, but just in case it isn't. The whelp that's blabbing isn't aware she is telling this info to a traitor, she thinks it's a trusted individual. So she's feeling it's okay to vent.

**I also love Ancano {sexy as hell}, but I have just got to take advantage of his evil, underhanded nature. And after reading this, you may want to re-read chpt 5 & 6... with the understanding that Ancano knows so much more than Fillim is aware of. He wants to hear it from his mouth! {diabolical laughter} :}
Njada Stonearm stood there, glaring daggers at him. "So! you leave one room and just go to the next! Is that how this little arrangement works!"

He disgusted her, everyone had heard Vilkas fucking him! Ria had been so upset, she'd left and gone to the Inn. Now they were fighting! Over him! They'd never fought like that, not until he showed up.

A little of a shorty, next one will be longer.

**********

Letting him sleep, he'd gotten up and dressed quietly. He downed another potion and bent over to kiss the snoring bear on the forehead. Farkas had wanted to spend the entire day with him, but he knew he'd be able to get done faster alone. Besides, they'd been up most of the night, the Nord needed his rest. He closed the door quietly behind him.

He would get his work done and then they'd have the rest of the day to do whatever. He couldn't get the smile off his face, he didn't think anything would, he was in the best mood ever. He'd never felt this close to anyone before, he was so in love.

Eating by firelight, drinking mead, his new favorite, talking and laughing. Then they'd just laid together and talked, kissing and holding each other. Falling asleep in each other's arms...

Of course, Farkas was still worried over the condition of his body, so they were limited to what they could do. But his bruises were fading fast, he'd ran a healing spell over the worst of them, trying to speed things up a bit. But it was nice to just be with him, to not feel like they had to do anything. It had been wonderful.

They would be heating up yesterday's leftovers, and the kitchen was clean. Now he knew the point of the huge meal yesterday, he would help her make one huge meal a week, the day after that was wash day. The kitchen was tidy and no food needed to be prepared. She did the wash, hanging it on lines outside, along the side of the building no one really used. He would sit with her later to do any mending that needed to be done.

Being that everyone was used to her wash methods, she planned to keep up on that particular chore. He understood, he was new and didn't know everyone's like and dislikes yet. For right now, he would be handling the more maintenance type chores and helping her cook.

Today, he was going room to room, collecting armor that may need cleaning or repair, along with
any weapons that may need repair or sharpening. He could clean the armor, but would have to make a visit to the smith for anything else.

He had mixed feelings about that, Eorlund had such a stern look about him. He had loved to smith back in the Isles, he missed it. He was truly hoping that one of the smiths here would need some help. Then he could maybe earn his own way, he could still help Tilma. He liked helping her. Maybe he could work so many hours a day with a smith, then help her do certain things. Hopefully... Thinking about it, he let out a soft sigh.

Tilma said Kodlak rarely needed for anything, she would tend to him. He was used to her and her ways, that was fine with him. One less space to worry over.

He was thankful for his good mood, it helped settle the nervousness of having to enter someone's living space, that he really didn't know. Especially after yesterdays little scene.

If someone's door was closed, he would simply come back later, it was still early and he didn't want to wake anyone.

Taking a deep breath, he knew he had to get this over with. The closest room was Vilkas', he headed to it.

Putting his head to the door, if he heard snoring he would turn around.

Farkas snored something awful, he could only assume that maybe his brother did too? It didn't really bother him, in fact, it almost lulled him to sleep. Like last night, laying curled up to Farkas, his rumbling snores had sent vibrations through his whole body. He loved sleeping with him.

He hadn't remembered much of his night with Vilkas, he had passed out right after they'd finished. He wanted to try and smooth things over, he didn't want Vilkas to be upset. Even though his feelings were stronger for Farkas, he wanted Vilkas to be happy too. He knew they could work it out.

Nothing but silence, he swallowed and knocked.

"He's not in there!" A loud grating voice boomed from behind him, making him scream out in shock. He quickly covered his mouth and turned, his back pressing into Vilkas' door.

NJada Stonearm stood there, glaring daggers at him. "So! you leave one room and just go to the next! Is that how this little arrangement works!" She was looking at him, as if he was something she'd just scraped off her boot heel.

He disgusted her, everyone had heard Vilkas fucking him! Ria had been so upset she'd left and gone to the Inn. Now they were fighting! Over him! They'd never fought like that, not until he showed up. She didn't see the draw, what did they see in this skinny, little runt! Especially these two, when they could have any woman they wanted!

He pressed farther into the door, as she advanced a step. She continued, and got louder. "I asked you a question! What's the matter! Tongue too tired to talk... I'm surprised you can walk after takin that on!" She gestured toward Farkas' door, and stepped even closer.

He'd had enough! His face was in a snarl, showing his white pointed teeth... without even realizing it, sparks had started to flutter around his open palms.
She noticed though, and stepped closer. Getting right into his face, her fists clenching. She knew she didn't dare touch him, then she'd have to face both the twins. She'd let him make the first move.

She lowered her voice. "Go ahead you little pussy! Go ahead, I'm a Companion, they'll have your head on pike so fast, I won't even have to lift a finger!"

Lightning flowed freely off his hands now, crackling off the wood behind him. Smoke was wafting off the door.

"You won't be happy, till they're killing each other over you, will ya!"

She moved back as if inspecting him, hands on her hips. "Pathetic! Women would line up for a chance with one of them, they have lined up for a chance! And then you show up! Why don't you just go back to where ever you came from!"

She was yelling again, "I bet you were a whore there too! Our men don't need your kind!"

His amber eyes completely glowing with rage, it was taking everything he had not to attack her. He'd never been so furious, his hands were in claws and were now turned toward her. The voice coming out of his mouth, didn't even sound like him.

Low and growling, "What's the matter... You jealous! They found what they wanted! You can go to oblivion bitch!"

She came at him, her face distorted with rage. Instantly, he brought up his hands... Blue lightning glowed in her face. "Touch me and I'll cook you alive!"

"Njada!" Startled, she turned. Farkas' loud voice, reverberating off the walls, instantly breaking it up. He stood in the hallway, wearing only a breech, his hair wild from sleep. She was absolutely seething, sparing a glance back at the Mer, he'd lowered his hands, the lightning gone.

Then her eyes caught sight of someone else, standing at the far end of the hall, Kodlak... Shit.

Chapter End Notes

I think she definitely got the smile off his face. Poor Fillim, at least he seems to be done taking shit.
Chapter Summary

He came out of their room, he'd just thrown them on, still unlaced. He was pissed. Pissed and ready to speak his mind.

He walked in, beside Fillim, hand at his back. Njada was seated at the table, with the old man. In the very same chair, his brother had sat at, so many times, pouring his heart out over the blood.

He would stand and Fillim, would stand beside him.

Chapter Notes

This is a little short, working on another and another... they will be longer.

************

Njada had stayed completely silent, watching Kodlak, as he walked down the hall to where she and Fillim stood. Everyone was silent, waiting... to see what would happen. He stopped, right in front of her. There was no anger in his expression, only disappointment. You could've heard a pin drop, it was so quiet.

Without taking his eyes off from her, he spoke to everyone. "I'd like to see the three of you... after Farkas takes a minute to put on some breeches, of course." With that, he walked into his chambers and sat... waiting.

Fillim stood aside and let Njada through, waiting for Farkas. He came out of their room, he'd just thrown them on, still unlaced. He was pissed. Pissed and ready to speak his mind. He walked in, beside Fillim, hand at his back. Njada was seated at the table, with the old man. In the very same chair, his brother had sat at, so many times, pouring his heart out over the blood.

He would stand and Fillim, would stand beside him.

Kodlak could feel the tension between the three. Farkas' hackles were raised, his wolf, fighting to be let loose. This would be a delicate situation, he knew how both the boys felt. The Mer was looked at by both, as a would be mate. He also knew, that things were quite serious, between he and Farkas. But, he couldn't abide by this kind of behavior. They'd had plenty of brawls, that was different. Fillim was peaceful, and he was their choice. It would have to be accepted, or it would end up tearing a rift between them all. And that, could effect everything.

He wasn't their master. He couldn't do anything, or make them do anything, that was against their will. He simply wanted it resolved.

He cleared his throat, "Over the years that I've been here, I've seen my fair share of fights... brawls.
I've even taken part in some of them. What I just witnessed... was not a fight."

He looked at Njada, "Being a Companion, does not absolve anyone, of wrong doing." She was looking down into her lap. "We protect... we fight for others... those that can't fight for themselves. Regardless, of our personal feelings or beliefs. Fillim is under the protection of not only the Circle, but he's part of us... part of our family, no different than Tilma. That was agreed upon, when we took him in." He thought that had been made clear, in the very beginning.

Farkas reached out and took Fillim's hand. Rubbing his thumb over the Mer's skin, trying to soothe him. He didn't need this.

"I've said my piece, now... I'd like the three of you, to work this out." Njada's mouth fell open, they all looked at each other.

Farkas, much to the surprise of everyone, started. He looked at Njada, "I won't have him treated poorly, I won't tolerate it! He hasn't done anything, to anyone here."

As he talked, they all watched the color rise in her face. She stood up, fists clenching at her sides. "Everyone here, shouldn't have to listen to him being screwed then!"

Fillim's face went dark red, he looked at the floor, his grip tightening around Farkas' hand. She took a step closer to Farkas, "Ria, is heartbroken Farkas! Heartbroken!"

This was stupid! Pinching the bridge of his nose, with the hand that wasn't in Fillim's clutches. He let out a breath. "First of all, we've all had to hear each other gettin laid, Njada! All of us have! You're no better! Second of all... neither of us, have ever given Ria a reason to think, that she was anything, other than a sister to us... Ever!"

She put her hands on her hips, "Maybe so, Farkas. But now, she'll never have that chance... will she. Along with any other decent woman. Evidently." Holding her hand up, pointing at Fillim. "First of all, we've all had to hear each other gettin laid, Njada! All of us have! You're no better! Second of all... neither of us, have ever given Ria a reason to think, that she was anything, other than a sister to us... Ever!"

Fillim looked at Farkas, "It's because I'm a male..."

Turning his head to look at her, "Isn't it... isn't that what you meant by... 'My kind'. It isn't because I'm Mer... you have one among your own. It's because I'm male."

Her face twisted in disgust... "It's because you're you! You make me sick!"

Farkas stepped towards her, raising his hand, pointing his finger at her. "Stop it! Njada, we grew up here. You have no idea, how many times Vilkas and I beat the shit out of each other. We're brothers... shit happens. That doesn't mean we don't love each other. And, besides that, you know that Vilkas and I both, have been with males before... why now?"

Still motioning to Fillim, "They were never brought here, Farkas! He kept it to himself! So did you, no one else had to see it or hear it! You can't just expect everyone to accept..."

He cut her off, "I do expect it, Njada!" He could hear footsteps, stopping outside of Kodlak's door now. They had an audience, hearing bodies press up against it.

He didn't care, this needed to be said. "I love him! Do you hear... my choice, Njada... no one else's."
Her face wrinkled up, like she had a bad taste in her mouth.

Farkas swallowed, he didn't want to take things this far, but he would. "If people here can't handle that, then we won't be here..."

Kodlak and Fillim, both stared at him in shock. Njada stared at Fillim... this was his fault. He was wrecking everything!

She looked at Farkas, pleading now, "Do you really think, that this is the only place, people will have a problem with this!"

She glared at Fillim, pointing at him. She was yelling. "It's all your fault, everything was fine, till you showed up!"

Fillim was fighting tears... his chest was clenched up. He just wanted to disappear. He was finally, feeling so good about himself and the fact that for the first time, he might have an actual home... a future with someone he loved. Even if it was with two men... He knew three people being together wasn't common, but if they loved each other, were good to each other, what else mattered. No one else was being hurt by it, he didn't understand this.

He had never been in a situation, where who he was with, was an issue. Of course, he knew of the social battles Mer in the Isles dealt with, but his relationships had been private. He'd never had anyone go against him, over this. Hate him because of this.

The hatred and prejudice he'd faced, had been over his race, not his sexual preference.

Now, he understood why Anariil had hidden his lovers, sneaking them into his home and onto his boat. It had needed to be kept secret.

At first, he hadn't thought it would be a problem, Farkas, Vilkas and the rest of the circle seemed to be so accepting of him. Of them... being together. Now this. Evidently, he was mistaken.

She was amping up again, she didn't seem to care that Kodlak was there, or even what he'd said. It didn't matter to her. "Look at him! He's gonna fuckin cry! I can't even believe this..."

She looked at Farkas, gesturing toward the Mer. "How can you stand him! Either of you, look at him! You're looked at like a fuckin God, Farkas... women would do anything for you! Both of you!"

He held up his hand and walked up into her face. He'd heard enough. He lowered his voice, staring down, into her eyes. Everyone, including the ones listening outside, knew... he was dead serious.

"Anyone... And I mean, anyone... that tries to hurt him, will have to go through me. What should matter to you, Njada... doesn't. This hate, it's ridiculous. I've never been happier, that's what should matter to my sister. If you can't respect our wishes and be happy for me... for us. If you can't put differences aside... then, maybe you need to think a little more, on what it means to be a Companion."

Kodlak, sat silent as Farkas turned, Fillim in tow and opened the door. The crowd standing in the hall listening, separated, allowing them to go through. Everyone was there, everyone had heard. No one made a sound.

Getting through the crowd, they came face to face with Vilkas and the new blood. They had evidently, been standing at the back... listening. Farkas met his brother's gaze and nodded. Vilkas returned it. He walked into his room with Fillim and closed the door.
Everyone dispersed, Vilkas stood at his door, looking at the scorch marks Fillim had made with his hands. Bringing his hands up to them, he felt along the burns in the wood. And smiled... So, the Mer could fight. He knew he had it in him. He just wished he hadn't had to prove it over something like this and against one of their own.

He had his brother's back, whatever he chose, he'd be beside him. Beside both of them. He walked in and closed the door.
Another chapter or two, coming tomorrow. Sorry so short, the next few will be longer.

**********

As soon as the door was closed, Farkas pulled him into his arms. Letting out a deep breath, he buried his face into the Nord's massive chest. He felt so safe, being wrapped up in this man... Gods. Safe from all the pain and hate... safe from the world. He'd stay like this forever. If he could.

Problem was, sooner or later, they'd have to open that door and face it all. "I'm causing trouble for you..." His voice was muffled.

Farkas pulled him down onto the bed. They faced each other, arms and legs intertwined. "No... Fillim. Njada, is causing trouble. Everything was fine... everything, should be fine." He brought up his hand, caressing the Mer's face.

"She needs to get used to it, Fillim. And, if she can't, then either she'll go or we'll go. That's all there is to it."

Fillim chewed on his bottom lip. "But... how can you just leave everything, you've grown up here. Over me... I'm not... I couldn't live with that Farkas." He couldn't believe this was happening. The day had started out so good. And within seconds, it had just turned to pure shit! Now look at what was happening.

Farkas pulled him in closer. "I'll still be a Companion Fillim... I'll always be a Companion, we just wouldn't live here."

Fillim nodded, blowing out a breath of relief. Though, the heaviness in his chest, was still there. "Alright... that makes me feel a little better." A tear slid over the bridge of his nose, giving him away. His face puckered up, clenching his eyes shut, he cried. Farkas held him, kissing his forehead.

Struggling to keep his voice strong, "I wanted... so bad, for this to be real..." His body jerked, as he sobbed. The floodgates opened. It felt like a lifetime's worth of pain, had just come to the surface. Everything he'd kept bottled up. Breaking loose.

Farkas held his face, looking into his warm eyes, as the tears flowed. "It is real... no one can take this away from us. No one!" Farkas was now, crying with him. He wasn't going to let anyone, crush this Mer's spirit... his hopes and happiness. He would be his defender.

"I am your home Fillim... You understand me..." He kissed his face, his lips catching his tears. Seeing him like this, was breaking his heart. He could literally feel Fillim's pain, his beautiful face was pulled into a grimace. How anyone could hurt him, was just so beyond what he could comprehend.

He was so precious to him... So good, so loving, so eager to please. His pain stopped here! It
stopped with him. He would help him heal... he had enough love to get him through anything... they would do it together.

He knew his brother would have his back. Where he went, his brother would follow. Family. The differences were over, he could see that in Vilkas' eyes.

Taking Fillim's hand, he placed it over his heart, holding it there. He looked into his eyes. "This is your home... right here... always."

Just hearing him say that... he couldn't believe it. He truly was, his savior... sent to protect him. To love him.

Fillim clutched at him, nodding. "I love you Farkas."

"I love you Fillim... I love you, too." He held him, looking into the fire. Fillim had closed his eyes, he was calming down.

Now that he was thinking about it, he and Vilkas had bought a fair piece of land, from the Jarl last year. Just outside the city walls. Had a stream running right through it. Good land for growing, fresh water supply.

Living here, their whole lives, they'd saved up a fortune apiece. They could have a good sized house built in no time. Hell, they'd be able to do quite a bit of it themselves. Hire out the stuff they couldn't do. Fillim knew how to build as well and he was a good smith... That would cut down on expense right there! The perfect team.

It would only take a few minutes to walk right into the city. Close enough to be protected, it was within sight of the guards towers. Maybe they'd get a dog, something to keep watch while he and Vilkas were on the road.

That's why they'd bought the land to begin with... Close enough to the city, they could remain Companions, be there in times of need. But have the privacy and space they craved.

It could be tough, living in a group, the way they did at times. The older they got, the harder it got. There was no privacy, everyone knew everyone's business. And more than half the time, they had their noses shoved right in it. What had just happened, was proof of that! He and his brother were grown fuckin men. And by the Gods... he wasn't going to have someone else, especially a whelp, deciding who he could be with. Vilkas, he knew, felt the same.

Kodlak had been upset, when they'd first purchased the property. He had been like a father to them, they assured him when they bought it, this changed nothing. It just gave more room for them to grow. They talked to the Circle about it, everyone understood.

So, maybe this would be the push they needed, to finally take action on it. Maybe this was happening for a reason. He knew Fillim would love it, too. He'd told him, how he liked to garden. He was into Alchemy, they'd build him his own alchemy room, maybe put in a green house. They'd have their own supply of medicines...

He was already going over everything in his head. It would be a good thing all the way around.

He and his brother knew, they'd always be together... ever since they were little. No matter how bad, their fights were, they vowed, they would be together... through thick and thin. They had decided, even if they married. They'd better pick mates that liked each other, cause more than likely, they'd end up living together.
This situation with Fillim, just proved it. Farkas could see it now, this was why they had both fallen for him. Inside, everything in them, even their wolves knew... they needed to be together... one. They were two halves of the same coin. Fillim brought them together. He was the bind.

He knew it would work out.

Their wolves were at ease, on the same side... as soon as his eyes met his brother's, he'd felt it. This was a common goal now. Fillim... and their lives, together.

They were all they had, it'd always been that way. Whelps had come and gone. But, the Circle lasted. They'd be stronger for it, the petty differences, that living so close together caused... would be over. They would do their jobs, spend some time together with everyone and when they were ready, they could go home... to their home. Their space, their business. Sounded good to him.

He smiled, his chin resting against Fillim's head. Rubbing his back softly, staring into the fire. They'd rest for a bit. Then Farkas would be doing his rounds with him. He wouldn't leave his side, for the rest of the day.

Now, he was excited. He'd talk to Vilkas and Fillim together, over dinner. It was time to form a plan.
Upheaval

Chapter Summary

He righted himself on the bed and stood. All he could do, was stare at him in shock. Why would he sneak up on someone like that... Gods... He was bigger than Farkas, how could he be so quiet. The Nord just watched him, expressionless.

Chapter Notes

**Just a note, the dragon being killed at the watchtower, happened prior to Fillim's arrival. I'm not focusing on that in this fic, however, I may mention things here and there. My Dragon Born, seems a little different, but don't take up arms just yet. Let it all pan out.**

Of course, this fic is bound to have some divergence, simply to allow me to fit my story in. I never want to upset... but, keep reading. Change is eminent. Again... I don't like to give things away, before its time.

***********

They'd fallen asleep... Their eyes opened in unison, as soon as the pounding began on his door. For a split second, they looked at each other... he knew, they were both thinking the same thing. 'What the fuck could it be now...'

They untangled themselves from each other, so Farkas could stand. Still clad, only in the unlaced breeches he'd thrown on, to have their meeting with Kodlak. Fillim sat up, leaning against the wall, watching as Farkas opened his door.

Skjor stood there, Aela standing beside him. "We need to have a meeting... just the Circle."

Fillim's heart, instantly went into his throat. He swallowed, sweat breaking out on his brow. 'Oh Gods... they're going to make me leave...'

Farkas could feel his fear, before he even looked at him, he knew what was going on in his mind. He gave him a reassuring look. "Go and help Tilma for now, Fillim... until I'm done."

Skjor leaned in and spoke up, so Fillim could hear. "You can do your normal rounds... you won't have anymore trouble, Fillim. Njada's... taking a break. She left a little bit ago. She's got some thinking to do."

As if that made him feel any better. Better that she wouldn't be there to harass him, but not better, that all this seemed to be happening because of him. This wasn't what he wanted... all he wanted, was a chance to live... a chance to have the same things that anyone else wanted.

There was bound to be some hard feelings... and then, there was the whelp that had the crush on
Vilkas. He didn't even know any of them... he'd been given brief introductions and then of course, right after that, there had been the fight between the twins.

All in all, there had been nothing but upheaval, in all of their lives, since he'd come into the picture.

Farkas didn't want him to blame himself, take it personal. Saying, he'd been the one to bring him here... he'd saved him and he would never regret it. He'd do it all over again. Besides, it wasn't Fillim's problem... it shouldn't be his problem. Or theirs. It was other peoples.

Farkas didn't understand hate... he couldn't. It was useless... senseless. How could any of them, keep their feelings aside to help others and do their jobs, if they couldn't even put them aside, to care for each other.

One of the things Kodlak had said, when they were little, kept ringing in his head. 'If your nose is getting bent out of joint... maybe, it's because, it's somewhere where it shouldn't be.'

That was exactly, what was going on here.

Still... it was hard not, to blame himself. He was starting to wonder, if he'd ever be welcome anywhere.

"Give me a minute to get dressed." Moving to shut the door, he could hear Skjor say that they were meeting in Kodlak's chambers.

Farkas closed the door, letting out a deep breath. He sat down on the edge of his bed, grabbing one of Fillim's feet, moving it onto his lap. He absent mindedly, played with his toes.

"I don't want you worrying over this... you hear? I did a lot of thinking while you slept, Fillim. I want to have a sit down, just the three of us, tonight over dinner. I think I know a way, to ease up some of the tension that's going on."

He patted his foot and got up, getting dressed. He splashed some cold water from the basin onto his face, grabbed a bottle and walked over to Fillim, pulling him up by the hand. "Its gonna be okay, I promise... go do your rounds and when I'm done, I'll help you with whatever you've got left. We'll get outta here for a bit, get some sun. Talk." He bent down and kissed him.

They walked down the hall together, he could see Vilkas, sitting in the chair that Njada had been in earlier. The same chair he'd sat in, to tell them all his story. Part of it, anyway. He could tell, just by the look on Vilkas' face... he was upset.

Farkas let loose of his hand and went to the door, shutting it behind him.

*************

Farkas shut the door and took a seat by his brother. Five wolves... one small room. The tension was almost unbearable. It took everything he had, to stay in the seat. What he wanted to do, was pace. Just like his wolf. He looked around, meeting the eyes of each one. Whatever it was, it couldn't be good. Not the way everyone was feeling. His brother, was the first to break the silence.

Gesturing to Skjor and Aela, "They want to offer the blood, to the Dragon born."

Farkas almost laughed... he couldn't believe, that all this shit was happening. All of it at once.

He looked at Kodlak, his first instinct, was to ask him what he thought. But, he already knew what he thought. There was no point. He knew how his brother felt too. At this point, he really didn't
care about the blood. Having it, hadn't bothered him, the way it had his brother. But, if they found a cure and his brother chose to cure himself, so would he. They would be together, here and in the afterlife.

Vilkas had wanted to be mad at him, over the fact that he'd transformed, the night he found Fillim. But, he hadn't had the heart. Vilkas knew, if he hadn't, he wouldn't have been there to save him. He'd be dead.

He was hoping they'd find a cure, before Fillim found out. The thought of him finding out, terrified him. It'd been bad enough, when he blew it in front of the newblood. But, he hadn't had a choice then, either. He'd taken it rather well, so no one in the Circle had been mad at him, over it. They knew he'd done what was necessary.

Now this.

He stuck the bottle of mead, between his legs and ran his hands through his hair in frustration. "So... I guess, you..." he motioned to Skjor and Aela. "You need to do what you feel is right... and we... well, we'll still be looking for the cure."

Everyone, especially Vilkas, looked at him in shock. Kodlak was speechless.

He started to stand. Vilkas took his shoulder, "Wait... You, you're alright with this?" He could tell, Vilkas was struggling to keep his temper. He was so passionate about being free from this curse.

He covered his brother's hand with his own. "Does it matter, if I'm not?"

Vilkas dropped his hand. He stood, "They want it... " He motioned to Skjor and Aela. "And, we don't..."

He looked at them all in turn, his eyes then settling back onto his brother. "I can't handle anymore fighting, I know that." He'd never heard of a time, when the Circle had been divided... until now.

"I can't handle anymore division." He stood in the middle of the room. All eyes were on him. What he wanted to do, was walk out of this room, go get Fillim and leave. He'd never wanted that... ever. He'd never wanted to leave, Jorvaskr. His heart just, completely ached.

Moving out due to growth as a man, a man in a relationship and still knowing, that he had his family here, was one thing. But feeling like he had to leave, to feel at peace... because of dissention... that was another thing entirely.

"I'm still in shock, over what happened this morning. I can't believe, what's happening to us..." He was fighting tears, himself. Everyone in this room, meant the world to him. His throat clenched up, "I'm done fighting between us... over this. I've never wanted to leave... before."

His brother was on his feet, coming to him. Tears ran down Farkas' face. He looked at Kodlak, "I'm with you... I want a cure."

He turned to Skjor and Aela, "But I respect how you feel... I still love you both."

He turned and looked at Vilkas, "I'm sorry... If I disappointed you. But, you'll have to finish this without me... " Vilkas just shook his head, silent. Fighting his own tears. He'd never seen Farkas so torn.

**************
Taking a deep breath, he walked into the whelps quarters. Walking by each bed, he scanned the room. Nothing... and no one. He stood there, thinking. Gods... all he wanted to do, was stop feeling like this.

He raised a hand to tuck his hair over an ear and turned around. He screamed! Jumping back, the backs of his legs hitting one of the beds, making him fall backwards. The newcomer had been standing right behind him, so close he could've touched him. Fillim, had been so wrapped up in his thoughts... he hadn't heard him. He hadn't made a sound.

He righted himself on the bed and stood. All he could do, was stare at him in shock. Why would he sneak up on someone like that... Gods... He was bigger than Farkas, how could he be so quiet. The Nord just watched him, expressionless.

He was the biggest person, he'd ever seen. White blonde hair, braided down the sides. Beard, hanging in braids as well and pale blue eyes. He'd only seen him, briefly. Vilkas had told him to steer clear, from the very beginning. And he had.

When Fillim finally thought, he might have enough courage to walk past him to leave, he spoke. "You're the one, that was exiled... am I right?"

Every hair on him, felt like it was at attention. He just stood there, his eyes wide, mouth open, staring at him. He couldn't even speak... he didn't know what to say. How... how could he know that.

The Nord continued, shaking his head, looking up, like he was thinking it over. "You know, I don't think I've ever met anyone... that they've actually gone to the trouble, to do that to." He moved a step closer. Other than him speaking... he made no sound.

Fillim backed up, all he could do, was gape up at him. He suddenly felt like all the air, had been sucked from the room and he couldn't get enough. His eyes, looked around him, to the doorway. He had to get out... he had to get away from him. There was something wrong.

The Nord smiled at him, there was nothing comforting in it. It was a cold look.

"Fillim!" Vilkas' stern voice, sounded off from the doorway. Fillim breathed out in relief. The Nord turned and looked at Vilkas. Watching, as Fillim inched by him, to get to the door.

Speaking low enough for just the three of them to hear. "Does the Jarl, know who he is... Vilkas?"
He slowly, walked towards them. Fillim got behind Vilkas, it was taking everything he had, not to grab onto the back of his tunic. Vilkas stood his ground, listening, as the newcomer continued.

"In fact... do any of you, really know... who he is?" he was pointing at him.

He stopped, just a few feet from them. Vilkas feared no man! Dragon born or no! Head held high... returning his stare. "Just how do you know, about his situation... That's between the Circle, no one else!"

The newcomer just chuckled. Spreading out his hands, "Angry women... Vilkas... Angry women. They run their mouths, to everyone. You can't blame me for that..." He looked right at Fillim, as he said the last line.

"Besides, I'm going to be a member... I've decided to go through with the initiation. Two days, from what Skjor says. I would've found out anyway."

Vilkas' fists clenched... he knew he should've trusted his gut on this one. "That can change, new
blood! The initiation hasn't taken place yet!" Fillim was literally clinging to his back now.

The Nord just raised his hands. "No disrespect Vilkas... but, it makes me wonder... the Thalmor exile him, then ship him off with a Justiciar. The very same Justiciar, that is now wreaking havoc at the college in Winterhold! Or haven't you heard..."

He crossed his arms, "I've got a little bit of inside information myself, see. The one that sent him here... he's one of their top dogs! Big Fish, Vilkas! Don't you think this whole thing smells a little funny!"

Vilkas' arms were crossed now, "Yes... I do think it smells! And the smell isn't coming from him! I know who he is... and I know why he was sent here! He's not a spy... he was the asshole's slave. He was sleeping with his son and things got messy. He didn't have the heart to kill him, so he shipped him off! Out of sight, out of mind. There's more to it, than you know! Not everyone, is mixed up in this damned war!"

The Dragon born's eyes looked past Vilkas, causing them both to turn. Farkas stood behind them, in the hallway. Behind him, was the rest of the Circle.
Chapter Summary

He struggled to push himself up, still feeling out of it. "Whatever you're planning, won't be necessary. I'm leaving... before there's more trouble over me." Tears were coming already, spilling over.

Chapter Notes

All I can say is... TAGS & pack laws.

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Vilkas stood with Fillim in front of him. Looking at Skjor and Aela, his thumb pointed back at the Dragon born. "I find it odd... that he seems to know, everything. Everything, that was private, between us! And, since when, have the Companions gotten mixed in politics!"

Before Skjor could even open his mouth, the Dragon born answered. "Perhaps, since you've taken him in... that, right there, mixed you up in it, Vilkas!"

Vilkas was fighting to reign it in... everyone in the hall, could see his eyes shifting between his normal color and yellow. Gently, handing Fillim off to his brother, he turned halfway in the doorway, to face the new blood.

"Perhaps, new blood... taking you in, has mixed us up in it!"

The Dragon born moved in closer to Vilkas. Pointing his finger at Fillim. "You'd better be right about him! If you're not, this whole city could pay! That statue and the screaming priest, that's right out front of this building... all the people you care about." With every word... he got a little closer.

And everyone at Vilkas' back, got closer to the doorway.

Vilkas' body, literally itched from the effort it was taking, to keep control. He was visibly shaking.

With one arm, wrapped around Fillim, holding him to his body. Farkas, slowly lifted a hand and placed it over Fillim's eyes.

Raising his hand, pointing through the wall. He was yelling... and he was nose to nose, with Vilkas. "Your smith up there, his family... the one that's missing! I know things, that you don't Vilkas!"

With every word... it took more for Vilkas to keep still... 'how did he know about Eorlund's son... what in oblivion was going on.'

The new blood shouted, his face red from anger. "All the ones here, that are in support of the rebellion! Do you think... for one second! That they won't come in here... and do whatever they want! To all of them... all of them, Vilkas! Regardless of who's side those people are on. And the
Empire won't do a damned thing about it! Lest another war break out... right here! On our soil!"

The fact that this man, seemed to know everything... he knew about Eorlund's son! Everything and everyone he held dear, felt threatened, everything was being ripped apart... he was done.

Vilkas' hands had stretched out... claws pushing through the flesh at his fingertips. The new blood backed up... eyes wide. Vilkas gave his head a shake, as his fangs pushed through, protruding past his lips. His mouth twisted into a snarl...

In seconds... his hair had gotten longer, eyes a deep yellow, he'd grown taller. His tunic and breeches, stretching and ripping at the seams, from the force of his growing body, trying to push through from underneath. His voice was no longer his own.

He moved forward and the Dragon born took another step back... taking in a Vilkas, he'd never seen.

Spit and blood flew as he spoke around his new teeth. A growling, deep voice... a voice he hadn't heard in so long. "Is this what you want... Dovahkiin! Take a good, long look!"

He took another step toward the new blood, forcing him back. "We have our own laws here! No verbal debates... Claws and teeth!" A startled look of realization, washed over the Dragon born's face. He took another step back. Vilkas held his ground.

The Dragon born raised his hands slightly, in understanding... respect. But still feeling the need to make his point. He lowered his voice, speaking calmly. "I hope you're right about him, Vilkas... I really do. If you're not... it could mean everything."

Vilkas... feeling Kodlak's hand on his shoulder. "I hold by what I said!"

He was calming, feeling the changes, as they slowly left him. He turned toward Kodlak, looking into the old man's face.

Speaking to the new blood, that was now at his back. "If you know something, about Eorlund's son... like you say. Maybe you should see him about it... Do the right thing."

Farkas' hand was soaked with Fillim's tears. He ripped the Nord's hand from his face, breaking free from his hold, he ran down the hall. Turning the corner, he bolted into Vilkas' room and slammed the door. His hands covering his face, he couldn't take it. The thought of having to deal with anymore, making him sick to his stomach.

How did he know... how had he found out. How had the women found out. He had only told the Circle, he said he knew about Anariil, how did he know who Anariil was? How did he know all of this! He thought that he was an enemy... their enemy. His shaking hands, clutched his head.

His mind was literally spinning with it all. He dropped to his knees, his arms wrapped around himself. His face and neck wet, he couldn't breathe... Desperately trying to suck in air.

Everything went black...

************

He came to... hearing them, before he could even see, or really remember what had happened. He was laying on something soft.

Farkas was whispering... was he afraid someone would hear him? "I know he can't take much
Someone else was in the room. Very slowly, his vision came back. It was like swimming up, to the surface... from blackness. Blinking several times, waiting for the blur to go away. He was in Vilkas' room... on the bed. Farkas and Vilkas, were sitting at the small table. Talking about the situation, what was happening... and, what had just happened.

They were both whispering. "If we leave with him Farkas... it will look even more suspicious. We need to try and ride it out."

He could see Farkas, nodding in agreement. "We need to get construction started, now. The sooner the better..."

That's when all the pain, came flooding back into his chest. Trust was in such short supply, that they felt the need to whisper... in their own rooms? Construction... on what?

He struggled to push himself up, still feeling out of it. "Whatever you're planning, won't be necessary. I'm leaving... before there's more trouble over me." Tears were coming already, spilling over.

Both of them, looked at him in shock. In an instant, they were both at his side. Climbing up onto the bed with him... both, in just tunics and breeches... barefooted. Vilkas sat farther away, letting his brother take the lead. Farkas pulled him onto his lap, leaning his back against the wall, while Vilkas laid a hand on his leg. Just letting him know he was there, that he cared.

Tucking his head under Farkas' chin, tears falling onto his chest. "You're not going anywhere... not without us." Placing his hand under Fillim's chin, he gently forced his head up, to look at him. Just looking at the pained look on Fillim's face... he couldn't fucking take it! He was so tired of seeing this poor Mer in tears, over stupid bullshit! Looking up, into his eyes... he choked out the words. "I don't want to Farkas... I don't want to leave either of you. But, look at what's happening... over me."

Tears streaked his face, "Maybe... maybe, you shouldn't have saved me..."

Farkas looked at his brother, agony all over his face. Fighting his own tears, he needed to be strong for Fillim. Holding him tighter, he wound a hand into his hair. He was getting angry, he had to let him know... he had to know, how he felt. How they both did.

"Do you love me, Fillim?"

He couldn't even answer... he nodded, clenching his eyes shut, his hand going down to cover the one Vilkas had on his leg. Farkas brought his mouth down to Fillim's, his other hand holding his throat. Instantly, he felt Fillim relax. Deepening the kiss, moving his tongue inside, tasting... teasing...

Vilkas watched them... feeling in the way... uncomfortable. Feeling hurt. He wanted what Farkas and Fillim had... they seemed to be so close. He'd thought over and over, since his episode with Fillim. How they could make this work. He'd thought about backing away... letting the two of them have, what they seemed to have so naturally.

Every time he thought about even trying, the pain was too much to bear. He'd gotten angry at himself, for feeling what he felt... for hindering things between them. After wracking his brain and searching his heart, he came to the conclusion... that, even if he couldn't be as close, have what they had. He would stand aside, let his brother be the dominant and he would take whatever he
could get. It was better than nothing... it was better than being without either of them.

He turned, he needed to give them privacy. No sooner than he began to budge, Farkas took hold of his arm... pulling him to them. Confusion gripped him. Putting up a hand to pull out of his brother's grasp, Farkas pulled away from the kiss and looked at him. His eyes heavy, full of need. Fillim lay in his arms, a limp rag. His mouth open, breathing softly, warm amber gazed at his brother. He could barely keep his eyes open.

Farkas literally handed Fillim to him, placing the Mer in his arms. He stared at him, not knowing what to do. So, he held him... Fillim snuggled into him and Vilkas shut his eyes... and just held him. Feeling the small body, ease into his. He opened his mouth and slowly took a long, deep breath. Laying his head into the Mer's. This... this was what he wanted.

Closeness.
As One

Chapter Summary

Very carefully, he got off the bed and began to undress. The door was already locked, Vilkas had done that as soon as he came in and saw that Fillim had fainted. There would be no more interruptions today. Putting a hand to his cock, he began stroking as he watched them.

Chapter Notes

*TAGS*

**Heaven on Nird**

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All Farkas could do, for a moment, was watch how Vilkas held him. The relief on his brother's face, so clear. This was right... this was what they needed. This closeness.

Very carefully, he got off the bed and began to undress. The door was already locked, Vilkas had done that as soon as he came in and saw that Fillim had fainted. There would be no more interruptions today.

Vilkas was so caught up in holding him... he was so content. Fillim's hand raised to his face, his warm amber eyes, gazing up at him, his hand caressing him. The hand moved from his face and into his hair, pulling him down to Fillim's lips.

Just feeling Fillim under him, the fact that he wanted him... made him feel like a starving man. He was ravenous. But he needed to keep control, this is what had happened last time. And they'd all seen what had happened because of it. He wouldn't repeat the error.

Fillim moaned into his mouth, the hand tangled up in his hair, tightened. He couldn't get close enough... he wanted more, had to have it.

Farkas stood at the edge of the bed, watching his brother, devouring Fillim's mouth. Putting a hand to his cock, he began stroking as he watched them.

Pulling away, just enough to whisper against Vilkas' lips. "I want you..."

He opened his eyes, meeting the Mer's. Fillim's hands went to his tunic laces, pulling at them. He immediately, remembered that they weren't alone. He looked up, taking in his brother... and what he was doing.

Farkas, afraid his brother would falter. Got onto the bed. On his hands and knees, he moved over to them. Putting a hand up to Vilkas' face, very gingerly... he touched his lips to his brother's. Vilkas just breathed against him... his eyes closed.
Backing away from his brother, he lifted Fillim off his lap and lay him down, just as if it were a handle, the Mer's hand casually wrapped around his stiff cock. Farkas smiled down at him, getting a lazy grin in return.

Vilkas stood and undressed, watching his brother, as he helped Fillim out of his clothes. Naked, he walked over to the nightstand and pulled out a vial of healing oils...

Farkas spread the Mer's legs, kneeling between them. Leaning down, he lightly kissed him... whispering to him. "Just mouths this time... okay? We're gonna start easy."

He knew Fillim wasn't ready to take him yet, his bruises were still fading. He looked and felt better, but Farkas still felt the need to go light. This would be easier on him for now, but would give them all the pleasure and closeness they needed. They had plenty of time, to progress into other things.

Taking Fillim's slender cock in one hand, he stroked him. He was half the width of his brother's and no where near as long. His skin was so dark. And the head, would get damn near a reddish purple when he was ready to cum. Farkas, just couldn't get over the sight. Such a pretty little cock. Perfect.

Sliding his thumb across the small head, pearly liquid coating the pad. Bringing it up to his mouth, he licked it off. Fillim pushed his head back into the pillow and closed his eyes. He was so hard, he ached. Just seeing all of them naked... together. Knowing he would have them both. He couldn't wait.

Handing his brother the oils, Vilkas climbed onto the bed. Coming up to where Fillim's head lay, the Mer opened his eyes and smiled at him. Bringing his hands up, one coming up under his balls, cradling them. The other wrapping around his cock. He lightly pulled, bringing him down to his waiting mouth. Vilkas just watched him, in complete awe, as he lightly kissed along the underside of his shaft. "Straddle me... I want you over me."

He'd wanted this so bad. Ever since he'd seen the Mer in his brother's bed, sucking on that bottle of potion. He'd wanted that beautiful mouth, wrapped around his cock... he'd dreamt of it. And now, here they were. Farkas grabbed Fillim's legs, behind the knees and bent him forward, raising his ass in the air. Looking up, all he could see, was his brother's backside... his hips rocking. Straddling Fillim's shoulders. He was sucking in gasps of breath.

Vilkas reached back behind him, both hands gently taking each of Fillim's legs. Holding them, so his brother could work... hands free. Farkas began licking... getting him wet. Long, hard licks, across his entire hole. The fine, red hairs, now plastered against his dark skin.

Grabbing a hold of each cheek, his fingertips ending right at his pucker... he pulled, opening him up and stuck his tongue inside. Tasting his bittersweet flavor. He pulled out and pushed back in... his little ring, twitching around his thick tongue. He could hear Fillim whining around his brother's cock.

Those warm eyes, stared into his. Closing, only to moan around him. Releasing the hold on his legs, he put a hand to each side of his head on the pillow, he lifted up and over him. Bracing himself with his feet. And started a slow fuck, into Fillim's mouth.

Pulling out, to tease around his sensitive hole, with little flicks of his tongue... Farkas watched as his brother fucked the Mer's mouth. His hard, muscled ass clenching together with each down stroke. Each upstroke showing his own fine hole, almost hidden, in all his ebony hair. He gave Fillims ass a kiss... both cheeks. And grabbed the bottle of oils, that had laid forgotten at his side.
Listening to the sucking noises coming from Fillim's mouth. His brother fighting to keep it together. Looking down at the Mer, only to look away again, in fear of losing it.

Dousing a finger, Farkas raised his hand up and let his oiled finger run in between his brothers cheeks, as he rocked over their small lover. Instantly... Vilkas cried out, throwing his head back. "Fuck... Gods! Farkas..." His name coming out in a whine. He left his hand there, the finger rubbing over his brother's asshole with each motion of his hips. He was panting, throwing his head around from side to side. His arms and legs shook from all his effort.

Letting his finger slide in, he watched as his brother's body locked into position... His ass, clenching tightly, around Farkas' finger. He could see Fillim pumping him as he came.

Vilkas watched him, those pretty, dark lips... drinking him down, squeezing every last drop out of him with his hands. Thinking he'd never seen anything so beautiful. Perhaps... he wanted to see Fillim cum. That was the sight.

Farkas listened to his brother groan, as he slowly pulled his finger out. He backed away and lay down, beside Fillim... watching as his brother, lowered his body over the Mer. He watched as they kissed, Vilkas sucking in each lip, tasting himself. He was spent. He crawled off of Fillim and moved to the end of the bed, he would be completely content to watch, as they finished each other off.

Fillim, getting onto his knees, turned himself and climbed over his brother, his ass in Farkas' face. He sat down. Literally sat down, on his brother's mouth. Farkas took a cheek in each hand and moaned into him. Vilkas could barely believe the beautiful sight before him. Fillim's fine, slender body, sitting straight up, on his brother's face. His long, red hair falling down around him, as he threw his head back in ecstasy. He could only imagine, what his brother did with his tongue.

Kneeling forward, Fillim grabbed a hold of the massive cock, standing full between Farkas' legs. He mouthed the swollen head, licking at it. He was so short, he couldn't bring his mouth down onto it, not without pulling away from Farkas' talented tongue. And he didn't want to do that... Farkas was an oral, fucking God! But he wanted him to be pleased... he looked to Vilkas and motioned him over. He could see the dilemma Fillim was having and opened his brother's legs wider to allow himself in.

Fillim was literally bouncing on Farkas' tongue, riding him... his cock standing erect, leaking. Vilkas put two hands to his brother and lowered his mouth down, onto him. Farkas, just knowing who's mouth had him, began bucking... fuck! he couldn't believe it... how fucking good his mouth felt.

Both hands squeezing him in unison, his tongue swirling around his head... down to his balls. Vilkas sucked each one into his mouth, the stubble on his chin scratching against his ass. 'Oh fuck... if he could just see that... Gods!' Vilkas moaned around him, he squeezed him tight, sliding up to the head... sucking so hard.

Farkas grabbed onto Fillim's hips, holding him still... his tongue was all the way inside. He could feel it coming, all the way from his fucking toes... He pulled at his cock, throwing his head back, he cried out. His seed shooting into the air, coming down to land all over Farkas' belly.

Vilkas slid two fingers through the seed on his brother's stomach, getting them covered. Moving them down, he slid them over his brother's hole... pushing. Farkas, releasing his hold on Fillim, the Mer climbing off and went down to assist Vilkas. Farkas lifted his head, he had to see this... Fillim's red head, lowered to his stomach, as he lapped at his body, cleaning Farkas of his seed.
Finally done, he moved his head.

His brother was between his legs, his eyes barely open, full lips stretched around his cock. One hand stroking him, squeezing him... the other, now pushing fingers into his ass. He panted, grabbing at his legs from behind the knees, holding them to his stomach.

Everything in him wanted to close them tight! that wonderful, fucking pressure, building in his balls, deep inside of him... all the way into his guts. Raising his ass to his brother, Vilkas pumped his fingers in and out, harder... faster... sucking and pulling. He couldn't fucking take it. Everything in him let go...

Vilkas sank his mouth down, till he was full back to his throat and swallowed him down.
Dreams

Chapter Summary

Leaves were falling. The wind was rushing past him. Screaming... he could hear screaming. It wasn't coming from him... he was asleep on the bed of the carriage. He was dreaming... he had to be. This couldn't happen again, not again...

Chapter Notes

Again, I can't reveal things before their time...
*I've put a name to the DB simply due to, a time is coming when he will be more than the newblood... all the way around,***
°°°Umm, also... just incase anyone is wondering, Vilkas' (is it Vilkas' or Farkas' that's the single?) bed is larger in this story than it is in the game. I kind of have a different vision in my head of their rooms. Ahhh fiction.°°°°

See the end of the chapter for more notes

************

Kodlak watched Vilkas, until he turned the corner. Then, his focus was back on Skjor and Fjolrin. He was distraught, to say the least.

The twins had been there, since they were toddlers. He'd pretty much raised them. Being pre-teens, when Skjor joined, he'd taken a fair piece in it as well. There had been enough going on with the dispute over the blood of late, but now... It seemed all of Jorvaskr was split. Vilkas wasn't the only one feeling like everything important to him was at risk. Especially after what had just taken place. Finding the cure was all he'd been able to think about... that, and the dreams.

He was in enough discomfort already, with his illness, that he lived on remedy. He didn't want to lose them... the Companions needed them. He needed them. And they, needed the Companions... Jorvaskr.

He was afraid if they didn't find the cure while he lived, it may be forgotten. Given up on.

He knew that both the boys, would be happier without this blasted curse. He longed to see them free of it, before he passed. He wanted them to join him in Sovngarde, when their time came.

Though, he knew they would probably never leave... not entirely. It was the fact, that they felt their personal choices were under attack and that made them feel unwelcome. Enough to seek solace outside the walls of Jorvaskr. Of course, there was always a little gossip, here and there. Everyone had their bed partners. They all had needs, like everyone else. What was happening now, was different.

He didn't expect the boys to just let it go, either. They were grown men. They had a right to their lives and they had a right to privacy about it.
Then, there was this newcomer... the one in his dreams. He still felt he was right in accepting him but, he needed to know where he stood. There had to be honesty. Integrity.

He was torn.

Jorvaskr had been free from politics for so long. The land and its people were so torn already with this war, now... he wondered what he'd invited into their halls. Part of him, was afraid to know.

It's pretty much all Vignar could talk about and he didn't care who knew, how he felt. Everyone there, cared for him a great deal though and if they didn't share his views, they overlooked it. It wasn't worth tearing up a long friendship over.

What troubled him the most, was the fact that this newcomer, had information about Eorlund's son. That was a messy affair, right there. Eorlund and what remained of his family, were positive, that the Battle-Borns knew what had happened to their son... Thorald.

Idolaf and his son Jon, even went so far, as to harass and torment Eorlund's wife, while he worked the forge during the day. Of course, they never did this in front of him. And, of course, because of their wealth and status, there weren't too many, willing to speak up in her defense. Except... the Companions. Almost every man and woman there, had said a fair piece to each of them, whenever it was heard in their presence.

Since Thorald's disappearance, their other son, Avulstein hadn't left the house. Afraid that he would be taken as well, or placed under arrest, for supporting the rebellion. Eorlund had sat with him often, sharing his concerns... they were old friends. Almost all of the Companions had sat at the Gray-Mane's table at some point or other. And Eorlund and his wife had partaken of festivities in Jorvaskr, their sons had as well. Before this war started.

Now, it was brother against brother... neighbor against neighbor. Entire families and towns broken. No one trusted anyone, anymore.

The newcomer's attack on Fillim and his suspicion of him, bothered Kodlak as well. The fact that he knew so much about the one that had owned him. The fact that he thought the Mer was some sort of spy, a threat to Whiterun... to Skyrim. Then, there was the issue with whomever had gotten information, that they weren't privy to and blabbed about it. The fact, that they did it to harm one of their own... out of jealousy.

That piece of it right there, made him feel like he was dealing with children again. This just wasn't something that adults did to each other.

But, he was pretty sure, he knew who that person was. Unfortunately.

Looking at Fjolrin, "Would you prefer to speak about this here?" Kodlak gestured about the room with his hand. "Or in my quarters, lad?" His hands, fisted on his hips. "But, we will speak about it... before anything else takes place." He finished, looking at Skjor.

Fjolrin took a seat on the bed he had been using, his elbows resting on his knees, hands clasped loosely. Now, he felt like a whelp... "Right here will do, Harbinger."

Kodlak and Skjor both took seats on opposite beds, so they could all face each other. He didn't look at Fjolrin, he looked down at his clasped hands. He didn't have to, he knew who he spoke to. "I know your position... or, maybe I should say... who you are. Enough to know, that you're completely engulfed in this war, boy. Right up to your hairline... I'm right, aren't I."

Fjolrin stayed silent. "I feel I did the right thing, in letting you join. But, the fact that you've
admitted knowing some things you know... well, that's something that I can't overlook now."

He looked up at the Harbinger, Kodlak watched his eyes, his expression. He was hiding something... a lot. He could feel it. Part of him didn't want to know, but part of him had to. With what he'd heard, he couldn't let it go, for fear it would haunt him.

"I won't ask you, what side you're on. But, I will say this... Eorlund, is a very old friend of mine. He's been a brother to me. His family is like my own." Kodlak brought his hands up to his beard, clasping them under his chin, in thought. In stress... "Do you know who has his son? Is he alive, Fjolrin?"

He just stared at Kodlak, his face giving away nothing and yet... telling so much. He knew.

Before they could go any further, a knock sounded off on the doors frame. A courier, in search of the Dovakiin. Fjolrin stood, accepting the letter, opening it and reading. As if nothing was amiss, he looked at Kodlak and Skjor, who had stood as well. "I must leave, we will have to discuss this further when I return. I'm needed in Solitude, right away."

He gathered his things and started out, behind the young courier. Pausing at the door, not even fully turning to look him in the eye. "I'm sorry Kodlak... I don't mean any disrespect... I can't keep the General waiting."

They watched him as he left the room. Taking a deep breath, he turned to Skjor. "I'd like to talk to Ria... would you please send her to my quarters."

**********

They all had lain on the bed, each one, touching some part of the other. Everything that had just happened... he had never been so relaxed in his life. It had been amazing, so liberating. After a little while, they got up, dished up some stew from the pot, bubbling over Vilkas' fire and had eaten. Right on the bed, sitting next to each other. Sharing bottles of mead.

He would have never thought, that something like this, could happen so freely, between the three of them. He always figured, that when intimacy happened, it would happen between him and whoever was present, while one was away. Never this.

But, this was perfect. Euphoric.

Several bottles of mead downed. There seemed to be no need for conversation at the moment. They were all fulfilled... and spent. Just to be near each other, was enough. Having full stomachs, they covered up and snuggled into each other... falling asleep.

**********

Leaves were falling. The wind was rushing past him. Screaming... he could hear screaming. It wasn't coming from him... he was asleep on the bed of the carriage. He was dreaming... he had to be. This couldn't happen again, not again...

He could see it, the tip of metal glinting in the moon light. The driver had been hit with an arrow, the tip was sticking through the back of his neck.

The horses were panting, they'd left the road, they were going through the forest. He had to stop the horses before they crashed! He had to get hold of the reigns!

Everything flying by in a blur, he had to hold on. Trying to reach an arm out to grab them.
God's damnit! The reigns, he couldn't reach! The horses were going crazy, they lurched to the right... The wheels lifted up... He was airborne!

When he came to, he couldn't move... His vision swam in and out. His arm was twisted under him. Rocking to his side, pain shot through him! He had to try to get off his arm. He could feel something cold and hard behind him, feeling around...

His mind finally coming back. He was laying against a tree, and his pants were wet. The realization hit him, that he'd pissed himself and his right arm felt like it was broke. The pain was horrible, his stomach twisted. Using the tree for leverage, he pushed himself to sit up. Sitting back against the tree, his arm hung slack...

Vomit sprayed out of his mouth, splattering down his front and legs. Steam rose up off of him into the cold air.

"You stupid fucker!... Great idea! Now we have to find the Gods Damned carriage!" He froze... His eyes bulging. He could hear them crashing through the brush, but he couldn't see anything. 'Gods!' They were getting closer, he struggled to get to his feet. Trying to hold onto his arm, he had to keep it steady.

The pain bringing sweat up on his face, his mouth watering again. 'He had to run, they would kill him!'

A rush of wind went past him, just catching a glimpse of it... he turned, something so big... black.

A gods awful wet dog smell... That smell... Oh Gods...

He was stumbling, like a drunk... He had to move faster. Every step was jerking his arm, he fought to keep from crying. Screams pierced through the night! He stopped, wide eyed, he couldn't see anything, it was so dark.

Something was panting! Panting... They were screaming... Whatever was out there, with them, roared! He'd never heard anything like that.

'It's so close!' Trying to run, tears running down his face. Ripping... a sick, wet ripping sound, over and over... 'Gods... It's tearing them apart.' Everything went still... No more screams. Nothing...

'Oh Gods!... Please...' Turning, unable to hear anything but his own heartbeat... Stumbling on his own feet, the ground came up to meet his head. Trying to get up onto his knees, he can hear it now... he can hear it breathing. Trying to crawl. Something warm is running into his eyes, falling to his side...

His eyes won't stay open, he can hear his own voice... Far away... Whimpering... Pleading.

The most beautiful face looked down at him... all covered in red. Yellow eyes turning to ice... his voice, so, so deep.

"Poor thing..."

Chapter End Notes

Taking a break to work on others... will be back, asap. Enjoy. <3
Coming To Light

Chapter Summary

She remembered, the newcomer had been there that night. He saw her come in and instantly, he acted like he was concerned for her... like he felt bad for her. She knew what he wanted and that was fine with her. She was upset, she wanted to get drunk, and then she wanted to get laid.

All that mattered right at that moment, was that there was a sexy, powerful man, paying her all kinds of attention. He'd listen to her woes, and then he'd fuck her into oblivion.

Chapter Notes

Regarding the last several chapters that had to do with the Dovahkiin. In this story, I really kind of felt the need to delve a little, into how much more this newcomer joining their faction complicates things. There is so much already going on inside the Companions. I really believe that things wouldn't be anywhere near as cut and dry, as they are in the game.

Of course, I know the game can only go over so much... but I believe there would be tension, his involvement into what Skjor and Aela decide to do and how it ultimately affects everyone. I really don't think everyone would've just accepted it. Not that easily anyway. The fact that Kodlak ends up cured helps... but he could've been cured without all the other stuff going on, that really shouldn't have been going on. So, here I'm just giving one take on it.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

*************

His eyes snapped open. Other than the glowing embers from the fire place, the room was dark. He lay there for a moment, letting his eyes adjust. Farkas lay to his back, his giant arm wrapped around him, his hips were eased up against Fillim's bottom. Farkas’ snores, ruffling the back of his hair.

Vilkas lay at his front. Fillim's right leg, was thrown over his and his right arm was over his waist.

Their breathing became steady and slow... almost rhythmic. He lay there, listening to them and thinking. Thinking about, not only his dream... but, the fight in the dining hall. The argument between Vilkas and the Dovahkiin... the newcomer. The fact that he'd been shielded... Skjor had yelled at Aela, to keep him back... keep him away. The fact that Farkas had covered his eyes.

Neither time... had they worried over what he would hear, or what he'd heard. How their voices had changed... the sounds. And how he'd felt, deep down, when he'd heard them. The smell, how he'd dismissed the feeling in his gut, upon first smelling it, so strong in Farkas' room. If he was to be
honest with himself, not just in his room, but the whole downstairs living area.

He had been so caught up in all of his emotional stress, all of the turmoil surrounding their relationships, and trying to get over his recent past. He literally hadn't processed what he'd heard, and what he'd smelled... remembered. His brain just hadn't pieced it together.

He hadn't remembered much about that night, dismissing it, he'd chalked it up to shock. When in all actuality, each time it had come into his mind... each time something happened that triggered a memory, he had subconsciously pushed it back. He had pushed it out entirely.

Avoidance and denial... the most efficient ways not to deal with something.

That's what he'd been doing, avoiding it. He really didn't want to think about it. He didn't want to add anything else to the huge pile of shit, that was already reaching massive proportions, that they'd all been attempting to deal with on a daily basis.

. He stared into the back of Vilkas' head. Was it worth ruining what he had... what they all had, together? The closeness they now felt, their relationships, that were finally coming together.

No! He decided it didn't matter. Farkas had saved him, he'd given him a second chance at life, love and happiness. Nothing was worth ruining all that. He loved him. Looking at the coal black mess of hair, before him. He was falling for him as well. Two halves of the whole... and he had both.

He smiled, nuzzling his face into the back of Vilkas' neck, tightening his hold around him.

Silently, Farkas watched him through sleepy eyes. Fillim had tossed and turned in his sleep. Whimpering and crying out, he knew that Vilkas heard him as well. He could sense, that his brother was awake. Fillim just didn't know it. Most nights, they would lay for hours... dozing off and on. Tonight, just like every night, since Fillim had been there, he had been content to just lay with him... feel him. It was relaxing. And he knew his brother was enjoying it just as much as he.

When his dream had gotten bad, Farkas had held him tighter and finally, he'd woken. He had closed his eyes and let his other senses take over, listening and smelling... feeling the emotions run off the Mer. They both knew... it was only a matter of time, before he figured it out. With everything else taking place, he wouldn't fret over it. Neither of them would.

He knew Fillim loved them both. That would win out... in the end.

*********

Ria was a wreck. She had sat in Kodlak's sitting room, with Aela and Skjor. The whole thing had started, when Farkas had first brought Fillim there. She had just been curious... that was all. She'd gotten a look at him, before Aela had told them all to go back to their quarters.

After that, she'd just wanted to know, what was going on. She didn't really understand, why the Mer was staying in Farkas' room. So... every chance she got, she had snuck to his door and listened.

Then... she'd listened when they had all been in Kodlak's sitting room and the Mer had told the men of the circle, his past. She had listened every chance she had... until, she heard that Vilkas wanted him. She was angry and she was hurt. By then, she knew enough... and she was angry enough, that she confided in Njada. It's not like she could hide it, she was so upset, Njada knew something was wrong and wouldn't let up. As soon as she told her, she felt bad.

Then... she heard them together.
That had been the straw. She couldn't handle it. She had run out of Jorvaskr, gone to the Inn and got a room.

She remembered, the newcomer had been there that night. He saw her come in and instantly, he acted like he was concerned for her... felt bad for her. She knew what he wanted and that was fine with her. She was upset, she wanted to get drunk... and she wanted to get laid. All that mattered, was that there was a sexy, powerful man, paying her all kinds of attention. He'd listen to her woes and then, he'd fuck her into oblivion.

He followed her up to her room, kept the mead flowing... he was her ear... her shoulder. She remembered sitting on his lap. His huge hand rubbing her back, while she blabbed about it all... everything. The more she said, the more he wanted to know. Then... she had the best sex of her entire life.

He'd stayed, sleeping there with her. Like a decent man... not some asshole, just out for a good time. He'd made her feel good.

Of course, she skipped that part with Kodlak. Not with Njada though. The Nord was beautiful and he'd been helping her keep her mind off of Vilkas as of late. But, the fact that he wanted information, bothered her. That's what she felt guilty over now. He said, he was just looking out for the Jarl, looking out for Skyrim... he wanted to make sure, Fillim wasn't a spy for the Dominion.

She hadn't meant to cause trouble. She was just hurt. She'd always had a crush on Vilkas. She also knew, that he looked at her like a kid sister. And, that's all it would ever be.

Now, she just wanted to move on. But, the newcomer was suspicious... and Njada was ticked. She didn't get, how the twins could be satisfied with a male. Ria didn't care. She knew that was the way with some. She wasn't really a stranger to it, but still... there were a lot of Nords that found it unacceptable. She cared about the twins too much, to let that get in the way of things. She wanted her family, to stay a family. Now, she just wanted them to be happy.

She wanted things to be the way they were and she wanted Njada back. Kodlak had reassured her, he wasn't angry.

He figured once, Njada blew off some steam, she would return. She just needed some space. As much as she tried to make everyone believe she was made of stone... he knew, a heart beat within her. He had seen that, the day she'd walked through their doors.

The day that she had become a member, he'd sat with her... alone in this very room. And he'd told her. It was her heart, that had made his decision. She had turned red, gotten a little angry even. But she listened.

He told her, that no matter how strong she was, how vicious a fighter... a warrior, she became. The thing that made her a Companion, was her heart. Anyone could fight... anyone could kill. What kept you apart, from what you fought against... was what was inside. Your heart.

She needed that... she needed them. That, is why he knew, that she would be back.

He knew, Ria would feel better, once she spoke with the twins and Fillim. They would understand. She wasn't looking forward to that, but... she knew it needed to be done. It was the right thing.

Kodlak dismissed her.

He sat at his table, thinking it all over. He understood Ria's feelings. It wasn't uncommon for a young man or young woman to become smitten with someone they looked up to. It happened.
These whelps... they were in awe of the older, more seasoned warriors. They spent a lot of time together, training, fighting, traveling.

That brought his mind to Fjolrin... he let out a deep breath, raising the tankard to his lips, he drained it. His mind swam, with everything he had said, while he and Vilkas, exchanged words. He knew Fillim was no threat... he could feel it. The lad was good, through and through. He was about as soft-hearted as they came. There wasn't an underhanded bone in the Mer's body. He was quite sure.

But... the reasoning behind the Dragonborn's suspicions. He didn't want to have to fret over the conflict taking place. It was bad enough, to have to see it everywhere in their town, as soon as he stepped out their doors. To see how, it had torn everyone apart.

He knew, there was a good heart in this newcomer as well. He'd felt it. He was the one, he knew his decision was right. And he would stand by it.

The thing that bothered him the most... was why, he kept so much hidden. How one man, could know so much... about so many. Fjolrin was a mystery.

Chapter End Notes

Also... things aren't always as they seem.
If I Have To Live With It

Chapter Summary

"Please... Anariil. You know my situation better than anyone. I will pay whatever the cost... anything!"

Of course, in the end he had agreed. He hated to see Telindil be put in a position to beg. "I will teach him. And while I do, I will think about the cost. I will tell you once I've made up my mind."

Finally, just prior to his sixteenth year, Anariil went to him. They sat in his study, glasses of wine in hand. "I have given thought, for quite some time now, over what my payment should be."

Telindil stayed quiet, waiting...

"I would like you to sign him over to me."

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Don't talk of love,
But I've heard the words before;
It's sleeping in my memory.
I won't disturb the slumber of feelings that have died.
If I never loved I never would have cried.
I am a rock,
I am an island.

**

From the moment he'd been born... no, before he'd been born. He had made up his mind that he was the enemy. The embodiment of all his pain. The constant reminder, that Telindil would never be his.

The love he had felt for his friend went beyond words. He had pined for him in secret for so long. Never freeing himself of it long enough to find another. Of course he'd had lovers, and there was a fondness he'd felt for some of them. But it was never love.

More often than not, it had been subordinates, younger Thalmor, wanting his favor for some reason or another. He was always more than happy to oblige them.

But, he could never stay away. His job made it impossible for him to do so. And it seemed that his friend longed for his company, just not in the way that Anariil needed it. If he was gone for too long, Telindil would send for him, he'd receive a note or letter. After all... he was his confidant.

And every time he had to go there, every time he would have to see him, his stomach would twist into knots. That all too familiar pain, would come creeping back into his heart. Until he felt he would be crushed under it's weight.
They would drink, and Telindil would ask him how his wife was. They, after all had just had their own son. He would lie, and tell him that everything was just fine. He wouldn't tell him that they had separate rooms. He wouldn't tell him that as soon as their son was weaned, he would give her permission to seek others for her own satisfaction.

It had been an arranged marriage. Purely for bloodline and status. She had known from the beginning, what their arrangement entailed.

The more time that passed and the older their sons became, the more stress and worry he saw on Telindil's face. He couldn't stand the sight of his own son. Just like he himself, was Anariil's thorn. His painful reminder. Fillim was Telindil's. When he looked at him, he saw her.

Fillim was a constant, painful reminder to them both.

Keeping him a secret, was horribly stressful. Telindil constantly feared that someone would make the connection. That they would figure out who's son he was. That his name would be ruined... his status. He was a very powerful Mer. He had no intention of losing all that he'd built and worked for. But, he also felt that he owed her.

Thus, he paid two different scholars to teach him in private. Ones that he could trust not to ever speak a word. They after all, had their own secrets they wanted kept. A little bit of leverage.

For his magic training, he'd actually come to Anariil. He would never forget that conversation. Telindil had made sure to break out the best wine, offering him glass after glass. And he'd actually been in quite a good mood, until the question came out.

"I was actually hoping that you would train him for me."

Anariil's face instantly fell.

Telindil had sat there in the chair across from him, staring at him. It was dead silent. Anariil let out a breath, breaking eye contact, he looked down into his wine... running the pad of his finger over the rim.

Very slowly, he had shaken his head. "I... I don't know..."

"Please... Anariil. You know my situation better than anyone. I will pay whatever the cost... anything!"

Of course, in the end he had agreed. He hated to see Telindil be put in a position to beg. "I will teach him. And while I do, I will think about the cost. I will tell you once I've made up my mind."

The instant relief showing on his friend's face, making him feel even more so that he had done the right thing. He simply hadn't had the heart to tell him no.

And he'd regretted it. The very first session they'd had, he'd regretted it.

They met in the rear gardens on his father's property. Anariil had demanded that there were to be no interruptions under any circumstances! He'd never really been alone with Fillim. Of course he'd seen him numerous times in the house, in passing or on the grounds during his many visits.

Of course, under normal circumstances, Telindil would've kept him hidden. But if Anariil was the only one there, he felt it okay for Fillim to be seen. After all, Anariil knew who he was. He'd always been cold towards him, and had made sure to never make malicious comment in front of his father, as he didn't want hard feelings between them over it. But it had been a struggle to not
show Telindil how he truly felt.

Hence his surprise at Telindil asking him to be his tutor. He would have to attempt to bury his own animosity, or else the young Mer would be so intimidated he wouldn't be able to learn. It had been incredibly hard.

Fillim had stood at attention, wearing mage's robes, his long hair was pulled back at his neck and tied. Anariil could tell he was worried and that he was doing his best to try and hide it.

Taking a deep breath, Anariil strode up to him. Looking down into his face. "Neither of us are very happy about this arrangement. However, we will get through it... won't we." Fillim nodded silently, his amber eyes staring up into Anariil's. "And we will do it for your father."

"Yes Anariil."

The first session had lasted two hours. By the time they were done, Fillim was in tears and Anariil was ready to rip his own hair out.

Anariil had gone off toward the main house with his fists clenched so tightly, that his nails had begun to cut little crescent moons into his palms. His hair was an absolute mess, strands hanging loose from it's clasp, sticking to the sweat that now covered his face.

In a panic, Fillim ran after him, dodging in front of him! He'd actually gotten down onto his knees, his hands clasped together as if in prayer. Anariil stopped, looking down at the young Mer. He had begged him. Tears running streaks down his face, mingling with the sweat that covered his dark skin in beads, his full lips trembling. "Please... please, don't tell him. Don't tell father that I failed..."

He'd started to walk away and Fillim reached out, grabbing his leg. As soon as contact was made, his hands dropped. Anariil glared down at him! "I promise! I will do better next time... please, please give me a chance!"

He had looked skyward, pinching the bridge of his nose between his forefinger and thumb. Letting out a long deep sigh, "I give you one more chance Fillim! I will return here in two days, and I suggest that you take that time of respite to better prepare yourself!"

With that, he had walked away, leaving the young Mer on his knees in the garden. Of course, he knew that he had agreed to teach him, and that he couldn't back out. But Fillim was unaware of that. What he was hoping, was that his threat would make Fillim try harder.

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With every step he took toward the garden exit, the horrible need to flee his friend's estate felt as though it were overtaking him. With all the adrenaline that swam through his body, he was terrified to see Telindil and tell him of how his son's first lesson went. However if he didn't, then Telindil would more than likely question Fillim, and then he would be aware of his pupil's upset. For some unknown reason to himself at the time, he couldn't allow that to happen. He just simply couldn't!

Stopping briefly at Telindil's private quarters, he had taken in a deep breath while attempting to straighten his hair, and walked in. Hurriedly making up a believable scenario, and then a believable excuse to depart... he walked out. The entire time, fighting the urge to run towards his carriage.

The entire rest of that day, his mood had been off. No matter what he did, or tried to set his mind on, he always found his thoughts back on Fillim. What was even more confusing, was that it wasn't just on the day's events... it was on Fillim himself. How he looked. How he looked so much like his father, yet different. How beautiful he was. That was something that he never thought he would
admit. Ever.

He’d sat at his desk, in his home... and instead of continuing to try and fight what his mind kept going to, he finally gave into it, letting himself linger over his memories of the day. Letting himself linger over how the young Mer's face looked. How it had looked while he was pleading to him... on his knees, with his hands held up.

It had taken one of his servants knocking at the door to snap him out of his reverie. Remaining seated so she wouldn't see his obvious erection, he had waited till she left before pouring some wine, letting the thoughts fill him once more while he stared out the window at the sparkling water. The confusion he felt over this, and the fear that he knew was his warning bell, was swiftly pushed aside. Pushed aside, while he greedily and hungrily wallowed in what would soon become his drug.

It also came to no surprise, that as night fell, the Mer's presence would dominate his dreams as well.

He dreamt of them, in the garden... it was late. The moon's glow shone over the trees and flowers, sparkling off the shallow stone pools around them. His silk evening pants rode so low on his hips, that the line of flaxen hair that led to the fine hair surrounding him was visible. Bare chested and bare footed, his hair had been down.

Fillim stood there in his robes, waiting for instruction. The warmth of his amber eyes, burning into his. His full lips partially open, and just the sight alone made him ache with need. He was already wet at the tip, pushing against the silken fabric that restrained him.

Anariil walked behind him, placing his hands down lightly onto his shoulders. Much to his surprise, Fillim actually eased back, leaning into him. Slowly he brought one hand up, wrapping it into all that hair, pulling his head back. Those warm eyes, gazing up into his as he lowered his mouth down taking that soft upper lip. Fillim moaned into his mouth as his other hand made it's way into the folds of his robes. He had far too much on.

Oh and finally he felt that soft warm skin and he let his other hand wander lower, until it reached the waistband of the young one's leggings. Fillim ground his bottom against him, whimpering and moaning against his invading tongue. Sliding his hand under the soft leather, his long fingers wrapped around the slender length...

His eyes snapping open, he peered into the darkness of the room, taking a moment to let his eyes adjust.

Laying amidst the tangled bed linens, he was covered in sweat and his own seed. His hand still wrapped around his own hard length, that was only now starting to diminish. He stared up at the ceiling. The ocean breeze flowing in from the open window making his still, sensitive body shudder. His wet hair, stuck to his face and neck. Instead of seeing the ceiling... all he could see was him. He could still feel him... smell him.

An internal war waged. He closed his eyes, shaking his head, trying to rid himself of his thoughts... his desires. What he now so wanted.

After collecting himself, he had walked to the pond that lay at the back of their property, surrounded by trees and greenery in a small grove of fruit trees. Bottle of wine in hand, clean bottoms slung over his arm. Against his own will, that whole night, the only thought in his mind... was Fillim. Standing in the cool water, drinking wine straight from the bottle, it came to him.
He would be his payment! He would be his reward!

His training after that, had gone much better. Anariil had struggled to maintain the rigid and aloof attitude that he wanted to convey to him. But he made every effort, to make some sort of physical contact. Any slight touch, here and there. And every night, he dreamt of him. He wanted to kiss him... taste him... take him. But he didn't dare, lest Telindil find out. Then, he may never agree to make him his ward!

This went on for almost a full year... he had purposely drug it out, giving Telindil excuse after excuse, that Fillim needed more training. Finally just prior to his sixteenth year, Anariil went to him. They sat in his study, glasses of wine in hand. "I have given thought for quite some time now, over what my payment should be."

Telindil stayed quiet, waiting...

"I would like you to sign him over to me. He would live at my estate and work off his debt for the schooling. Not just my teachings of course, but yours as well. I would send the gold to you accordingly."

Telindil's expression was blank. Anarill could tell that he was thinking it over. Having Fillim gone, would ease things up on him immensely. He would be taken care of, but yet he would be out of sight!

Anariil continued, "He would be treated well, Telindil... you've seen my servants quarters. He would have very nice accommodations." He crossed his legs, taking a sip of wine. "And... I am in need of someone with Fillim's building skills... and a smithy."

"How long would it take, Anariil... for him to work it off per say?" He crossed his fingers under his chin, amber eyes fixed firmly on his friend's green ones.

He swallowed, glancing away just briefly... he could barely look into those eyes without thinking of what he would soon have. "Two years... then he will be given a choice to stay on and receive payment for his work, or leave and do something else."

He knew it was more than fair. It was a good opportunity for someone of his breeding. Under normal circumstances, he wouldn't likely find better anywhere else. And of course, after seeing the flash of fear that had passed over his friend's face, they both knew that Fillim would be going nowhere else.

Telindil sat back, lifted his glass and took in a mouthful of wine. "Fillim's birthday is next week. I will send him to you on that day, with papers that I will have drawn up. He will be yours..."

It was settled. He swore he could already see the weight lift from Telindil's shoulders.

Anariil could barely contain himself! He stood, shaking his friend's hand. Straightening his shirt, he turned and left. As soon as his back was turned toward the door, his face broke into a huge smile!

He had things to prepare.

Fillim's first night there, he knew he needed to let the Mer settle in, feel comfortable... feel safe. After all, these were new surroundings, and he wanted him to be as much at ease as possible. In all actuality, It had taken everything he had, not to so to him. He was so very tempted. The second night however, he simply hadn't had the strength to stay away. Having the Mer in his possession... knowing that he could be alone with him, was too great a temptation!
Great pains were taken to show that he meant him no harm... that he wanted to just please him... that he just wanted to show him affection.

It had been completely mind blowing. Being able to see him bare for the first time. Being able to touch him, taste him... feel him quake beneath him. It was something he would never forget.

Fillim was in such desperate need to get affection, that he took what Anariil offered, like a starving wild thing to a steak. And he had offered it every night that he was home. Some nights just laying in each other's arms, some completely enraptured in each other... the pleasure had been so immense. So great.

He had taken such great care with him, taking almost two weeks to work up to their first time. Right here, on this very boat. Below decks... in the bed that he had used, just for private meetings with lovers. His wife was gone with his son, visiting her family. It had been perfect. He'd brought him aboard, showing him around, getting him acquainted with the space. After all.. they would be spending a lot of time here. He wanted him to be comfortable.

They sat on the bed, kissing and touching... sipping on wine. He had everything ready. Bottles of healing oil on the bedside table, they had bathed prior to coming. They were ready.

He stood, pulling him to his feet, undoing the thin robe he had gifted him with. He let it fall to the floor, where it pooled around his feet. Fillim just looked up at him, as if he were in awe. That look... it had always done him in. Fillim was so fragile... so innocent. So tempting.

Gently, he lay him down, spreading his long legs. He knelt between them and kissed every inch. Lavishing him with tenderness. Caressing him, he bent down, pushing his legs up into his chest and buried his face between his cheeks. Now it was he, who acted like the one starving! Sucking on the tender flesh around his dark, tight hole. Kneading it gently between his teeth. He licked him, running his tongue over him, all the way up to his scrotum... and then taking each round, little nugget into his mouth, he gently sucked on them, rolling his tongue around each one before finally releasing them. Fillim had thrashed on the bed, throwing his head back and forth on the pillow... his deep, red hair flying about his face. He cried out! Moaning and calling out his name!

Straightening his tongue, he gently pushed it in... and held him. The young Mer's body quivered and shook! Pulling his tongue out, feeling that delectable pucker, tighten and pulse around him before pushing it back in.

Anariil sat up, watching him as he grabbed one of the bottles, drizzling the healing oil onto his fingers. Fillim could barely keep his eyes open... he fought for breath, his slender cock, so hard it stood upright. Pearly fluid running down the side of it. He was more than ready.

He knelt over him, he wanted to see his face when his finger pierced his virgin hole. This was something they had yet to do. Only his tongue had entered him and nothing else would, until he made him his.

He pushed it in, so slowly. Fillim's mouth hung open, his head pushed back into the pillow. One hand clinging to Anariil's arm, the other digging into the bed linens. All the way in, he left it for a moment. Then slowly, he started sliding it in and out. He didn't touch his cock... and he didn't intend to. Before they finished, he would cum... untouched.

Two fingers... three. Fillim was begging... grabbing at him... his face pleading. The head on his beautiful cock, a deep purplish red... swollen and weeping. Preparing him had taken longer than anything, and it was worth it! Just watching him... hearing him, Anariil knew he wouldn't last long.
Lining himself up, he slowly pushed the head inside. For just a moment he stayed still. He couldn't look... he could barely stand the sounds that Fillim was making. 

"Au-riel!" but he was so... so tight! He lay down over him, holding himself up on his elbows, his hands entwining into that hair. Lowering his mouth to Fillim's, he pushed in.

Fillim's arms and legs, locked around him. He whimpered... his eyes clenched shut. Anariil whispered to him, "Relax... you need to relax, bear down just a little and breathe slowly, it won't hurt as much."

He took a deep breath and swallowed, nodding. After a moment, he could feel the muscles surrounding him relax some and he started moving, in and out very slowly. It was the depth he wasn't accustomed to. His fingers had readied him for the width. Anariil was almost as slender as he was, just much longer.

The sensation of being opened up and having him so deep inside. He knew how that felt, and after a moment, he would be begging for more! To be filled... to have every nerve in you touched and awakened... jolted to life! To have that oh, so sweet spot rubbed and caressed by your lover. There was nothing else like it on Nirn!

And he had begged... he had screamed his name. His nails digging rivers of red across Anariil's golden back, as he thrust into him, his sweat dripping onto Fillim's thrashing, shaking body.

And when he came... he cried. His body locking up, his hands pounding into Anariil's back. His seed, painting his own dark, olive skin white. He'd clenched up so tightly around him, that it was a pure mix of pleasure and pain. He couldn't take it... and finally he let go. Pulsing inside of him, until he was so filled, he could feel his seed leak out around him.

It was perfection... absolute perfection.

They had lay together, still connected as one. Both of them coming down, their breath slowing. He looked into those warm amber eyes... and very quietly, he whispered against his lips. "You are mine Fillim.... "

He kissed him... "Mine..."

*********

Anariil lay on the bed, the waves gently rocking him. Staring into the ceiling... the letter he'd received, was crumpled in his fist. A steady stream of tears ran down the sides of his temples, falling into undone hair.

'It was time. He could never forget... and he wouldn't let Fillim. No... he would never forget. What he owned would soon be coming home. Everything he loved would be taken. Nothing would remain!'

Chapter End Notes

Lyrics ~ I Am A Rock
by: Simon & Garfunkel

In my mind, I envision Anariil to be a bit of a cross between Ancano and Ondolemar.
Features not as sharp as Ancano's but yet, not as full as Ondolemar's. A little bit longer hair than Ancano tho... I have a kink for hair. Just to give a better visual perspective. Just so you know.
A Study In Control

Chapter Summary

He did not feel any hatred for his father either... on the contrary. He felt sympathy, a need to help him, to bring him back to the ways they had been trained in. He would never feel disrespect toward him, but he lacked will power. That was all too obvious.

His father needed reconditioning... a lesson if you will. To be broken and remolded into what he had fallen from.

The problem was, in the position he was in... his rank. He was almost untouchable. Knowing his father, he would fight and die, before admitting that he needed help.

Chapter Notes

This entire story's main focus is pretty much on the Mer, even with the Companion's involvement. Simply because I can see and agree with some viewpoints all the way around, I wanted to delve a little into the Dominion/Thalmor, showing some positive verses all the negative that many people feel, and some understanding as to why things may be as they are. Simply because there is good and bad in all, and to understand someone, I feel the need to step into their shoes and walk around a little.

I wanted to show a more personal side to not only the Dominion & Thalmor, but the Altmer people as well. I don't feel I'm too far off the mark, taking Lore into as much consideration as possible. But again... it's fiction.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

************

I've built walls,
A fortress deep and mighty,
That none may penetrate.

************

Sitting at his desk, absent-mindedly rubbing a long finger over his brow as he poured through the text. The quill in his hand scratched over the parchment. He was almost finished. Just one last note, then he could indulge in a glass of wine.

Turning a page in the text, rereading over the question again. It was definitely a trick question... their instructor was no fool! He tested them in every sense of the word. Their minds needed to be sharp... as sharp as their blades. Being able to out think your enemy, to anticipate his or her next move. In the longrun, this would be more useful than even magic or physical weapons.

Nords were so passionate about the glory of battle and pride, they tended to let their hearts rule.
Letting emotion over power you would cause the loss of control. And that was inexcusable. It caused the one that wielded the weapon to overcompensate with their swings, thus throwing them off balance. The more upset... the more enraged they became, the more hampered each movement would become.

Their own anger would then become a weapon against themselves, making them vulnerable. It was proven that when one became angry, driven by rage and revenge, their vision actually changed. Their eyes would zero in on their target as if they had blinders on. Seeing nothing but the one that lay in their path, nothing that was around them. Their hearing was decreased from blood flow and pressure. They would literally become the bull amidst the glass.

And that was when the attack would come! Not from the enemy they were focused on and charging, but from the enemies they didn't know were there. They wouldn't even see it coming.

Their medical officers had advised during his last class, that it was almost akin to a type of black out. That the one that was so enraged, often times would have gaps in their memory, things that they had done or things that had happened. It was almost as if their body was taken over... the thing controlling it, only felt... driven on instinct, not the mind, not something that could think and reason.

That would never happen to him. The few days he'd spent agonizing over the last moments at his home, he had blocked out. Pushed it down. It would never hurt him again.

Now he knew why what his instructors taught was so very important. Vitally so! Control was everything! It was not that you felt nothing. You simply did not let the feelings control you! Letting that happen, was weakness. Simply because it made you weak... it made you vulnerable.

The one emotionally hurt, acted and reacted, based solely on that pain. It moved them, made decisions for them that they would have never made, had they not been under it's influence! His instructor compared it to the drunk. The alcohol in their brain affected their reasoning skills and made their decisions for them... it controlled the will, and thus controlled the body!

While everyone around them that was sober, could stand by and watch every wrong move they made. And because of their inebriation, they wouldn't listen to a single word of advice. Love was the same way. Once you felt it, it controlled you. Your mind, your will... and thus, your body were no longer yours to control.

He knew what he had done, it was wrong. His dishonesty, his sneaking and underhandedness. Not the fact that he was intimate with Fillim... he didn't feel the way other's here felt about the bloodlines. He didn't harbor hatred for someone based solely on breeding and status. To him, that was a weakness as well... it was something that controlled other's actions. Those things would not control his!

While Fillim was being whipped, he could only think about his pain... his loss and what was being done to the one he loved. But later, after he had started his training, he looked back on it. The way his father had acted, the things that he had done. The mark he'd made on Fillim's back. He then realized that what controlled his father, was the very thing that they were being taught to recognize and to avoid. Of course, he understood his father's draw, Fillim was beautiful, exotic... but for it to control him to the point that it did. He was obsessed. He should have known... he should've seen the signs. But he had been weak himself.

He did not feel any hatred for his father either, on the contrary. He felt sympathy, a need to help him, to bring him back to the ways they had been trained in. He would never feel disrespect toward him, but he lacked will power. That was all too obvious.
His father needed reconditioning... a lesson if you will. To be broken and remolded back into what he had fallen from. The problem was, in the position he was in... his rank. He was almost untouchable. Knowing his father, he would fight and die before admitting that he needed help.

He scrawled another note, thinking over his father and the situation at home, giving him a bit of insight to the instructors question. Then, he thought over the lesson again.

There was a time for feelings, and it definitely was not on the battlefield.

Even before he had joined he had been schooled for years, since he was just a young Mer. The arts... Tamriel's history, magic and weapons skills along with alchemy. He was well versed in their past wars, the mistakes that had been made. They would never become so over confident that they underestimated their enemy. That would never happen again. The White Gold Concordat that had been signed, allowed their fist to tighten around the enemy's throat. But even with this... there were steps to be taken. They had to be cautious.

Daily, there were many new recruits. Things were changing, new types of warriors... not the Battle Mages the Nords were accustomed to. His first day here, as soon as they had looked at the schooling he'd had, he had been assigned to elite training.

Intellect, power of the mind, and stealth. Weapons and magic both, coupled with this... he would be deadly. His targets would be blind and deaf to the arrival of their own demise.

He was at the top of his class. Something he could hold his head high over, but he would never forget his place. No... not ever! To be so prideful, so self sure... that in itself, was weakness! There would always be more that he could learn and he would be thankful to his teacher.

For each lesson learned, only made him stronger, more deadly.

Chapter End Notes

Lyrics ~ I Am A Rock
by: Simon & Garfunkel
A Study In Control - Part II

Chapter Summary

The problem with pain that wasn't dealt with properly; was that even when you felt you had handled it... that you were stronger, it could rear its ugly head. Just like a great, sleeping beast, that had been suddenly awoken. Bringing along with it, everything you thought was behind you.

Chapter Notes

**Graphic torture** Of course, those that are accustomed to reading this kind of material, this may seem like nothing. You decide. Just wanting to give a heads up. *Also, the students in his class are around his age. Not older, more experienced Altmer. So, I'd say around 18 to 21 years of age in this particular chapter.*

There is much in this chapter that is key to the story and things that will be happening later. Also, in who Tarenen is becoming. Even if you can't read all of the parts involving the actual acts of torture, I urge you to read as much as you can as it is very important.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

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Filling the goblet, he sat back. Sipping his wine and holding the parchment, reading over his notes and answers. His eyes kept wandering... pausing to look over the slight sunburn on his arms from their time spent on the water earlier in the day. It was rapidly fading and more than likely it would be gone by tomorrow. As soon as they had returned, he had started on his studies, work was due tomorrow.

At the current time he had three instructors. One for magic, which included all schools, along with alchemy, one for weapons training, which also covered agility and tactics. And one for conditioning. Some classes were taught singularly with just the one instructor. Some were taught by more than one of them at the same time. Sometimes all three, teaching the use of all the skills combined.

Most of the work requiring reading and study time, came from magic and conditioning. While a lot was hands on for all the classes, he still had yet to read anything from his weapons instructor. That class was all hands on, physical training. Keeping them physically ready, learning techniques and so on. A very interesting and challenging class. Definitely one that would allow for each Mer to find what weapon fit them best.

While all were taught everything, the instructors were intelligent enough to realize that it was best to allow one to follow what suited them naturally. *All* needed magic training and conditioning. But when it came to weapons... if one was singularly gifted say... in archery, that Mer would be an archer. They may do other things, but that would be the physical weapon they used. That would be
He was highly gifted in magic. But when it came to weapons... knives and swords were his art. Stealth and agility. The ability to move unseen and unheard. After yesterday's class his weapons instructor had taken him aside, telling him how very pleased he was. He was now scheduled for special classes... special training, that would put his skills to use. Just another part of the elite section that he was in, and the training that he would undergo. Along with the others he had been grouped with, he was a natural.

Then, when they felt that he was ready, there would be a test.

This was the best thing that could've ever happened to him. Numerous times since his arrival, he'd wished he had been sent earlier. But then he wouldn't have had the experiences he'd had. Everything that he'd gone through... watched both his father and Fillim go through. Everything that had been brought to light, and all of the realizations that he had made.

Even the love... the happiness, as short lived as it was. All of it was a lesson. One that he would never repeat.

Volana was his favorite instructor. Conditioning. The Mer had helped him so very much. Everything he had been still dealing with, his questions over his feelings. Over control and how to master it. Of course, he didn't know everything... not yet. But very soon, he would be much better equipped to protect himself from the very things that he sought armor against.

There were some things he simply needed to think over still... things that would have a huge effect on his family, and on someone else.

He was tough, as all their instructors were, but he was also wise... so intuitive and so brilliant!

Two days ago, the lesson he had taught had dealt with torture. Not all, but some, would be playing the role of inquisitor. It was possible that any of them at some time, may be in a position that would require them to hold a captive and question them. Some would be in a position where they would have to witness it. Control in both situations, would be key! Vital!

His class was led into one of the inquisition rooms, and then lined up. As soon as they entered, they could see a prisoner bound on a rack, the Mer wore nothing but a breech cloth, and he was blindfolded. One of their own. He was a traitor.

An older Mer, one of their foot soldiers. As soon as he had landed on the shores of Skyrim, he made the mistake of telling one of his comrades that he planned to defect. He was immediately turned in and sailed back to the Isles. Reconditioning wouldn't be happening in this case. He would be used as an example.

Volana would not be performing the torture himself, one of their Senior Medical Officers was present, he would do the honors today. Their medical officers were healers as well. Not only did they fight on the battlefields alongside their Mages and soldiers, but they were key to healing those that had fallen, so they could keep going... keep fighting. So that when the fight was done, more of them could return home to their families alive.

When Restoration was taught, it was a Medical Officer that taught it. This would not be the case today.

They would be attending classes taught by him, as medical training and Restoration was necessary. Not just in the case of healing and treating wounds, but also in cases of torture. They would be
taught numerous different methods. In most cases, you wanted your captive to stay alive, thus the injury you inflicted couldn't be too severe.

In some later classes, this particular Medical Officer would be teaching them what to do, where to do it and for how long. The perseverance of the captive would also play a role in what you would choose to start with, and how you should proceed. This Mer however, did not have any information that they needed. He was simply a training tool, and would be exterminated once the class was over.

In some cases, but not all... there would be one that conducted the actual torture and one that asked the questions, trying to get information. But not always. They all would need this experience.

Volana stood before them, blocking most of their views of the bound Mer. His powerful voice rang throughout the room. "Today you will all bear witness to the torture of this traitor!" He held his hand out, gesturing toward the Mer.

He came closer, holding his hands behind his back. The leather from his robes, straining over the muscle in his long arms. Abruptly coming right up into the face of the student next to him, his amber eyes narrowed, boring into the student's wide ones, seeing the fear they contained. Though he spoke to the entire class, he remained there... staring at the frightened Mer.

"While this is taking place, I will witness all of you!"

Their instructors never wore hoods indoors. Only when they conducted classes outside were they worn, and then not by all. They would not earn their Thalmor robes until Graduation day. For now, they wore an array of student's attire befitting each class and the activities held within.

He turned and faced the Medical Officer. "This is Undilar, he is one of our Senior Medical Officers. He is one of those here, that you would see if you were sick or injured. He also more than likely gave many of you your entrance physical, and at some point, will be teaching you all Restoration."

Undilar nodded his head to them in greeting. Volana stood to the side, "Undilar, can you tell my students what I will be looking for while you perform your duty?"

An extremely tall Mer walked forward. Very tall and yet, quite broad through the shoulders as well. Very well built. His white hair, was cropped to form around his face, fanning down his neck where it ended between his shoulder blades. The stark white of his hair stood out in extreme contrast against his golden skin. Making it quite obvious that every opportunity he had was spent in the sun.

His hair, which would have normally been a flaxen white-blonde, was made even lighter from being bleached out by the exposure. Giving the impression to whomever saw it, that he was older than his actual years.

Of course, that's only if they were taking in his hair. Once your eyes took in his face, it was obvious that he was not an aged Mer. It was also painfully obvious that he had been bred from the purest of stock. The finest, sharpest features... and eyes of brilliant green. And then, there was his height. He would have towered over the tallest of Nords. Tall, even for one of their kind.

He was absolutely exquisite in appearance. Tarenen already knew just from word of mouth, that there were many of the young male students, that held a bit of a crush on him. More than likely female students as well, but the fact that his class only contained males... he couldn't be sure. From what he'd been told, all were too intimidated by him to do anything more than stare and fantasize
He nodded again, "Of course. Your instructor will be looking for physical signs of distress. While one may have the strength to remain still and silent while witnessing torture... there are other signs, that would still give away the fact that you are struggling. The most obvious signs of course, are passing out and vomiting. Then the rest as follows... facial expression, skin discoloration, as in becoming pale or a sickly color. Fidgeting, the licking of ones lips, excessive swallowing and looking away. The ones that are the least visible, are sweating, pupil dilation and rapidity of breath and pulse."

He walked back over to the bound Mer and waited. Volana walked along the line, looking at each student, speaking as he went. "I want to make it clear to all of you! Today's lesson is not pass or fail! It is simply to see which of you are capable of holding yourselves together while witnessing an act of torture!"

He stopped in front of Tarenen, "I will be watching you! Studying you!"

He knew better than to look him directly in the eye. Even when he was right in your face, you never looked at him! None of them! The key was to find a focal point in the distance and lock onto it. The only time you looked directly at them, was when you were given permission, or when you were at ease and an actual conversation was being held.

Respect... the knowing of one's place.

From growing up around his father, he knew what Volana watched for... he could see how you breathed, how your eyes reacted... if you had broken out in a sweat even. It was like he could see into your soul. Tarenen found him exhilarating! He was a master! And he was exactly what Tarenen strove to be.

He moved on, "Only once I feel that you can handle no more, will you be dismissed! I also want to make it very clear, that whether or not you handle this well... this will not be your only lesson on this subject!"

Turning back toward Undilar, he waved his hand, letting him know that he may proceed.

Walking over to a table lined with numerous medical instruments, he chose a pair of pliers. "I will tell you what I am doing and why, as I work."

He walked down to the Mer's feet, which were shackled at the ankles. Slowly he grazed the pliers along the underside of the Mer's foot, causing his body to jerk under his restraints! "I will start at the feet. Why? Because the feet, just like the hands, are full of nerve endings! They are extremely sensitive."

As soon as he finished speaking, he grabbed hold of the Mer's right foot! Holding it firmly in place, and placing the pliers onto the nail of the big toe, he pulled sharply, ripping it off!

The Mer was silent...

For a moment, Volana watched them from a distance. Undilar was just getting warmed up. This was nothing. After all, he was torturing one of their own. He would have been trained to withstand pain. Just as all of the students before him would be.

He also knew the fact that the one on the rack was Altmer, one of their own... would be harder for some of them to handle. Even with the fact that he was a traitor.
Had he been a Nord, things may have been different.

A few of the students surrounding him, sucked in air through their clenched teeth, or gasped. The growing tension in the room was now physically evident. He stayed at attention, watching Undilar.

The second nail now removed... the Mer was groaning, his teeth clenching, hands fisted up.

What he did, and how he explained it... how he moved with such ease as he worked.

The third nail...

It fascinated him.

Volana walked down the line, taking them all in. Student's hands were now up to their mouths, covering them, either in shock or nausea. Almost all, wore expressions of sympathy, disgust or oncoming illness. A few of them however, were still holding out. That was good. This was always a good way of separating the strongest from the weakest. Of course all of them would eventually be shaped into what they wanted. Some just took longer than others.

Not getting enough of a stir from the prisoner, he decided to move on.

"Skinning... is another technique that is highly effective for one that is tight lipped. With this, you can work as fast or slow as you please. It will not kill the prisoner! And you can do it anywhwere on the body!"

As he talked he moved back over to the tray, selecting a surgical knife. He paused, turning toward them, holding the knife. "The most important thing is to not cut too deeply. You only want to cut through the first to second epidermal layer. The smaller the area, the easier it is to pull the skin off neatly. I feel the need to tell you! There are numerous types of torture! The fact that our subject can hear me! He knows what is coming, and yet is incapable of stopping it! This is a form of psychological torture!"

He held his hand over the Mer's face. "Which is very effective! As you can see... he is weeping. Silent tears, are still tears!"

He knelt down to the Mer's ear and spoke very calmly... very slowly, so they all could hear. "Determination does you no good today... if I were you, I would let loose of your control. The longer they remain upright, the longer I will continue."

He walked down the rack and stopped in front of the Mer's thighs. Taking hold of one leg just above the knee, he lowered the knife and slowly began to cut a line moving upward in the direction of the Mer's hip. The Altmer was whimpering, crying... his hands opening and closing, attempting to grab at anything! His head thrashed violently back and forth, limbs jerking under their shackles!

And seemingly oblivious to it all, Undilar calmly moved to the next cut. Blood ran in little rivulets down the side of the Mer's leg, pooling onto the rack and dripping onto the floor.

Tarenen seemed to be oblivious as well. Oblivious to the other students around him and how they were being effected, he lifted up onto his toes. He wanted to see what Undilar was doing... see it up close!

Volana walked down the line. As soon as the Mer let out a good scream, two of them dropped. The one he was most interested in... was Tarenen.

Having made all of the cuts, he was ready to peel off the piece of skin. "Before I rid this worthless
creature of his flesh, I feel the need to give a bit of information." His eyes scanned over the
students. Out of the ten present, two had fainted, one had vomited and two more were holding their
stomachs, weeping. They would soon be joining the first three. There were five still standing, that
still seemed to have their composure. So far...

His eyes settled on Tarenen, noticing how engrossed he was. And how calm...

Arching one finely shaped eyebrow, he addressed him. 'Would you care for a closer look?'

Tarenen's eyes instantly went to Volana, seeking approval. He nodded, holding out his hand toward
Undilar. Tarenen gave a slight bow to his instructor and walked forward.

Undilar spoke to him and the rest of the group. "The main thing with skinning, if you want to keep
the subject from getting infection, or succumbing to shock, it is important to heal shortly after the
session. Of course, that is if you care!" Tarenen watched spell bound, as he took two sets of long
tweezers, digging them under the edge of the cut and started to peel it back, very slowly.

The Mer was screaming! begging! his whole body lifting and arching up off the rack! The leather
restraints creaked from his fruitless efforts to get free, the buckles rattling noisily! Nothing stopped
Undilar. He continued until the rectangle of skin was removed, showing the connective tissue and
muscle underneath. A four by six inch space, had been opened up like a window on the front of the
Mer's thigh. Blood flowed freely from the wound, running down the rack and onto the floor,
splattering onto their boots.

He looked up at Tarenen, "As you can see, I have gone down to the third layer."

Finally, Undilar spared a glance up to see that not a single student remained standing. The ones that
had passed out, would be removed by stretcher and taken to the infirmary until they recovered. The
others were being dismissed, one at a time and a servant would be called in to clean up the vomit.

Volana nodded... it was time.

Undilar raised his voice, so Tarenen could hear him over the sobbing Mer that lay between them.
"I am told that you fancy the blade..." Taking an ornately carved dagger from the tray, he handed it
to Tarenen.

"He has served his purpose, I would like to see how you would end this traitor's life."

Tarenen looked at him matter-of-factly, reaching up to take the blade. Volana, who had walked up
to the end of the rack, now watched them closely.

As soon as Tarenen took hold of the blade, Undilar's grip tightened, holding it a moment longer.
Tarenen's head tilted as he blinked at him in question.

Undilar stared into his eyes, "Always remember this, Tarenen. To kill with a blade, is a personal
act. A violent act. It is not killing from afar, the way an archer or a magic user does. You will feel
his flesh give way, his life end beneath the piece of metal that you wield!"

With that, he released his hold. Tarenen held the blade and looked down at the Mer. This was a
mercy killing. He was doing both this traitor and their people a favor. Clutching it in both hands, he
positioned the point over the Mer's heart and raised it above his head, his eyes meeting Undilar's
for just a split second.

Then, with all his strength he plunged the knife down, until it was buried to the hilt! Warm blood
splattered over his hands, shooting up in a small geyser, covering the Mer's midsection, along with
the sleeves of his robe. He let go and lowered his hands to his sides.

Instead of focusing on the rapidly dying Mer before them, he looked up at his instructor and Undilar. Both of them were smiling at him. Volana raised a hand up to his shoulder, "Well done... well done, indeed!"

***

The next morning, Volana stood at the front of the classroom. They were all seated. "I will take this time to discuss yesterday's events."

Every student sat as still as stone. "As I said, it was not pass or fail! However, you must know, that each of you will undergo further training in that field. It is a requirement. And at some point in order to graduate, you will all have to be able to get through it! Without so much as a flinch... a grimace! In fact, I don't even want to see a bead of sweat grace your golden brows!"

He leaned back onto his desk. "You all will also at some point undergo training, conducted by myself and Undilar, to withstand pain yourselves! In case of capture!" Amusedly, he looked at the shock that crossed some of their faces, and crossed his arms, "Now, any of you that have witnessed torture before, I would like you to please step forward."

Tarenen stood and walked toward the front of the class, and stopped.

Volana looked at him for a moment, then back to the rest of the class. He'd figured as much, especially knowing who his father was. "I would like you to tell us all, Tarenen, what you were witness to. A brief description, if you will."

He turned and stood at attention, looking out over the class, focusing on the back wall. He spoke clearly, "I was bound and forced to watch as my lover was whipped."

As soon as the words left his mouth, Volana looked at the rest of his students. "Dismissed! I will see you all at our next scheduled class time."

His hand raised up to Tarenen's arm, staying him. Once the others had gone, he spoke quietly, "I wish for you to accompany me for evening meal... dress casual."

Tarenen nodded, walking to his desk to collect his books and satchel. "Tarenen..." his strong voice, now soft. He was seated at his desk, looking up at him. "I am not displeased with you in any way. I would simply like to speak with you privately."

He nodded, "I understand."

***

Carene watched him as he dressed for dinner. Tarenen looked into the full length mirror, brushing out his hair. He would keep it down. Many of them had long hair, some in the extreme. As long as it was kept back and didn't interfere with training, the instructors didn't care. It had grown all the way down to his middle back now. It had been a long time since it'd been this long. In fact, not since he was just a little Elfling, had it been. And then, it was down to his bottom.

Carene walked behind him, straightening his collar. Looking him over and trying to hide his concern over the pained look that suddenly flitted across Tarenen's face. But just as quickly as it had come, it vanished. He knew what plagued him, he also knew he'd been working very hard at keeping it under control.
The problem with pain that wasn't dealt with properly, was that even when you felt you had handled it... that you were stronger, it could rear it's ugly head. Just like a great, sleeping beast, that had been suddenly awoken. Bringing along with it, everything you thought was behind you.

Carene pushed it from his mind and took in the beautiful Mer that stood before him. He wore the lightest green, silk shirt, tucked into tan doeskin leggings that hugged his every curve. And knee high, leather boots, that laced up the sides.

Tilting his head, he smiled at him. "You look absolutely divine."

As soon as they both entered elite training, Volana had placed them together as roommates. Stating that he knew that they would be a wonderful fit for each other. He could feel it.

Of course, they weren't in the same conditioning class. They had different needs where that was concerned. But each instructor would take time periodically, to observe the other classes. Then they would all meet and compare thoughts. Carene's instructor brought up their pairing to Volana, and they had agreed.

They were the perfect match. Complimenting each other in every way.

Tarenen looked back at him in the mirror. "Thank you."

***

He stood at the door to his instructor's quarters and readied himself to knock. Looking up in complete shock, when the door opened, "Were you planning on coming in?"

Feeling the heat rising up in his face, he smiled. "Forgive me."

His quarters were done in a mixture of rich burgundy and earth tones, very warm and relaxing to the senses. A few candles had been lit, bringing just the right ambiance to the room, and a window opened. Allowing the gentle evening air to circulate throughout.

Volana motioned for him to sit while he remained standing to pour them some wine. Roasted pheasant, with mushrooms and leeks in a wine sauce that was spooned over it. Potatoes and baby peas, to the side. The wonderful aroma was making his mouth water.

Plates had already been prepared. Evidently his servant had been dismissed, giving them the privacy they needed.

Tarenen watched him as he sat down. He was in complete awe of him. So powerful, and so under control, all of the time. The fact that he seemed to know what was behind each Mer's eyes, completely amazed him! Such a deep, intuitive gift.

He couldn't help but let his eyes wander. He'd held him in thought so very often. His deep blue shirt, open down the front, allowing an amazing view of his toned chest. White-blonde hair, down. A sight that he had never seen. His features were more on the full side than Undilar's, but no less beautiful. And those eyes. He had such a weakness for that amber shade.

Volana sat quietly for a moment, watching the young Mer's eyes travel over him. He took great pleasure in the fact that he could know, just how one's eyes moved. Where they went. How their body was positioned... every movement, all the little things that whispered to him of what they wanted.

They would make small talk while they ate. But, what he was most interested in, other than
Tarenen himself, was what he had witnessed. As soon as it was out of his student's mouth, he knew who had done the whipping. He would be taking this one under his wing!

Tarenen poured out his heart, he did not cry, as he no longer really felt the pain of it. But, he held nothing back about how he felt. Telling him of his failure to keep himself under control while it was taking place. The pain and anguish that had taken him over. That was now his goal! To not fall to weakness. To not be controlled by those feelings. But, to be the one in control!

He would give all honesty to this magnificent Mer, who would now guide him.

They sat on the sofa, knee to knee. Very gently, Volana took his wine glass from his hands and set it down. He had waited for this.

"There is only one time, Tarenen... when the loss of control is forgivable. Can you tell me when that is?"

He stood, taking the young Mer's hands, leading him into the bedroom. Standing before the bed, Volana's hands caressing his arms, Tarenen's voice, a soft whisper. He looked into those warm eyes, so heavy with lust. "During times of indulgence in personal pleasures. Pleasures of the body... sex."

Volana's hands moved up to his face, his fingers wrapping into his hair, his breath ghosting across Tarenen's lips. "Correct."

It had been a long time since he'd had a Mer this young... this tight. He felt so, so good. Tarenen's hands, clutching onto the cheeks of his ass, squeezing, digging into him, pushing him in deeper and deeper. The young Mer's head, thrown back into the pillow, his body covered in a sheen of sweat. Eyes closed, mouth open, as he moaned out in delight. Long legs wrapped around Volana's hips.

He whispered into his student's ear... his hips, rocking against him... holding him. The young Mer's arms, now wrapped around him, fingers digging into his back. "I will help you, Tarenen. I am here for you... always." Placing light kisses along his delicately pointed ear.

And he would be.

His student had given him what he wanted. Valuable information. He knew Tarenen had held some back, though, and he understood why. He also knew that it would all come out in time. And Tarenen would be rewarded, just as he was right now.

Intimate pleasures were such a wonderful release. And this young Mer, he had so very much that he held in. He needed help dealing with his feelings. The aftermath of what he had been through. And he would love every second of aiding him.

***

Tarenen quietly, opened the door to his quarters and stepped inside. It was early morning. Volana had insisted he stay.

"He's never had anyone stay the night before."

He jumped, looking over at Carene in shock as guilt flooded through him. He was still in bed, propped up on his elbow. Long, silky hair, cascading down his bare shoulder. Tarenen let out a long breath, walking over, he sat down on the side of Carene's bed. His roommate lay back down and looked up at him, a sly smile now gracing his face.
Tarenen couldn't help but smile back. If anyone here could lighten his mood, it was him. He was beautiful. The longest hair, the color of corn silk. Full lips, and those eyes... that warm amber... just like Volana's. He was the positive force in Tarenen's life. But with that, he was also always in control. A fine example that one could be and still be content. Still be happy. Their instructors knew that he, was what Tarenen needed.

Carene spoke through his wide grin. "You had sex."

Tarenen's own smile broadened, heat rising up in his face. His went head down, now trying to hide it as he looked into his lap. "Are you jealous? Upset with me?"

Carene sat up, taking his hands from his lap. "Never! You needed it. Do you feel better?" The smile still remained.

Tarenen laughed, he couldn't help it. "I do... but..."

Carene's hand came up to his mouth, gently quieting him. "Then that's all that matters! You needed him. You will need him. And you and I, we will still have each other." Long arms wrapped around him, holding him.

"Come, we have the day to ourselves. Let's get out of here, I'm dying to be on the water."

Tarenen just smiled at him, shaking his head. Another day of sailing, he was definitely turning him into an addict. He was so glad that they would be assigned together.

***

Volana stretched out his long legs as Undilar poured their tea. "Breakfast was wonderful... as usual."

Undilar sat down, a smile spreading out on his face. "How was your dinner last night... with our protégé?"

He raised his cup, taking a sip. "It was divine... as was he." He couldn't help but let a little chuckle escape.

"I would say that I envy you... but, that would be weak of me, wouldn't it?" He laughed.

"You shouldn't feel envious. He looks up to you as well, very much so, I might add. He just needs me a little more right now."

He crossed his legs, "I have a matter that I need looked into... quietly."

Chapter End Notes

*Also, I know I could've described that scene with him using a skinning knife, somewhat in the way one would skin an animal or scalp someone. But one of my partner's relatives are fond of squirrel. (I know, ha ha ) I get flack any time that's mentioned. Anyway, I watched him skin the whole body with just a few minor cuts. So I decided to go that route.*

I do apologize if this was a little disturbing for some, but I actually held back. I really
didn't feel the need to get too severe with it here. After all, it was just training. There may be more coming up, but it won't dominate the story. Tarenen will become a regular character in this, showing the transformations taking place in him. There's a reason.

*For any that are reading Leverage, you can definitely count on it there as well, just a different kind. Wild as well, again, diff kind and purpose.*
Letting out a deep breath, she knelt down to close it. Simply out of respect for his privacy, she made every attempt to avert her eyes to the items within.

Until she noticed a ragged, leather bound book. Numerous folded pieces of parchment were sticking out of it here and there where they had been tucked inside. She paused, looking at it. Her curiosity getting the better of her, she finally picked it up and sat down at his desk.

As soon as she opened it, she regretted it.

This is moving time ahead by a matter of 2 or 3 weeks. I am splitting into two, as this one will be very long, going over a blend of what's going on in the Isles and stuff in Skyrim. Most of the chapters from here on out, will be more like this, so I can fit everything in.

The first place she went, was Fillim's old quarters. They hadn't replaced him... they never would.

Anariil had completely lost any interest in the maintenance of their estate. He had lost interest in life. All he did now, when he wasn't at Thalmor headquarters, was sit on his boat or in Fillim's room... and drink.

Even with Headquarters being just a short distance from the training center and the barracks, he still had yet to visit their son. As far as she knew, he hadn't even checked in on him to see how he fared. In fact, since Tarenen had left their estate... he hadn't even spoken of him.

Turning around, she walked out and closed the door, heading down toward the docks.

Hearing her come aboard, he inhaled deeply through his nose, closing his eyes as she approached him. "What do you want Fairne?"

She couldn't cry over it... not any longer. She walked to the desk in the corner and grabbed the chair, pulling it over to the bed he lay on and sat down. Laying there in pants alone, holding a half empty wine bottle, he opened his eyes and stared up at the ceiling. "I want you to go to him Anariil. I want you to tell Telindil."

Without moving his eyes from the ceiling, he let out a huff of air. "Tell him what, exactly?"

"Tell him that you love him."
He turned his head to her, a look of pure incredulity overtaking his face. "You know nothi- "

Cutting him off, she put her head in her hands. "You forget, Anariil... we were schooled together. I saw how you would look at him. Even then it was evident."

Pushing himself up, he stood and walked across the room, lifting the bottle up to his lips to take a drink. He slowly shook his head, "Do you not think, that I haven't thought about doing that very thing almost daily? For years, Fairne!"

He couldn't believe he was actually talking to her about this! But they had been friends since they were young. All of them had been. That being one of the only reasons that she had agreed to their pairing, even knowing it would be sexless once their child was born. She had known of his orientation.

He turned to her, clutching onto the bottle as if it were his life line. "If I saw rejection in his eyes, or heard it in his voice... it would kill me Fairne! I would rather die than face that."

"Are you so sure that is what you would get? He has never married Anariil... not ever. To this day he remains alone."

Leaning back against the desk, he balanced the bottle on his thigh, closing his eyes. "We... we fooled around, just once when we were but young Mer..." Tears escaped his eyes, rolling down his cheeks. "Never once, did he ever look at me, Fairne... the way I saw him look at females."

Wiping an arm across his eyes, "A male that wants a male knows. He knows when someone feels the way he does. If I told him, he may say that he understood, but our friendship... it would never be the same again. It is better to suffer and have him in my life, in any form. Than to be without him completely, or to have that marred."

Standing, she walked to him and took the bottle from his hands. "Then why did you not keep Fillim here? When being separated from him," she held up a hand in his direction, gesturing to him. "has done this to you!"

Turning from her, he walked back over to the bed and sat down on it's edge, laying his clasped hands into his lap, his head bent downward. "How can you speak to me of him! Do you think I would keep someone that didn't want me? Someone that would rather be with my son! OUR SON FAIRNE!"

Sitting back down on the chair that faced him, their knees almost touched. "I know that he loved you! I was here, remember! I heard everything Anariil. He would have been with you after Tarenen went to training. Did you once, ever tell him how you felt?"

He faced her, his grief was so apparent. His beautiful features pinched up, his brows gathered in all his dismay. "How could I? He was our servant. A mixed breed servant. What future could we possibly had? Living our entire lives hiding it from everyone! Especially Tarenen! As if he would have understood!"

He had seen what Telindil had gone through with Fillim's mother, trying to hide it. Never being able to have a real relationship. It hadn't been fair to either of them.

Dropping his face into his hands... he wept. His shoulders shaking, tears falling to the floor from in between his fingers. "My fear... and my guilt, kept me from telling him... and that only ended up driving him to my son!"

He knew he had no business being with Fillim. So often, he felt like he was betraying Telindil. But
Fillim was all he would ever have of him. That's how it started. Then, he fell in love with him, and the guilt increased ten fold. Eating at him slowly, day by day.

"Tarenen does not feel the way most do over the bloodlines. You should know that better than anyone! He himself fell for Fillim Anariil! I think he would have understood."

He took her hands, shaking his head. "You don't understand, Fairne..." She didn't know who's son he was, she didn't know the motivation behind his presence in their home. She didn't know.

Of course, Fillim may have told Tarenen who his father was, but Fillim did not know about their love until he was sent away. Tarenen didn't know that he loved Fillim's father. He didn't know that Fillim started out with them, being his replacement for the one Mer he so wanted, that he could never have.

He had never in his entire life, thought he would wish for the sweet release of death... long for it.

Perhaps, when this was all over, he would get his wish.

Sweet release.

**********

As soon as their talk was over, he packed a bag and left for their vacation home. Telling her, 'There were just too many reminders here.'

Everywhere he looked, he saw Fillim... remembered their time together. Then his betrayal! And he was. He was betrayed, not only as his lover, but as his master and as a father. He still couldn't bear the thought of having to see his own son. He couldn't yet look upon him. The hurt was far too great.

Raising his hand to finger the amulet around his neck... he hadn't worn it in so long. As soon as Fillim came to stay with them, the night he was first with him, he had taken it off. For the first time in years, he'd been without it. His guilt had forced him to take it off. After that, it was kept under lock and key.

It was priceless. In fact, in his long life, he had never seen another one. Anywhere.

But for many years prior, he hadn't been able to part with it. He gladly wore it, especially when he went to visit Telindil. He wanted him to know just how much it meant to him. That it was precious to him.

When he had gotten his highest rank in the order, Telindil had thrown him a party to celebrate. His gift to him. He had waited until everyone else had gone to give it to him. They were both well into their cups and he had called him to his private quarters. Anariil had actually thought, perhaps that he was going to open up to him. That just maybe, the very thing he had been waiting so long for was finally going to happen.

Telindil walked over to a painting on the wall, moving it to reveal a hidden safe. Anariil waited as he opened it... watching him, confused. Finally turning to him, he held a gold chain, the links exquisitely crafted. On it was Au-riel's symbol.

His hands had flown to his mouth in shock. He couldn't believe what he was seeing! He had stared at it, his eyes welling up with tears.

Then his friend had walked around behind him and lowered it over his head. His tears had
overflowed, spilling down his cheeks as he listened to him speak. "My great, great grandfather found this on expedition, far, far away from here. It has been handed down from generation to generation. You Anariil, have always been like a brother to me. I give this to you. A token of my friendship, and my gift to you, in appreciation of your service to our people."

He'd smiled, his shaking hands wiping his tears away. Right then he knew... it would never be anything more, than what it was. He was seen as a brother. A friend.

But still he had cherished the gift and the feelings that his friend did feel. He would never do anything to mar them. And now that he and Fillim were no more, he would wear it. He would never part with it again.

**********

Waiting until he left, she walked back into his study. She planned to check the house and lock up. Having had her own long term lover, she was rarely there for any length of time now. When Tarenen was still home, she would only see her Mer a few times per week. Now she usually stopped by their estate just once a week, to check in on the servants and make sure that anything that was needed, was supplied. Most of the time the servants had the full run of their estate. She knew their presence wasn't missed.

Walking through the room, she wanted to check the windows to make sure they were locked. As soon as she was around the back of his desk, she noticed the chest he kept was open.

It was made from a blend of different trees, that had been collected from numerous places throughout Tamriel. His father had given it to him when he was very young. Anariil had always been a private Mer in the extreme. She understood this. Most of their males required space of their own, just as many of the females she knew did. It was probably the same with any of the races. He never offered to tell her what was inside of it and she never asked.

Letting out a deep breath, she knelt down to close it. Simply out of respect for his privacy, she made every attempt to avert her eyes from the items that lay within. Until she noticed a ragged, leather bound book. Numerous folded pieces of parchment, were sticking out of it here and there, where they had been tucked inside. She paused, looking at it. Her curiosity getting the better of her, she finally picked it up and sat down at his desk.

As soon as she opened it, she regretted it.
Now he knew he was going to be sick. Abruptly cutting her off, he shoved the book back at her!! *Put it back!! Put all of this back!!*

Making every attempt to lower his voice, his panic fought to overtake him! He was terrified to be heard! "Do you know what he will do, if he finds these gone?! He will go on a rampage Mother!" Shaking his head, he pushed the book back at her, "I don't want this! I don't even want to know what it says! Please..."

*************

The courtyard and gardens of the training center were alive with students. It was an absolutely beautiful day. Picking a shady spot for their midday meal, he would need it if they planned to sail again on the morrow.

Their only class on the last day of their week, was Weapons training. Being out early, would ensure them time to prepare for tonight. Now, he knew the reason Volana and Undilar planned it on this day. They had no classes to teach.

For some reason, even with the fact that Carene was more fair than him, he always seemed to burn faster. His magic instructor, upon seeing him pink, had given them a recipe for some healing tea. It would aid in him healing, but would supply more of what his body needed to get the beautiful color that Carene always had, instead of the pink he always seemed to end up with.

Carene had laid out a blanket for them to sit upon, while he took their food out of a basket. Mixed greens, with apples and cheese sliced up on the side. A bottle of wine. It was perfect.

He had been with Volana twice now. Each time spending the night. He at first, couldn't get over how easy Carene was over it. But now, after talking with them both, he was starting to understand.

The day after his first night with Volana, they had gone sailing, spending the entire day on the water. Relaxing and laughing, playing around with each other. Simply having fun. They had sat down on the deck to eat. The sun sparkling off the water like diamonds. Carene had poured their wine, then raised his glass. "A toast!"

Tarenen had laughed, raising his glass to meet his. "To what do we toast?"

Carene's golden eyes grew heavy, a sultry smile graced his face. "To us... each other, I toast to having you." Their glasses chimed together and Carene leaned closer, kissing him lightly on the lips. "To us Tarenen... I love you."

Whispering against Carene's mouth. "To us, I love you as well, Carene."

He was overjoyed, and he wanted to beam about it. But at the same moment, he couldn't help but feel, that he had betrayed him. As soon as he had looked down into his wine glass, Carene edged closer to him. Raising a hand to his chin, he looked into his eyes. "I know that you have the same feelings I do Tarenen. I see it... I feel it in you. You cannot worry over being with him. That would
never cause my feelings for you to falter."

Tarenen finally raised his face, he was so torn... so confused. "How can you be alright with it? Are you not angry? Do you not feel betrayed?"

Calmly sipping on his wine, he just shook his head, "I understand your draw to him. He and I are very much alike. He is simply older and more experienced." Golden hairs, that had escaped his tie, flew about in the breeze. "He is truly a master."

Setting down his wine glass, and taking both of Tarenen's hands in his. "What if I were to tell you, that I have often spent time with Undilar. Would you be upset with me? Would you stop loving me? Or would you understand, that it is not me doing anything to hurt you. It is simply me getting what I need to grow and learn from him. The same way that you are getting what you need from Volana. That is why we are so good together Tarenen. That is why we will fit each other in battle so well. We will give each other what we need. We will complete each other. And in time, we may not ever feel the need to be with another... but only time will tell."

Tarenen shook his head, thinking about what he said. "No. I would not be angry, as it was nothing you did with malice. It began before us and you have been open with me about it. You still love me."

Looking down at their hands, he was starting to understand and starting to feel better. "It is not you, being with just anybody, to just be with them. It is for the same reason that I was with Volana. He gives you something that you require. They are but our instructors... mentors, in every way." It was true. He realized that now that he thought about it. What he felt for and from Volana, was completely different than what he felt for Carene. A completely different type of emotion. So, it was the same for Carene.

Releasing his hands, he lifted his glass and took another drink. "What if I were to tell you, that Volana and Undilar are partners." Tarenen's mouth dropped and his eyes widened. He couldn't believe it! Picturing the two of them together, he was stunned.

Carene chuckled. "They have been partners for over twenty years. The rings they wear are binding rings. They own an estate together. Even though they have separate quarters at the training center, they still are with each other daily. When they are not working, they live together at their estate. I have been there, they host numerous parties. I've been to a few. In fact, they are having one in two weeks, on the eve prior to our break days."

He took a sip of wine, smiling in that sly, sexy way he knew Tarenen couldn't resist. "Volana wants me to bring you."

He knew his face was red, he could feel it. He was also, feeling better. About a lot of things. Understanding. Feeling like it was all coming together. He was so blessed to have these Mer in his life. Like he could finally heal from all the hurt. He still couldn't get over the first time they met. He never would. It was like the start of a new life.

With having every class together, except Conditioning, they had gotten close fast. It seemed that they had just gravitated toward each other. He had felt in many ways, the same way about Carene as he did Volana. Their very first class together, as soon as he saw him... he was completely struck by his beauty. And he watched him... he couldn't help it. He wasn't anything like the others. He was different.

One of the other things that he noticed quite quickly, was that Carene wasn't vain. He wasn't snobbish. He didn't carry himself like some of the other Mer Tarenen had seen. They were so
beautiful, but they knew it, and it showed in their personalities. They were ugly inside, and it was a turn off to him.

But Carene, he was easy going. Easy to smile and laugh, but also quiet. And he was in control.

Their first Weapons class showed his agility, his true power and potential. How, like in the snap of one's fingers, he became a skilled and deadly force. Every breath, every movement, calculated and timed perfectly with his enemy's. He was like Volana. He had the same gift. He seemed to always know, just how you were feeling. What you were thinking, and what you needed.

And they had both told him that he had it as well. It simply needed to be honed.

In fact, Carene was the only one, that knew everything that had happened to him. At his home, with his family. He didn't judge and he didn't see him any differently. He helped him!

He was closer to telling Volana the remainder of it all, spilling more and more each time they were alone. He knew he would end up giving him the rest of it, at the party perhaps. He made him feel so comfortable, that he could tell him anything. The Mer was like an older version of Carene. In fact, looking at him now, it was like looking at Volana when he was a youth. Now he could see what Carene would be like when they were up in their years. Beaming at him, he loved him so.

They reclined under the trees, munching on apple. "Are you ready for tonight?"

Tarenen nodded, smiling... he was excited and yet a bit nervous. "Yes... will there be any other students there?"

Wiping his fingers on a towel, he lifted his glass, sipping. "No, we will be the only students. They rarely invite their students, actually. There will be older Mer there. Older than us... and, it will be just males."

Sitting down his glass. "I feel the need to tell you... their parties, are probably very different Tarenen, from any that you've ever been to"

Before he could finish, one of the guard approached them. Looking at down at Tarenen.. "Pardon my interruption. But I have been sent to tell you, there is a visitor here to see you." Pointing toward the garden entrance, Tarenen looked up, his mother was standing there, watching him.

Instantly, just seeing her, his chest clenched up... she looked distraught. She was holding onto a knapsack, a duffle bag sat on the ground, next to her feet.

Standing, he brushed himself off. "Thank you, that will be all." The guard turned and left.

He turned toward Carene, who was looking at her... watching her. "I so wanted you to meet her Carene. But..."

Glancing back at her, Carene stopped him, "I know, she looks upset. There will be another time, do not worry over it. I will wait here for you."

Giving his hand a squeeze, he left him and walked toward her. The closer he got to her, the more severe the weight in his chest became.

Her eyes were red from crying, she looked as though she had aged... he was almost afraid to ask. Putting his hands up to her arms, "Mother..."

Her voice cracked, "Is there somewhere we can talk? Privately?"
'Oh Au-riel..' He knew, whatever it was, it wasn't good. "Certainly, come..." Bending over, he picked up the duffle, she followed him to a conference room, holding onto the knapsack for dear life.

Undilar, watched the exchange, from his window... and watched them enter. Carene stood in the garden, looking at him... their eyes met, nodding to each other, he turned away from the window.

Before he could even cross the room, he heard the door to the conference room next to him, close... the lock clicked into place. Silently, he slid up to the adjoining door and placed his ear against it...

As soon as the door was shut, she started to weep. Tarenen stood there, not knowing what to do. She opened the knapsack, reached inside and withdrew a tattered book, handing it to him. Looking from what he held to her, "Mother... what..."

"You need to sit down and read that... if not now, soon... very soon!" Rummaging through the pack again, she held a group of parchments... some old and worn, the one on top, was new. It still held a piece of the wax, it had been sealed with.

He held up the book, "Mother, what is this? What is this about!?"

"That is your father's journal..."

His mouth dropped, as he gaped at her! Sheer panic, was rising up inside of him! "What! Where did you get this!?" 'Why did she have it!' was the question, ringing in his head.

Taking in a ragged sounding deep breath, she fruitlessly wiped at her face. "I got it from his chest... these were inside of it. Tarenen, you must read them... you must..."

Now he knew he was going to be sick. Abruptly cutting her off, he shoved the book back at her!! *Put it back!! Put all of this back!!*

Making every attempt to lower his voice, his panic fought to overtake him! He was terrified to be heard! "Do you know what he will do, if he finds these gone! He will go on a rampage Mother!"

Shaking his head, he pushed the book at her, "I don't want this! I don't even want to know what it says! Please..."

She backed away from him, shaking her head. "No! You need to know Tarenen!' Tears flowed down her face, her voice choked. "And... if there is anything left, of my son in you... you will help him. You've got to do something..."

Undilar's eyes grew with each sentence... brows gathering in concern, his hand flew to his mouth! He stared at the door, mouth agape. What on all of Nirn, was she doing!

Tarenen took the papers from her and set all of it down, onto the nearest desk. "Anything left! *How dare you! How can you say that to me!?*"

Stepping forward, his hand pointing into his own chest, "I will *always* be your son! Even if he no longer sees me as one! Would it be better, that I wallow in self pity and anguish!? Is that what is required of me, to be your son!" He turned away from her, folding his arms.

Walking up to the desk, she lifted the newest parchment off from the pile, and held it out to him. "He intends to hurt Fillim! If you would only read this..."

'Ooh Gods! Why...' closing his eyes, he tipped his head back. *He wasn't going to cry... he wouldn't do it!*
He swallowed, taking the parchment from her hand, he opened it... and read. All he could do was shake his head. He didn't even know who his father was anymore. He just couldn't believe it. Tear drops, fell onto the parchment as he closed it up. Fighting to maintain his voice, to no avail. It was filled with the tremors that exposed the emotion that now rushed through him. "He's gone mad... hasn't he." It wasn't really a question.

Turning to her... her face was wet, "All he does Tarenen, is sit in Fillim's room, or on his boat and drink. That's it. Today, earlier, we talked... afterwards, he left for the vacation house. He can't stand to be at our home anymore."

He gestured down at the bag on the floor, "What is that?"

"I went into Fillim's room, after I read these and packed up his things. He didn't even allow him to take his clothes, Tarenen."

He just shook his head at her, she had to be hysterical. She definitely wasn't thinking clearly! What could possibly make her think, that even if he could get these things to him, that Fillim would even want them! What reason, would he have, for wanting anything, that would remind him of his time with them... with him! He just couldn't fathom, what was happening.

Setting the parchment down, "Do you know what will happen to me, if I interfere! You know how powerful he is! And yet, you want me to help Fillim... when he's all the way in Skyrim! And from this one letter, we don't even know what father has planned!"

Picking the book up, she held it out to him. "Read this! I beg you... just read it." Wrapping her arms around him. "Forgive me Tarenen. You know I will always love you." Leaving him standing there, she turned and walked out.

Blowing out a deep breath, he gathered all the items, putting them back into the knapsack. Bending down and grabbing the duffle, he walked out of the room and stopped. He was absolutely terrified. To take on his father... to even get involved...

But, just the fact that Fillim was still alive, that he was finally making some kind of life for himself, after having gone through so much. For his father to try and destroy that, he couldn't even imagine what must be going through his head.

Undilar stepped away from the door and ran over to the window, watching for Tarenen. Carene was still out there, sitting on the blanket waiting for him.

A knock sounded at his door. Turning away from the window, he walked over and opened it. A very upset Tarenen, stood in front of him, holding a knapsack and a duffle. He stepped aside, motioning with his hand. "Please, come in, I was just preparing to leave for the day... Volana is waiting for me."

Tarenen's eyes nervously combed over the cut stone floor. He licked his lips, swallowing... raising his head up to look up at him, a tiny glimmer of hope showing in his green eyes. "He's here?"

Walking over to his desk, Undilar turned and leaned his tall frame against it. "He is. But he's outside, getting his things into the carriage."

Tarenen walked to him, setting the bags down. He could tell, the young Mer was trying so hard to be strong. Trying so hard not to cry. Even being pink from the sun, he seemed pale, and he had such a lost look on his face.

"What is wrong, Tarenen? You can tell me..."
Walking right up to him, he lifted his hands and leaned into his broad chest. Head down, his whole body shook as he cried, his voice, cracked and trembled. "I need your help."
Chapter Summary

Volana went through Tarenen's clothing, choosing for him. Picking out a dark blue, silk shirt and loose fitting, silk evening pants. He turned to him, helping him undress.

"Our gatherings are very private, and one must never speak of what happens here once they leave. We have an agreement with all Mer that attend. You will see why..."

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Oh, a storm is threat'ning
My very life today
If I don't get some shelter
Oh yeah, I'm gonna fade away

***********

Tarenen's head pushed into his chest, his hands, clutching desperately at Undilar's shirt front. And all he could do at that moment was hold him. The truth was, he didn't know what else to do.

Wrapping his long arms around the sobbing young Mer, he held him, and he thought about what he'd heard, what she'd said to him and his reactions.

Volana of course, had told him everything. They kept nothing from each other, and he had needed his advice on the situation. He was concerned for the young Mer, concerned that he still held too much inside. He was trying so hard to let it go and he was struggling, even with all the support that he had.

Even being at the top of his class, as talented and gifted as he was, there was something eating at him... something that kept his instructors puzzled. They had all met over it, and Volana had told them that it was a family matter and that he was working on it.

Volana had been certain, his family was the only thing holding him back. His father in particular. The more Tarenen opened up to him, the more it all fit together. He was afraid of him... terrified of him. And with everything the Mer had suffered, he completely understood why.

They both knew who his father was. In the Isles and in the order, there was barely a Mer that didn't. Now Undilar was seeing for himself, that everything Volana had told him was correct. And actually probably much worse, than they'd first suspected. Way too much, was being piled onto Tarenen's shoulders, and with everything he was already dealing with, he was still just trying to heal... to become strong again.

A big part of him, wanted to be angry, that the Mer's mother was forcing this onto him! But, she was probably just as lost. Whatever it was, it would be his trial. This, would either make him... or break him.

Rubbing his hands soothingly over his back, he spoke low to him... comforting him. "It's going to
be alright... we will help you..."

Volana's soft tapping on the door, made him look up. He walked in and stopped, taking in what was happening. Undilar raised a hand to him, quietly motioning him over.

As Volana walked to them, Undilar placed his hands on Tarenen's head, gently raising it, so he could face him. His eyes and nose looked raw, his face was soaked in his tears. He whispered to him. "Volana is here, Tarenen... we wi--"

Instantly, his face twisted up in despair, and he swiftly buried his face back into Undilar's chest! Crying out, "Oh Gods! Don't see me like this... not like this! I've failed!"

Heartbroken and ashamed, to have his mentor, someone that he so looked up to and admired, someone that he was so inspired to be! To see him like this! It seemed like a fate worse than death itself! For if he were to lose face... to lose the only ones that he now lived for... there would be no recovery. What would be the point of going on?

Volana shook his head, Tarenen's reaction stabbing at his chest, he put his hands to Tarenen's shoulders and pulled him from Undilar, wrapping his arms around him. Almost instantly, Tarenen eased into him and got completely quiet. He whispered into his hair, "I will not hear that from you Tarenen! You have not failed!"

Slowly, Tarenen pulled back enough to lift his head, and looked up into his face. "I couldn't stand it, if I were to disappoint you..." Looking back down into his mentor's chest. "Either of you... I, I just don't know what to do..."

Volana looked up to his partner and watched his expression as he spoke, as if to make sure that what he said was agreed upon. "I want you and Carene to pack bags for the duration of our break days and stay with us... right now!"

Tarenen, looked back up at him in shock. He knew not to question him, for if he said something, he was definitely sure of it. One never had to second guess, that he meant what he said. Volana's eyes were still on Undilar, who nodded silently at him.

They were in agreement.

Finally looking down into his student's eyes, "All of us, will deal with whatever is happening to you Tarenen... we will do this together."

Tarenen looked down in shame. He didn't even know what everything his mother had given him contained. "I... I don't even know, what it all means yet. My father... he is so powerful.... and--"

Volana took his head in his hands and looked him square in the eye! "Do you trust me? Tarenen... do you trust us? Undilar, myself and Carene..."

"With my life!"

Undilar pushed away from the desk, "I will go get Carene, I believe that he's still in the gardens." Placing a hand, gently onto Tarenen's shoulder as he passed them. "He will meet you in your quarters."

Tarenen turned his head to him, looking around Volana as he spoke his gratitude. "Thank you... for everything." Undilar gave him a brief smile, "Its alright, you two take your time."

As soon as the door shut, Volana's hand wrapped around his jaw, lowering his head to bring their
mouths together. Soft and tenderly, he kissed him. One hand, moving to wrap itself in his long silken hair, the other around his slender waist, holding him close. Whispering softly into the kiss... against his lips... "Do you trust me.."

Tarenen was breathless, clinging to him... "Yes! With everything in me, I do."

Breaking apart, just enough to look at him. "Tonight, you will relax! I don't even want you to think about this! And on the morrow, we will all get onto my boat and we will spend the next two days on the water. And we will deal with this problem together! Do you understand me?" He nodded, blowing out a soft breath of pure relief, his fingers moving over the wet spots that he'd made on his instructor's shirt.

Volana leaned back against the desk, pulling Tarenen along with him... still holding him. The way Tarenen looked at him, it always seemed to make him weak in the knees. It was the same way, that he, himself had looked at Undilar... and if he was to be honest with himself, he still did. The Mer was his lifeline, his support... his release. His one true love. And he, was Undilars.

The same way, that these two young Mer, were each others. He knew that was much of the reasoning, behind their personal interest in them both. Even in their gifts and skills, they were, but them... incarnate.

They were literally molding and shaping, two younger versions of themselves.

Raising a hand to caress along his jaw, "Tarenen... there is never a need for you to feel shame, not over something like this. You have been through so much. This is why Undilar and I are here. I want you to succeed... we both do. When you get through this, when it is all said and done. You will be stronger... wiser. And you will be the better for it all."

Finally releasing him, "I will take these things," his hand, gesturing to the pack and bag, that sat on the floor at their feet, "With myself and Undilar, in our carriage. I promise not to look at any of it, until we are all ready to deal with it. Now go, get yourself packed."

Tarenen smiled at him, turning to walk to the door. Just before he could open it, Volana called to him. "Tarenen, I don't ever want you to turn away from me again! You need not ever hide from me."

Tarenen nodded, giving him a slight bow, "I won't." Walking out the door, even with all he still faced, he was so filled with hope. Hope that this would soon be over... and that he could finally go on with his life.

Pushing it from his mind, he all but ran to his quarters.

**********

Looking down at the two bags, he and Undilar were already packed and ready to go, their carriage waited outside. They would have another follow along behind them, to carry their two students.

He needed to find out exactly what had transpired prior to him coming into the room, of course he knew it had to do with this mess that Tarenen's father was involved in. And that he seemed insistent on involving his young son in! Pushing himself away from the desk, he grabbed up the bundles and left, locking Undilar's office behind him. They could talk on the way.

Climbing up into the carriage, Undilar took the bags from him, waving his arm out the window to signal the driver, they rode off. It was at least an hour's ride from the training center to get to their estate, giving them plenty of time to talk. Turning in his seat, he motioned to the duffle and
knapsack that Undilar had set on the seat across from them.

"Do you know what these contain? What happened, prior to me walking in?"

Facing each other now, Undilar spoke, "He was in the gardens with Carene, having midday meal. They had already, as you know, planned to attend our gathering tonight." Opening a bottle of Alto, he poured them both a cup. "As you requested, I had informed the guard to let one of us know whenever he has visitors."

Which he felt was wise, they wanted to know when anyone came for him, so they could see how he was affected by contact. See if there were any changes in his behavior.

"As soon as the guard told me his mother was there to see him, I looked out the window to see what she looked like..." Shaking his head, "I don't know... to see if anything out of the ordinary took place. As soon as I saw her, I knew."

Gesturing toward the bags, "She had laid that on the ground and was clutching onto the knapsack. Volana, you should have seen the change that came over him just upon seeing her. The way he looked walking up to her, was like he dreaded it."

He drained his cup, Volana pouring him more as he spoke. "I heard them go into the conference room next to my office, so I listened through the door. His mother was near hysterics, she had somehow secretly obtained, his father's journal and some documents of importance. I could hear the sound of parchments being rustled about."

He took in a mouthful of wine and swallowed, "Volana, as soon as Tarenen found out what it was she had, he sounded terrified! He tried to make her take them back! And she refused! She was going on and on, about the Mer that you said had been whipped. That his father, somehow plans to harm him... all the way in Skyrim! She told him, Volana...." and he could barely believe, that she had said this, to her own son! "She told Tarenen, that if there was anything left, of her son in him... that he would help him!"

Volana watched him closely, they were both furious. The sympathy he felt for Tarenen went beyond words. For her to place a burden like this upon her own son! When she knew he still had to be trying to heal from his own pain, was mind boggling.

"Tarenen lashed out at her, he said that he would always be her son! Even if his father no longer saw him as one! That he shouldn't have to wallow in self pity and anguish to be seen as such!"

Draining his second cup, his hand came up, holding his forehead in frustration. Volana took the cup from him and took his hand, holding it. "Isn't that pathetic! What he must be feeling! It took me right back Volana... right back to what I left behind."

Letting out a sharp breath, "Anyway, as soon as she left... left him with all of this, mind you! He knocked on my door, he'd only been there a few minutes when you arrived. Volana, he literally walked into my arms and started weeping, saying that he needed my help."

Motioning to the duffle, "What is in this?"

Undilar huffed out a disgusted breath, "His old lover's clothing, if you can believe that! What on all of Nirn, is she thinking! What could he possibly do with these things? And why would that Mer, even want these? In Skyrim of all places!"

Volana shook his head, trying to make sense of it. He poured them both some more wine, "He needs this gathering, Undilar... he needs it to unwind. It will do him good." Taking a drink, he
slowly shook his head, staring out the window... "I will never give up on him... I cannot."

Running a hand down his mate's hair, Undilar watched him. "And I would expect nothing less... you never gave up on me."

Volana turned to him, his eyes welling up as he took his hand. "And I have never once regretted it... I never will."

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Their estate was magnificent. While their servants unpacked their bags, taking anything that needed cleaning, Undilar and Volana, walked the two young Mer through the property, showing them everything.

Lush with greenery and overlooking the cliffs. Steps had been carved from the rock face, going down to a massive dock where two good sized boats were moored. The main house itself, was by no means a mansion. It had only one floor, but was huge in its entirety. One large master suite that they shared, along with four smaller rooms for guests. Each, having its own bathing room, with a pump and a sunken tub. Which was something that they had added in, once it became their's. The main room was open, with large windows and doors, that opened up to see the water.

The kitchen and dining area, opened up onto a porch that overlooked the gardens... stone pools, were scattered throughout. Some even being large enough to swim in. A warm springs was located in the back of the garden, where they soaked on occasion. It had at one time, been the vacation home of Volana's family. Having been left to them, when his elderly parents retired.

As it was still early in the day, none of the other guests had arrived yet. Their servants, were a Khajiit family, that lived on adjoining property in a smaller home of their own. Two of them were busy in the kitchens, preparing food for the evening's gathering.

Walking back toward the main house, Tarenen couldn't believe how differently their instructors behaved at home. They held hands while they walked, often kissing. They literally looked at each other, with so much love, he couldn't stop staring. Undilar and Volana walked up ahead and Carene elbowed him, laughing. "I told you, they don't normally have students here." Gesturing at them, "This is why... they are home. They do not want the ones that they are attempting to train, to see them at ease."

He just shook his head, he had so much to learn. But, seeing them... seeing them like this... happy, content, and in love. He knew that he was with the right Mer. He could be what he aspired to become... and still be happy, still feel... still love. They were proof of it!

It was also proof, that one didn't have to become what his father was, in order to be successful. It was a choice.

Undilar stayed in the main room, greeting their guests as they arrived. He had looked on in amazement at the males that came in. All so attractive, and of all different ages, many of which, were very powerful. Of course, none as young as them. Some in fact, he had seen at headquarters, whenever he had gone with his father. Some were other instructors. And of course, some he had never seen before.

The main room, was decorated with giant throw pillows and rugs, all over the floor. Day beds and sofas. Numerous tables lined the room, holding a large array of bottles and jars, filled with different wines and drink. Some of the like, that he had never seen. And there was one large table, in the center of the room... surrounded by pillows and rugs, that held the largest pipe, he had ever
Numerous tubes, each with a mouthpiece, came out from the center, which was partially filled with water. Smaller pipes, lay around it, of all different kinds. And small glass bowls, some with leaves and some with buds... some with what looked like black tar, one was filled with a golden brown cake-like substance. Some, even held flower stamen and petals. Carene laughed at him, leading him to the master suite where they would change.

Volana went through Tarenen's clothing, choosing for him. Picking out a dark blue, silk shirt and loose fitting, silk evening pants. He turned to him, helping him undress. "Our gatherings are very private... one must never speak of what happens here once they leave. We have an agreement with all Mer that attend. You will see why..."

After dressing him, he brushed his hair. Carene stood to the side, preparing himself, and listening. "The four of us will start out the evening in the main room. We will all smoke to relax and have some drink. There will be trays of different foods, seafood and the like. All to eat with fingers... we are very relaxed here. Once everyone is relaxed enough, you will see more and more open shows of affection. And once actual sex begins to take place, the four of us will retire to our master suite."

He looked up to see Tarenen's face... his eyes wide, mouth agape. He chuckled, "You will be fine, I just felt the need to forewarn you, so you won't stare or say something to embarrass anyone. Because you are both with us, no male will openly approach you. But I can guarantee, that you both will be admired, and you both will be looked at and spoken to."

Looking over at Carene, then back to him. "You are both very young and very attractive, hence the reason that we will retire once things get real personal."

He led them to the door, pausing before he opened it. "All of our guests stay the night. But usually all are gone prior to morning meal. This is a way for the ones that choose to be with another male, to not only display open affection... but to possibly find a mate or a friend they may be intimate with. It is a way to release tension and pent up feelings, that are not appropriate to show in our society. We offer it to all that prefer to live as we do, that we can trust. In fact, each gathering has been larger than the last."

Undilar met them at the door, his voice lowered as he took Carene's hand. Looking at all of them, "Are we ready?" Receiving their nods, they all walked into the main room.

Volana held Tarenen's hand, taking him around the room, they chatted and socialized. Volana introduced him to everyone, leaving no one out. No one seemed nervous or embarrassed, they were all at ease... smiling, laughing. All of their guests had also changed into similar types of clothing. Open, light weight shirts, loose fitting, relaxed pants and all had bare feet. He looked around, noticing that no one's hair, was tied back. Mer ate with their bare hands, licking fingers and drinking. It was like stepping into another world! He had never seen their kind so relaxed. Just taking it in seemed to be relaxing him, making him feel more at ease.

Looking over at Carene, Undilar held his hand and they both talked and laughed. Carene actually seemed to know many of the males there. Making him remember, what he'd told him in the gardens earlier in the day. That he had been to a few of their parties. And with what his Instructor had just divulged to them, or more so to him, his mind wanted to fly towards the unknown and sink into the endless possibilities of what his new partner had experienced at said gatherings.

How many Mer had he seen making love to each other, during these soirees that were secretly held here... and how many of these males, had seen his partner?
He looked about the large, open room as his imagination went wild. Much to his surprise, his heart was not inflamed with jealousy... he was not burdened with the crushing force his heart would feel over personal and intimate betrayal. If anything, his curiosity was forcing his body to respond in just the opposite way, making him want to take a closer look at some of the Mer there. Endless, forbidden secrets abound, and within moments he realized his body temperature had risen, and that his instructor was watching him... closely.

He could see the evident color, rising up in the young Mer's face, as he watched everyone. Volana gave his hand a gentle squeeze, leading them over to the drinks and food trays. Looking into the kitchen, he noticed all the servants were gone.

Leaning into him, he softly spoke against his ear. "You are definitely being admired. I am very proud, to be the one holding your hand." Tarenen's face lit up as he smiled, looking down at the floor.

"What would you like to drink? Have you ever had any of these?"

There were so many numerous jars and bottles to choose from. He looked at them all, shaking his head, "I don't really know. What are they all?"

Going down the line of colorful jars, he pointed to them while he spoke. "This is Flin", moving to the next few, "these are Shein, and these two are Sujamma. These are made by the Dunmer. A good friend of our's keeps us supplied. If you don't get it from a Dunmer, it's probably not the real thing. They are very aromatic, smooth but strong. Very different than wine, but good."

Taking a glass, he broke the wax seal on one of the jars and filled the glass only half full. It was potent, so only a small amount was needed to achieve the desired effect. "Lets start you out with some Shein, then the next time you're here, you can try something different." Tarenen smiled up at him, "You mean to have us here again?"

Handing him the glass, "Of course. I care about you Tarenen. We both do. We care about both of you. You're always welcome here."

Undilar walked up behind them, Carene in tow. "Are you two ready? We're going to light up..." Tarenen looked at Carene, his eyes getting big, a huge smile lit up his entire face.

Putting his arm around the young Mer, "We're ready..." Leading him to the center table, they sat down on one of the large pillows. So big that both of them could fit comfortably.

Taking a small, decorative looking knife, Undilar scraped some of the black tar from one of the bowls, then formed it into a ball, with his fingers. Looking up at Tarenen, "This is hashish... black. That over there, the brownish, gold colored one... that is blonde. Both are good, but we will start with this."

Reaching over, he grabbed what seemed to be an ornately carved stone square, with a long spike, sticking out of the center of it and placed the ball onto the end. Snapping his fingers... he lit it and placed a glass down over it. Within just a minute, the glass had filled with smoke.

"This is how I learned to smoke this when I was but a young Mer, younger than you." Sliding the glass carefully to the edge of the table, he placed his mouth to the edge and sucked the smoke out of the glass. Within moments, it had filled again. Each one of them taking their turn, Tarenen had coughed, until his eyes watered and overflowed with tears, holding his chest with both hands, his face bloomed to a dark crimson red. They were all laughing at him, Volana patting him on the back and handing him his glass to sip from.
Carene moved over to sit next to him, their two older Mer, one on each side of them. Things were going to start getting a little more loose. Tarenen looked up at the other Mer, four were using the large pipe, while others, had picked up the smaller ones, filling them with an array of the many things laid out.

He was already feeling really good, between the drink, Volana had given him and just one hit of the hash, he felt better than he ever had in his life. So relaxed, almost euphoric, light and happy. So much so, that he couldn't stop smiling. Raising his hand, he pointed at the large pipe, "What is that they are smoking?"

Undilar looked up, speaking around the smoke he'd inhaled and was holding in. "That is Opium... you're not ready for that yet." Leaning over to Carene, lacing a hand into his hair, he brought their mouths together and exhaled into the kiss.

"Why not..." he looked around, giggling. Volana watched him, smiling. Just watching him watch everyone... what was starting to happen, he didn't think he would ever forget it. Leaning back into one of the sofas, he crossed his legs and put an arm around the curious, young one. They could explain it all tomorrow.

He was spell bound. His eyes glazed over... mouth partially open, as he watched two of the Mer on the sofa across from him. The males kissed, the more aggressive of the two, was continuously rubbing his hands all over the bare chest of the other. Finally, moving down to his waist band, he slid his fingers underneath... reaching his whole hand down into the Mer's pants, grabbing hold of his cock. The recipient's eyes closed, laying his head back, his mouth fell open as he moaned out.

Turning his head, everything seemed to be going in slow motion... he giggled, and even the sound of his own voice sounded far off. Looking up at the pillows next to them. One Mer lay on the floor, completely naked... he was so beautiful. A male between his legs, holding his cock, licking him, taking it into his mouth and sucking, while another kissed him, slowly rubbing all over his chest and stomach. The Mer being serviced, was holding onto the head of the one between his legs... his other hand, around the cock of the one that was kissing him.

Looking around at all of them... many were missing clothing, while some were completely bare. Some, simply kissed and talked with Mer right next to them, that were making out, or having sex. No one was bothered by any of it, like it was nothing... an everyday event.

His eyes moving back to the first couple, on the sofa.. two more, had now joined in. The male sitting down, now had his pants down to his ankles and was being sucked off, by the Mer who had previously had his hand down his pants. A male, had settled behind the Mer that was sucking him off and was running his tongue through the cleft of his ass, preparing him. While the fourth, kissed the male that was sitting down.

He looked at Volana, such a calm look on his face, tilting his head... "This is so nice..."

Volana laughed, holding onto him tighter, he looked at Undilar, "I think it's time we went to bed."

Undilar nodded, pulling Carene up with him. Things were well under way, and they needed their own private time. Volana stood, pulling Tarenen up by his hands.

Leading them into their master suite, they closed the door and slid the lock into place.

Chapter End Notes
Lyrics ~ Gimme Shelter by: The Rolling Stones

Kind of like Vegas, huh... what happens at our place, stays at our place... def one party I'd like to attend! I think you all know what's coming up...

Also, these Mer are using what I would picture as an enclosed carriage with with a single door and windows, luggage rack or something on the back of it. Not the open carts with benches that are used in Skyrim.
At that point, they hadn't slept apart since the first time they were all intimate together. At first, it was nice. Then, after a few days they were all feeling cramped. The twins were simply too different and yet in ways, too much alike, to be in the same space all the time. And he needed to get out of there.

He didn't feel comfortable. He wanted to work, earn his own money! Not only that, but she was back...

This will be a split, between what's happening in the Isles and what is now taking place in Skyrim. Remember, about a two week window of time has passed.

Candles were lit in various places throughout their large suite, giving just enough light to see by, but still relaxing to the senses. Volana and Undilar had both gone into the bathing room to ready themselves.

Carene wrapped his arms around him, pulling him in close. "Are you alright?"

Tarenen kissed him, nodding. "I feel good... Better than I ever have Carene." It was like, just for one night he didn't have to worry over what was taking place... all the turmoil. He could just let it go.

Smiling at him, Carene's long fingers, rubbing up and down his back... he leaned in to kiss him, whispering softly against his lips. "I love you..."

The two older Mer were giving them time to talk, Volana and Undilar both knew that Tarenen needed to be alright with the arrangement. They were, after all, a couple... just as they themselves were. Nothing would happen, that neither were prepared for. Even though they had been with each of them separately, being intimate as a group was very, very different.

Carene had hoped them being around each other, seeing each other holding hands and openly displaying affection with the older Mer, would prepare him. Still holding him, he looked down into Tarenen's chest, "Will you be alri- "

His chin being lifted by Tarenen's hand, was what cut him off. "I'm fine with anything, as long as you are. It doesn't change how I feel about you, and it won't."

Their instructors emerged from the bathing room, both wearing only their bottoms. Tarenen zeroed in on Undilar... taking him in, it seemed like, for the very first time all over again. Standing there,
his mouth agape... all he could think about was the first time he saw him. The class on torture... he had so admired him. He was so breathtaking, and now to see him half bare.

For a moment, it was almost too overwhelming on a sensual level, with what was already coursing through his body, between the smoke, and the drink. For that moment, he really wondered if he would be able to handle it. Not that he didn't want it, or didn't want him, but could he handle it emotionally and physically?

Pushing it roughly from his thoughts, he once more allowed his mind to wallow in the sight before him, and dwell on the fact that he was about to partake in just one more thing, that he never had before... that this night, and these Mer, were the beginning of his fresh start.

Undilar was so tall, taller than all of them. But broad shouldered... chested, and so muscular. It was amazing what their long robes hid from everyone's view. His eyes traveled down, from his face to the waistband of his pants, drinking him in.

As Undilar approached him, he had no choice, but to move his gaze back up... he was beautiful. His white hair, forming around his face, accentuating his perfect bone structure. Getting longer as it fanned down his neck to lay between his shoulders. Brilliant green eyes, amidst the finest, sharpest features. All he could do, was stare at him like an idiot, and wonder how many of his fellow students would give their eye teeth, to be in this very position that he was now in.

But he was too overtaken at the moment to swell with pride. He would think about that tomorrow, while he nursed what he knew would more than likely be a very tender bottom.

Completely oblivious to what Carene and Volana were doing, all he could see, was the giant Mer before him. Mouth hanging agape, he looked up at him.

Bringing his hands up to caress the young Mer's face, Undilar tilted his head back, bringing his mouth to his. His voice, soft and low, "From the first moment I saw you Tarenen... I have wanted you."

Just from taking him in, the fact of who was touching him, he was hard.

Adept, but soft movements, slid his open shirt off from his shoulders. Hands slid down his sides, pushing the pants over his hips, where they pooled onto the floor.

He could feel Undilar's hard length, as he moved him backwards toward the bed. He was leaking, leaving marks on his golden skin. With one quick movement, he was lifted and placed onto the bed, his legs wrapped around toned hips. Hips, that were now bare. Their cocks came together, Undilar's heavy sac falling against his hole.

Sliding his hands, up across the young Mer's sides, he gathered his arms and moved them up over his head, holding his arms down lightly at the wrists. He ground his hips into him, their cocks sliding together... pushing. His balls moving over his cheeks... kissing against that tight pucker that he wanted so badly.

Tarenen pushed his head back into the pillow and whined out, wiggling his ass against the much larger Mer, that held him down. Breathless already, "I want you."

Sliding an arm around him, he was turned over, his ass in the air, he arched his back, and pushed against that massive length. Instantly, he could feel oil running over him, coating him. Long fingers, sliding over his hole... his head dropped to the bed, hair surrounded his face as one large, finger slid inside of him. Tarenen's voice trembled, "Oh Gods... please..."
Carene's hands lifted his shoulders, "Here, I want to get under you..." Lifting up, Carene slid under him... his head down toward Tarenen's cock. Within moments, he was facing his lover's crotch. Lowering himself down, onto one elbow, his other hand, wrapping around Carene's slender cock. Wet heat, engulfed him... he wasn't going to last... he just knew it!

Undilar's fingers slid in and out of him... wrapping his mouth around the swollen head before him... he could feel Carene moan around his own shaft, the sound, vibrating against his sensitive flesh. And the only thing that was keeping him from spilling right then, was drug-induced haze that seemed to envelope his entire being. It was odd... almost as if everything that was taking place was surreal. Slowed down, and yet his body's senses seemed to be hyper aware. Like he was feeling each sensation, the physical and the emotional, on a completely different level.

Movement from in front of him, made him look up. Volana was pushing Carene's legs forward... cock in hand, slick with healing oils, he lined up to the Mer's hole and eased in. Instantly, the mouth that surrounded him, opened up and let out a cry! Tarenen closed his eyes against it and he paused. It was suddenly too much!

'Oh Gods...' just seeing his lover's hole, being opened wide, right in front of his face. The hard length, moving in and out of him, as Volana rocked his hips back and forth. He'd never seen something so erotic in his entire life! Even witnessing the males in the other room, seemed to pale in comparison to this.

All of that went away, as Undilar's swollen head pushed against his hole, opening him up. Throwing his head back, his mouth lifting off the cock he'd been sucking. Large hands gripped his hips... that soft, low voice coaxing him, "Relax little one... just relax..." Carefully, he pushed his head inside and slowed. "Bear down, just a little bit... let me in Tarenen."

Gods! he was so big! Bigger than he'd ever had. Very lightly, he bore down... doing his best to relax his bottom, he felt him slide in.

His eyes clenched shut, it was too much... 'Wait!... stop! Please..." Just trying to breath... his head dropped. "Just... give me a minute... "

He was filled. More so, than he had ever been. Volana's hands had lowered and now rubbed over his back as he continued to rock against Carene. The mouth around his own sensitive flesh, pausing every few moments to moan against him. Undilar eased back a little, then slid slowly forward. He breathed out in apparent relief, "Okay, it's okay now..."

Lowering his mouth to Carene's cock, he took him in... watching him get fucked, while he was being fucked, and at the same time, being sucked off, was complete sensory overload!

Arching his back, feeling strong fingers digging in around his hips, his head thrust backward, as he cried out! Unable to even form words... all he could do, was feel! Carene's untended to cock, now lay against his belly, leaving drops of pearlescent fluid behind as it bounced against him with each thrust he received. There was naught he could do for it though. He had been transformed. Transformed into a mindless, speechless rag doll.

The incoherent sounds that were escaping his mouth around each ragged breath he took, didn't sound like his... he couldn't ever remember being this lost in ecstasy. Being completely unaware of his surroundings... being this oblivious to everything except what he felt.

Every thrust forward, filled him more and more. Undilar's rich, sultry voice, growling into his ear... "Do you want it all, little one? Can you take me..."
Heavy balls slapped mercilessly against his, as Undilar ground into him! Gods! he was going to cum! He couldn't hold back! Opening his mouth wide to cry out, Volana pulled out of Carene, and moving his cock up to Tarenen's face, hot seed shooting out in spurts, coated him.

Volana's hand wrapped around Carene's length, pulling him to climax. Between his mentor's and his partner's seed... his face was covered. Licking around his mouth, he was alert to at least try and catch what he could with his tongue. He stopped, and cried out, as Undilar roughly grabbed his hips, forcing him to hold still as he pulsed inside of him! Just hearing the Mer's low, sexy voice, as he groaned out his name, still pushing into him... grinding against his ass as he filled him.

Warm seed, leaked from his hole where they were joined, running down over his balls and dripping onto the bed.

Vaguely aware of the strong arms that slid around him, pulling him up and onto his knees. Still inside of him, Undilar's long fingers wrapped around Tarenen's sensitive length. The slender cock twitching in his hand, as his seed ran down them, coating them as his student let go... splattering the two Mer in front of him.

Undilar held him as he came down. Hair sticking all over his sweat soaked body. The young Mer's eyes remained closed, his limp body still twitching in the aftershocks of their tryst. And simply breathing, seemed like too much effort for his poor spent body. There was no strength left in him.

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He didn't remember them parting, nor did he remember Undilar laying him down. The next time his eyes opened, it was to Volana's warm, amber ones.

Smiling as the arm around him, tightened, Tarenen took a minute to let everything register... he didn't feel sore. And he knew that he should. Au-riel! Undilar was huge. He should've known, just by his body size, that his cock would undoubtedly be suited to match.

His smile widened, "Last night... it was amazing! I cannot believe, that I'm not sore..."

His mentor's body shook against him as he laughed. "I healed you Tarenen... last night. You passed out, before he could even pull out of you."

He couldn't remember anything after he came. Nuzzling into Volana's chest, "Where are Carene and Undilar?"

"They're down at the docks... preparing the boat." Pushing himself up, he reached for Tarenen, allowing him a minute to stretch. "Come... we need to get cleaned up and help them. We have two whole days to spend on the water."

And with what lay ahead... they would need it.

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Sweat ran down his olive skin, his tunic was already soaked through. Pulling it over his head, he draped it over the stone bridgework that led to the gates. Pausing for just a moment to admire it... the tunic was among the first of the new set of clothing, that he had actually bought for himself. Paid for with his own earned coin. Not bought for him, or donated to him, by someone else. And lately, that meant the twins that had taken him in.

Before them... well, before them it was always someone else that he'd depended on for everything. From the bed and pillow, which he rested on at night! Down to the cloth that covered his ass, and
the food he consumed!

Forcing the thoughts from his head, he picked the Imperial sword back up, it was ready for sharpening. Jon Battle-Born crossed his huge arms, watching Fillim as he worked. "You've got yourself some help, I see."

Adrianne stood up from the tanning rack to greet him. "Aye, that I do... he's the reason I'll be able to finish this order for the Imperial's, that you pushed onto me."

Jon laughed. "You know as well as I do..."

Raising her hand, she stopped him. "I know, I know... you don't have to say it. Besides, I can always use the coin and the experience."

Her husband's gruff voice behind her, startling them all. "An' she don't give herself anywhere near the credit that she deserves either! I've got the soup on, woman..." He waved to Jon and turned, walking back into the shop.

She waved her husband off, as if shooing him away and turned partially towards Fillim, he raised his eyes to her... listening and watching their exchange.

Speaking to Jon, her eyes remained on her apprentice... "And, I'd even be able to take on a little more... if Fillim here, is up for more hours."

Fillim smiled wide, showing the points of his little canines, and nodded.

Jon shook her hand, his deep voice carrying through to his sharp ears, even over the noise of the grindstone. "Done! We can use all the help we can get, the smith in Solitude is overwhelmed. And there's a lot of coin in it for you. What's say we double the order... I've already got clearing from Tullius. I'll be by at the end of the week with some coin and gather up what you have ready."

As soon as Jon left, she walked over to him, and he paused, allowing the grinding stone to slow. Grabbing a rag out from the water bucket next to him, he rung it out and wiped his face, laying it over the back of his neck. "I'll need you full time for quite awhile you know... you're alright with that?"

"I'll take all the hours you can spare Adrianne"

Patting his shoulder, she turned and walked inside. Getting ready to prepare lunch, she provided his midday meal for him. Which he greatly appreciated. It allowed him to stay there, getting more accomplished. Instead of having to walk all the way to Jorvaskr and deal with Njada.

Helping Tilma purchase produce and meat for the Companions, he had made friends with the Bosmers that owned the Huntsman. He'd actually gone hunting once with Anoriath and loved it! And now, he was secretly training him to use a bow... Fillim knew if Farkas found out, he'd be pissed.

But it was helping him to regain the strength in his weak arm, and it helping his self esteem. Just as this was...

Now, every morning it didn't rain, he would leave two hours before he had to start work, and go to the Huntsman. Anoriath would work with him. He'd buy breakfast from them, with his own coin that he'd earned himself. Just thinking about it, made him smile. He'd spend an hour training, then eat and then head over to the War Maiden's to prepare materials for that day's orders.

As soon as he told them he could smith and was wanting work, Elrindir had walked him right over
to Adrianne. That was almost two weeks ago. After crafting a few things for her, she hired him on the spot. He'd started work that very day. She had been relieved to get the help, wanting him full time. At first he agreed to part time, until he could go over things with Tilma and his partners.

It had taken everything he had, not to run to Jorvaskr! He'd been so excited! But as soon as he'd gotten in and told them, there was a fight over it. Farkas, wanted to provide for him... keep him sheltered. Vilkas, thought he needed room to grow. Fact was, they all needed some space. And that's exactly, what he'd told them. Which had created even more hurt feelings.

At that point, they hadn't slept apart since the first time they were all intimate together. At first, it was nice... then after a few days, they were all feeling cramped. The twins, were simply too different, and in some ways, too much alike, to be in the same space all the time. And he needed to get out of there! He didn't feel comfortable, he wanted to work, earn his own money! Not only that, but she was back...

And even though she hadn't been ugly toward him, he was done feeling like he didn't belong! She constantly gave him threatening looks, making disgusted noises, every time he walked by her or was even in the room.

He had even heard Ria, speaking with her about it. She wanted things back to normal. Knowing that all the tension was just driving a wedge between everyone, when the circle were already at odds with each other as it was. They didn't need anything else.

Apologizing to Tilma, he had loved working with her... helping her, but there was just no way, that it was going to work. It had only taken a day for him to tell Adrianne, that she could have him full time.

Knowing how he felt... how they all felt, even with things settling down, they started construction on their home. When they weren't doing jobs, Farkas and Vilkas, aided the two Nords they had hired to work on the framework.

When Fillim wasn't working, he helped. In fact, he himself, had drawn up the blue prints. There would be three bedrooms. One for each of them. That way, they each had their own space. When they wanted to be together, they could be... when they needed to be alone... they could be. But each man, would have his own space.

Just the fact that he was earning his own money, building a house, that he would be a third owner of.. he was ecstatic! He'd never been happier in his entire life.

He had plans for an alchemy room, a green house off one end and a garden. Having the river, right on their property, he could tap into that for watering the garden. A decent sized kitchen with a pump, of course, they'd have to dig a well... a weapons room, a nice sized living room and a wrap around deck on the second floor. And each bedroom, would have a door leading out to it.

One large bathing room, with a sunken tub and a pump, like he'd had back home... at his father's residence, before he was sold.

Just the thought of that... remembering, made him grimace.

Shaking his head, trying to rid himself of the painful memories, Adrianne had stepped out, holding a tray. She set it down for him over by the smelter. Standing up from the grinding stone, "Thanks Adrianne."

Dunking the rag again, he wiped himself off and walked over to it. Settling down on the grass, he
was starving... the soup's aroma was making his mouth water. Bread and apple, sat to the side, along with a bottle of mead. Digging in, he couldn't be thankful enough. Adrianne and her husband were good people.

In fact, there were many good people there. The longer he worked for her and people saw him around, the more friends he was making. He loved the alchemist... she was very nice, but she thought every person that walked in was ill. What she really needed, was someone to talk to.

He'd gone in to buy some supplies that he didn't have, and to use her table. Most of what he needed, grew right around Whiterun. A few times, he and Farkas, had gone for walks, talking while he gathered. He even got Vilkas to go with him once. But, some of the things he wanted, he had to buy.

He had no use for poisons, which, most of the fungus in the area gave you. About the only mushrooms he needed were Blisterwort, and once in awhile some Mora Tapinella. He also wanted Charred Skeever and Hawk feathers. Farkas killed a few mud crabs for him, collecting chitin and legs. He had boiled them and heated up butter for them. That was one thing he missed about living by the ocean... seafood. In the Isles, there was a constant supply of fresh fish and shell fish. Squid and Octopi, which just thinking about, made his mouth set to watering! Oh well, this would have to suffice. Perhaps someday he could talk them into a trip to the coastline...

After hearing Arcadia's woes over a cup of tea, she had given him a deal on the ingredients. Which were mostly for curing poison and disease. She simply adored the Jarl's court wizard, Farengar. And he, didn't seem to be interested at all, in any form of romance. Especially now that the Dragons had returned. That seemed to be all he could talk about, when she was around anyway. Telling Fillim, that she had requested frost salts from him, for a love potion. Which, he swiftly talked her out of using on him!

Instead, Fillim told her to request lessons from him, on enchanting. Enchanting for alchemy purposes...

Eating his apple, he laughed, remembering how she had smiled, absolutely glowing, as she told him every detail of her first lesson.

Now, when he wasn't thinking over his smithing... he was thinking over the new house and his mates. They were stressed... things between the circle were divided. He didn't know all the details and they refused to talk about it with him.

And that was fine. He didn't want them upset, but he really didn't want anything else to think about right now either. As much as he had tried to let go of what Fjolrin had said to him... he couldn't. He wanted to let go of what plagued him... his past. And dreading the Nord's return daily, he couldn't.

That, even without Njada's return, had been the push he had needed to get out of Jorvaskr. And if they were honest... it was the twin's as well. Neither of them trusted him. Not after what had happened.

Fillim feared him.

He didn't want anything to do with the war... he didn't want anything to do with the Thalmor. Even with the fact, that he was happier here, than he ever had been at home... he missed his home. He missed the climate, he missed the ocean... he missed, what he'd never had.

His father.
Setting the empty bottle down, he closed his eyes. His heart literally ached... how was it right, for one to have to pine and ache, for something that they would never have... ever! His father, probably had no idea, what had happened to him. No idea, that he had been whipped, or exiled...

Anariil would never tell him! He knew he wouldn't have, for fear of it ruining their relationship. And even if he did know, would he even care?

Even if his father hadn't spent much time with him, he was always kind to him... he had treated him well. When his birthday had arrived and he called him into his office, telling him he was to be given away... he had been shattered.

As much as he had tried, to hold it together in front of his father. It hadn't mattered... silent tears, had rolled down his cheeks, as his father had handed him papers... papers, that he was to give Anariil, once he arrived there.

For just a moment, his father had actually looked at him... in the eyes. And he could've sworn, that what he saw in them... was regret. Then, in a flash, it was gone.

He had tucked his hands behind his back and turned away, not even looking at him to say goodbye... his back, had been turned to him.

He had turned to walk out of the office, and he paused. Swallowing... he had for the first time ever, broken Telindil's rule... he called him father.

His voice had been choked, tears had ran off his face, falling onto his shirt... as he said his last words to him. "Goodbye... Father."

Not waiting to see his reaction, he left, closing the door behind him.

Adrianne's voice, bringing him back to the present... "Are you well, Fillim?"

Taking in a deep breath... he smiled at her, nodding. "I'm fine... thank you for the meal Adrianne."

Standing up, he brushed the crumbs from his breeches, it was getting late and he had a lot of steel to shape.
As soon as the doors opened, Vilkas stood. He could tell Fillim was upset. Just by looking at him he could feel it. As soon as he stepped in, the tension in the air became physically apparent.

His chest tightened involuntarily as he eyed Njada, who sat at the other end of the long table. Much to his relief, she stood and headed toward the back doors. At least he wouldn't have to deal with her tonight.

Moving to his side, Vilkas walked along side of him to the stairwell. The doors opened again. Giving a quick glance back, now he knew what the Mer's problem was.

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**********

They took turns. First thing in the morning Fillim would work on armor and shields, she on weapons. Then they would switch, giving each of them not only a break, but experience on both. She had complimented him numerous times. For someone of his age, she couldn't believe how skilled he was.

They had gotten in an order for a complete set of glass armor. Including a sword and a shield. Taking over on the other items that he'd been working on while he made it. She watched. With him just focusing on that, it had only taken him part of the day to make it. The next morning, with special tools that he had made himself, he had finished carving the intricate designs into it.

It was beautiful! Even if she couldn't see a Nord wearing it or using it, it was beautiful and it was strong. Just that one order had given them more coin than she would have taken in over a two day period. And with him doing the work, it freed her up to work on other items so they didn't fall behind.

She'd never gotten a lot of requests for specialty items. She could make it, but didn't really care to. She was best with steel, iron and with leather. She knew how to make Orcish and Elven, but there wasn't a large call for them either. Usually it was just buying and reselling after she'd repaired and polished what she took in, of course.

Fillim was actually showing her things. The only thing he didn't know how to make, was scaled armor and Daedric. They didn't really see a lot of the Daedric stuff, but he did know how to improve on what they took in. Even enchanted weapons and armor. She knew selling and crafting the specialty items brought in more coin. Something that took him the same amount of time as steel, they could charge double for. Sometimes even triple.

With all they were accomplishing in the two weeks that he'd been with her, their coin had tripled. Which would allow them to make much needed repairs to the shop, and their home. They had been
able to stock up on numerous supplies, pay their taxes early and now they could even start saving some coin. Just in case of emergency.

Hiring him had been one of the best decisions she had ever made. In fact, she had told Ulfberth that, just the day after he'd been hired. Every morning he showed up excited, he was organized, particular, and he took great pride in his work.

He would help build the name of their business and with his help, perhaps even rival that of Eorlunds, in time of course.

Sun was getting low in the sky. Setting his last piece of the day into the crate of finished items, he could hear Adrianne speaking to someone out front. Opening one of the rain barrels, he dipped his hands in and splashed the cool water onto his face. His braid, falling into the water, he flung it back over his shoulder, water running down his back

"Fillim handles my specialty items, Fjolrin. If you want that fixed, I'll have to give it to him."

Instantly his eyes widened, his heart doing double time in his chest! Swallowing, he wiped his face and walked towards the front to grab his tunic. Before he even got up there, he could hear the Nord's voice. "Fillim? Since when has he been working for you?"

"Last two weeks now." Adrianne turned to him, "Fillim, I've got an encha..."

As soon as their eyes met, Fjolrin took the bow out of her hands, silencing her. He was speaking to her, but his eyes never left Fillim's. "That's alright, Adrianne. I'll take it up to Eorlund."

Pulling his now dry tunic over his head. "Good luck with that."

Fjolrin halted in his tracks, turning his now irritated gaze back to the Mer. Adrianne raised her eyebrows and leaned back against the workbench, watching them. The Nord turned, walking back toward Fillim. "What's that supposed to mean, Elf!"

Pulling his braid out from his tunic, he grabbed his satchel, lowering it over his head to hang at his side. "Eorlund won't touch anything that's enchanted."

Not to mention the fact that him going up there decked out in Imperial armor, probably wouldn't set too well either. He wouldn't get too sarcastic now that he worked for her, he represented her and her business even when he wasn't there.

Walking right up to him, one massive hand holding onto his Imperial helmet, the other, wrapped around the bow. Fillim swallowed, doing his best to look calm. "And you know Eorlund well enough to say that, do you?!

Tilting his head, "Well enough to know that he won't work on anything enchanted." Holding his hand out toward the bow. "Now, you can take it to him and be turned away, or you can let me take a look at it."

Not seeming to have any other choice, Fjolrin straightened and curtly handed him the bow.

Seeing that he seemed to be alright, she raised her hand to him, "Night Fillim." and headed inside.

As soon as the door closed, the Nord's voice lowered. His blue eyes burned into Fillim's. "I don't trust you... you know that. If that bow isn't perfect when you're done..."

Fillim just rolled his eyes, turning away so he could look at the bow in better light, without Fjolrin
breathing in his face. "I guess that makes us even then, doesn't it? I don't trust you either."

He was amazed that he didn't get an answer. Instead, he stood there, watching him inspect it. It was a wreck. A long, hairline fracture ran down the entire length of the riser. The stringwork had all been completely burnt away.

Turning back to him, "I'll need it overnight, you have a cracked riser. And of course, it needs to be restrung. I can do it first thing in the morning. When it's done I'll send it over to Elrindir, he'll re-string it for me."

The Nord nodded, standing there watching him. "I have to put this inside, Fjolrin." He paused, tilting his head. "Was there anything else?"

Folding his arms, he just shook his head, watching Fillim as he went inside with the bow. Instead of leaving, he stayed. Not even knowing why, he just felt the need to observe him, to talk to him. He was curious. About a lot of things. And it was driving him nuts.

Saying goodnight to them, he pulled the door closed and turned around. For just a moment, he stood at the doors, watching him. The Nord just stood there. "What do you want? I've already told you, Fjolrin, your bow will be ready in the-"

"I just thought to walk with you. If you're going to be working on my weapons, perhaps we should at least be on speaking terms."

Now he really didn't trust him. He had practically accused him of being a spy for the Thalmor, acting like he was a threat to all of Whiterun! Now, he wanted to walk him back to Jorvaskr so they could talk?

Adjusting the strap on his satchel, he stepped out into the street with him. For a moment they just stood there, looking at each other.

Fillim looked him over. He looked absolutely ridiculous in that armor. He didn't fit the look at all. He was huge. Bigger than Farkas. His long, braided beard and long hair, the armor looked uncomfortable at best. The Nord's eyebrows gathered, leaning back, he opened up his massive arms. "Am I missing something? Why're you lookin' at me that way! Don't get any ideas, Elf! I'm not your type!"

Fillim groaned, wrinkling his face up in distaste, "As if I would even consider you! Do not flatter yourself!"

The Nord's look instantly changed. Half smiling, actually flushing and half insulted, wondering why he wouldn't be considered. Fillim just shook his head, letting out a deep sigh, he started walking. Looking straight ahead, "Who made that armor for you?"

"Smith in Solitude. Why?"

"It looks uncomfortable. And... well, it doesn't really look like you, Fjolrin."

Fjolrin stopped. Standing in the middle of the street staring at him. It was getting dark, Fillim knew Vilkas would be waiting, he should've just kept his mouth shut. He stopped, letting out another deep breath. Turning to the Nord, he could see that his jaw was clenched up even from where he stood.

Raising his hands, "No offense meant. But, Imperial armor is not the best. And it doesn't look very comfortable."
Fjolrin slowly walked up to him, making Fillim take a step back. Nervously looking around, there was no one left on the street, just the guards down at the front gates. "Look, for someone that's doing... whatever it is that you're doing that's bad enough to crack an ebony bow... an enchanted one at that!" Stopping his retreat, he licked his lips, "Don't you think you should have better armor? That's all I'm saying."

Leaning down into the Mer's face. "Are you taking care of me, Elf? Do you really want me to be safe? Or is it something else?"

Fillim's eyes got bigger with every word, he sputtered. "Wha- What?! I... I... No! It's my job!" Shaking his head, turning, he continued to walk. "You're being an ass, Fjolrin! Stay in that if you wish!"

A gigantic hand on his arm, halted him, turning him around roughly! "I wasn't through speaking with you, Elf!"

Ripping away from his grasp, "Well I'm done! And you'll keep your hands off!"

Huffing out a breath, he stormed off, straightening his tunic and satchel. He could hear Fjolrin behind him, laughing. *Insufferable Nord!* His face was on fire, he was tired, filthy and he was starving. He just wanted to get home.

Home.

As soon as Jorvaskr came into sight, and knowing who was still walking behind him, relief instantly flooded through him.

Then remembering who else was waiting inside, it left him again.

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Letting the doors close behind them, he let it go.

He was getting a lot better at that lately, with Fillims help. Letting things go.

Everything that they had all endured as of late, he just wanted peace. He longed for it so much, in fact, that he had let his brother take his last job, so that he could work on their home. As big as the place was going to be and with them all working, it was going to take some time.

The problem with that was, Fillim, having to stay here, was driving him to work more and more hours just to get away. The more hours he worked, the less they all saw of each other, and that in itself, was putting a huge strain on things.

A double-edged sword, it was.
As soon as they were below, he slid an arm around the Elf, he needed to feel him. He missed him.
"I have a bath ready for you, and a meal."

He was quiet. The whole way to the bathing room, he didn't say a word. Just looking at the
expression on the Mer's face... his brows gathered, his mouth set... it was such a strained look for
one so young.

Vilkas closed the door and pulled him back to it, turning him so his back was against the door.
Those eyes, looking up at him. His hand raised up, caressing his face over his forehead, attempting
to ease the worry there away, down to his jawline. Vilkas lowered his face down to Fillim's, feeling
the Mer's breath against his lips. The moon was full... and he needed him. He needed to have him,
or he was going to go insane.

Pushing his hands up under Fillim's tunic... feeling his flesh... rubbing them all over him. He was
already so hard... so hard he ached. Grinding his hips against him, whispering low, "I need you,
Fillim. I need to be inside of you. Please."

Wrapping a hand into his hair, his mouth came down to the Mer's. Gods, he felt so good. Fillim's
eyes closed, he almost felt limp... just like that first time. "Take a bath with me love... let me bathe
you. I promise Fillim... I promise I'll be gentle."

Those amber eyes opened up and looked into his. They made him so weak. Fillim nodded,
speaking so low he could barely hear. "Gentle..."

He couldn't waste time on the undressing, if he didn't move now, he wasn't going to last. Just the
thought of being inside of him was enough. Enough to make his seed overflow and run down the
sides of his cock. He'd thought about this all day!

Vilkas leaned back into the hot water, pulling Fillim back against him. Taking a cup, he poured the
soothing water over his long hair, he needed to feel it lay against him. The Mer's head laid back
into him. Spreading his legs, laying one over each of his... he could see everything. His pale, hard
length, rubbing over the Mer's dark skin. His slender cock was already so hard that he stood erect
from the water.

Reaching over the side of the tub, his fingers touched the small bottle of oil, grabbing it. The only
regret was, that this wouldn't last long enough.

He hadn't had him since that first time. Since then they had only used their mouths. That was no
longer enough.

Their bodies grinding against each other, Fillim's ass was pushing down into him. His head laid
back against Vilkas' chest, his eyes closed, mouth opened up in a silent cry as oiled fingers
breached him.

It had been too long, far too long... he needed this! He needed him now! Lowering a hand from
around the Nord's neck, he wrapped it around his thick cock, guiding the head to his opening and
slowly pushed down. Vilkas lifted his hips, raising them both from the water, pouring more of the
oil onto where they were joined and slowly, slid completely inside of him. Pausing, he wrapped his
arms around the Mer's stomach, holding him. All but their breathing, they were silent.

Their eyes closed, Vilkas raised a hand to cup Fillim's jaw, the other slid down to rest at the side of
his cock. Slowly, he rocked his hips, pushing his head back harder and harder into Vilkas' chest, he
moaned out.
He wanted to talk lovingly to him, but all he could do was breathe against his pointed ear. Just seeing him, seeing his face... seeing the expressions he was making, knowing that he was the one giving him that pleasure was going to be his undoing. Lowering his hand, if he couldn't see where they joined and he wanted to so badly, then he wanted to see his pale flesh as it pierced Fillim's tight, dark hole. He wanted to see it spread wide, taking him all the way in... see those fine, dark red hairs as they stuck to his oiled length, sliding over him.

If he couldn't see it... he could feel it.

Moving his wet fingers over Fillim's stretched hole, feeling his own manhood as it moved in and out of the little Mer. Running his hand up over Fillim's tight, little balls. Gods!

His breathing picked up, just imagining in his mind's eye what he was feeling with his hands.

Fillim cried out, his hands digging into Vilkas' neck, his dark cock, standing straight up from the water. "Touch me... touch me!" Grinding his ass into him, Vilkas wrapped his hand around the Mer, and that's all he needed.

Seed shot out of him, up into the air, landing back down into the water around them. Moving out, just enough, to grind back into him he couldn't get close enough. Couldn't get deep enough. Fillim could feel him as he stopped. Breathing, as he filled him. Vilkas' stubbled face, rubbing against his ear, "I love you..." he breathed. "I love you."

Turning his face, Fillim just looked at him. Vilkas' eyes were closed, his ebony brows gathered... he waited. As if he had let something slip, and now was afraid of the outcome. Afraid that it wouldn't be returned, and was bracing himself for the pain that would follow if it wasn't.

Raising his hand out of the water, holding onto Vilkas' jaw, feeling his rough beard against his already pruned fingertips. "I love you too, Vilkas..."
Fillim had laid there, watching him... listening to his tone change. It was quickly turning into hurt, anger. Farkas felt the need to be in control of their relationship. As much as he was gentle and loving, he was the dominant force. Even if it wasn't as severe as his brother. From the very start, he had told Vilkas, that Fillim had enough backbone for him. And he had meant it!

He wanted to protect him, provide for him. He wanted him there for them, when they were home.

What he wanted... was a spouse.

A little bit of reflecting going on here, over things that had happened during the two week or so, time period.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Icy eyes looked down into his... he didn't need to say anything else. The evident relief shone all over his face. It took a lot for Vilkas to express his feelings vocally. And if he felt so strongly that he would declare himself, Fillim knew there was much more than what he'd just said, that was boiling underneath. The man was his own animal. The more he was around him, the more he discovered.

Vilkas brought his mouth down to Fillim's, taking his lips gently as he slowly pulled out of him.

Slowly moving his hips against Fillim's backside, "You're not hurt are you?"

Smiling, "No... I needed you too Vilkas."

For as difficult as it was for Vilkas to talk about his feelings, he loved it when Fillim told him how he felt. The man simply needed to hear it. And the more he did, the more positive the change that Fillim saw in him.

Letting out a bit of a chuckle. "I really feel better now." Between dwelling on his anguish over his father, and Fjolrin and his unnecessary antagonizing, he had definitely needed the release.

Tightening his hold around the Mer, he let out a relieved breath. "Lets get you washed, then we'll eat."

He loved how they fawned over him, especially Vilkas. Farkas was always loving with him. But Vilkas made up for any of his gruffness at bath time. He loved bathing Fillim and Fillim loved it.
In fact, that was really the only time that he was jealous of his brother's time with the Mer. Farkas loved to take baths with Fillim as well, because Fillim would dote over him.

After a couple of arguments, they'd come to an agreement. When one of them was away, the other, of course, would bathe with him. When they were both there, they had to take turns. Of course, that didn't mean that there still wasn't some hard feelings over it.

Both of the twins loved his cooking as well, and he had promised both of them that as soon as the Imperial order was complete, he would cut back some on his hours. Then, he could help them work on their house more, giving them all time together. When the Imperial's order was done, Adrianne wouldn't be needing him as much. She had already told him she would be flexible with him. That would give him time to garden, amongst other things.

Farkas had already insisted that he didn't want him working full time. Both twins, had argued over him working at all, until he put his foot down, stating that he would decide for himself! The next day, when he decided to tell Adrianne that he'd work full time, he and Farkas had their first real fight.

Vilkas had left for a job in the hold and they were alone. Sleeping in his own room, simply due to the fact that neither of them felt it right to invade his brother's space while he was gone. He also, had longed for his own bed... his own room. Hell, they hadn't been apart in three days, if you didn't count the night he got pissed and left. He was goin' nuts! Now Fillim felt the need to be gone! He'd never see him.

He'd lain there in bed, his arm wrapped around Fillim, the Mer was snuggled up to him. Staring up at the ceiling. "I don't want to lose you..." A single tear, rolled down his temple, getting lost in his black hair.

Propping himself up on his elbow, rubbing the big Nord's chest. "Farkas, you are never going to lose me... ever! It's just work, I can't be here all day. You know that! Not anymore. Not with her here and Fjolrin..."

He had lain back down. "I can't take the stress anymore, Farkas."

More tears fell.

Farkas was a combination of a great big puppy, and a great big bear. He never had a hard time expressing his feelings to him. They would talk all night over how they felt, loving on each other. Sometimes it was a relief.. and sometimes, it wasn't. Like now.

His black eyebrows gathered up, his trembling hand went up to cover his face. "I won't ever see you, Fillim! Ever!"

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He wanted to protect him, provide for him. He wanted him there for them when they were home.

What he wanted was a spouse.

He hadn't said that yet, but it was coming. Fillim wanted that too. But, he hadn't ever had the
chance to be independent, at all. He needed this, to heal, to become whole. The way that he should have been able to when he was growing up and maturing. Like any normal Human, or Mer. Now, it was all he could think about. He craved it.

He couldn't be some kept lover... mate... whatever, that had no say in anything! Just like the fact that he was having to sneak to learn archery. It was ridiculous!

One evening when Farkas had been sleeping, Vilkas took him out into the yard and was working his arm out, showing him some moves with a sword. It was still light enough to see decent and he'd actually been having a good time, it was fun. And he could tell that Vilkas was really enjoying it. He knew there would be times when they were both gone, and he wanted Fillim to know how to protect himself. He knew the Mer could use his magic. But he had no magic skills, and wanted to do something together. This was a way for him to do that.

Teaching him how to block with a shield, Fillim had readied himself to swing his sword. As soon as he had started to bring it down, it was snatched from his hand! They had both turned around in complete shock, to face a very pissed off Farkas! Holding onto the sword so tightly, his knuckles had gone white. He had pushed past Fillim like he wasn't even there, glaring down into his brother's face! "I told you, I didn't want him fighting!"

Vilkas had stood there, dumbfounded. "He's not fighting, Farkas! He needs to learn how to defend himself!"

Farkas bore down into his face, yelling! "From who?! You?!!" Vilkas had looked from Fillim, back to his brother. He could tell, Vilkas was hurt.

He pushed in between them, Farkas yelling over his head the entire time. "So far, the only threats to him, have been from right here! He don't have to fight, cause the next one that hurts him is gonna taste my broadsword!" Yelling so loud, Fillim swore there had been an echo. It had literally reverberated off the stonework that surrounded the back porch.

When he'd finally got himself calmed enough to back off, they had looked around to see that everyone in Jorvaskr was standing there... watching. Eorlund had stopped working and was looking down at them from the forge. A couple of guards had even come around the side of Jorvaskr to watch.

Njada had just gotten back, and as soon as that was out of his mouth, knowing it was partially aimed at her, she got up and stormed inside. Farkas had been so pissed, he had gone into the underforge, and hadn't returned until the next morning. Fillim asking Vilkas where he'd gone and coming up empty. He'd slept, wrapped up in Vilkas' arms... tears running down his face into the pillows.

The next morning when Farkas finally got back, he was wet and cold... and covered in dirt. His eyes were completely bloodshot and red-rimmed. Fillim could tell that he'd been crying. They had taken a bath together, Farkas telling him how he felt... apologizing, but that he still felt the same. He didn't want him fighting.

Vilkas later told him that his brother feared that if he fought, he would get hurt. If he got hurt, they could lose him. Farkas was terrified of anything taking Fillim away.

The very next day, he'd been hired. The day after that, he went to work full time. The fight was on.

There was too much stress. Between the problems within the circle, the prejudice that was aimed at Fillim, and now the problems with the dragon born just adding to it. Plus, having to share a mate.
The last thing they would work on, it was a given. But, everything happening all at once was making them all over emotional.

The night they fought had been horrible. He found out very quickly that Farkas, even being as gentle as he was had quite a temper. And when it came to Fillim, he would throw fits. He would never hurt him, but he had absolutely no problem in letting Fillim see his anger. Especially when he wanted his way.

It took Fillim getting real angry before Farkas would back down. Then, there would be compromise.

"You will see me, just not as much. I'm sorry Farkas, but-"

Instantly, Farkas had rolled on top of him, kissing him, wrapping his large hands into his hair. Fillim knew he didn't want to deal with what was going on, he wanted him to change his mind, and was hoping that sex would do it. "Make love to me. I want you..." Kissing him over and over... "I love you Fillim..." Taking his knees and moving Fillim's legs apart.

He wasn't in the mood. He needed him to understand that how he felt still stood. He had put his hands up on Farkas' chest, pushing ever so lightly. He whispered, "Farkas... I love you too, but I'm not changing my mind."

Farkas had stopped and just held himself up, hovering over him, he stared down into his eyes. And Fillim could see the realization sinking in. After only a minute, he'd pushed himself up and off the bed and got up, turning to face him. Trying to keep his voice from rising and completely failing. Fillim sat up on the bed, looking at him. He wasn't really afraid of him, as much as he was afraid of how this would affect them.

Because he wasn't going to back down.

"I don't want you working away from here! I don't want you gone all the fucking time!" His voice getting louder and louder with each word! Tears had ran down his cheeks, he looked utterly desperate. He crossed his arms, standing there naked, his long hair disheveled and in his face. "I won't have it, Fillim! You need to listen to me!!"

As much as it had hurt Fillim seeing him like that he had to take a stand now. If he didn't, he would never have a say in anything! Farkas would think that if he threw a fit, Fillim would cave and give in. Pushing himself off the bed, he walked around him and grabbed his breeches. Farkas watched him, completely silent as he put them on, reaching around him to grab his boots and tunic, was when he panicked.

He moved in front of the door, raising his hands. "Wait... Fillim, wait!! Where are you going?!"

"To the Inn! Farkas, you need to move! I'm upset and I need time to think!"

Farkas was near panting, holding his hands out to him, his face pulled into a grimace. "Please... please, Fillim! I just- You just- You have to understand! I can't take being away from you! It's bad enough when I'm gone, but now, even when I'm here I won't see you!!"

He was sobbing. "You have to understand! I don't want you gone!"

He had tried so hard not to cry, but his voice betrayed him and came out broken and choked, his chin and mouth quivering so badly that he could barely speak. Pointing into his own chest, "You have to understand how I feel! I have never had freedom! Ever!!"
Tears had flowed down his face, his nose running. He wiped his sleeve across his face, attempting to mop it up. "I love you so much!! Both of you... but I can't be a slave anymore!! I have to have a say in something, Farkas!"

Reaching around him, he had grabbed the door handle. Farkas moved out of the way. The last thing he saw as he pulled the door shut, was Farkas, sinking down onto his knees, his hands coming up to his face.

Running past the whelps quarters, he didn't know where to go. Near hysterics, he didn't want to be around anyone, let alone, have anyone see him in this state. He wasn't going to be able to speak without bawling. Practically vaulting the steps, he ran through the upstairs, not even seeing anyone that was there and headed for the back porch. It was late, the only thing he could hope for, was that everyone would be inside.

As soon as he got out onto the back porch, he stopped, looking around, he felt so lost. He had nothing. No money, barely enough for one night's stay at the Inn, and he didn't want to be there. Remembering the door that Farkas had gone in the night he'd gotten angry, he headed there.

Opening it up, he walked inside. Casting a candlelight spell, he looked around. It was warm, completely surrounded in stone with just one entrance out the back which was well hidden, and an old fountain that didn't look like it'd been used in years, all stained up on the inside. Walking into the corner, he laid down onto the floor and curled up around himself. This was the second time now, that he had cried himself to sleep in that last three days. Over this one twin.

Being lifted, was what had woke him. He was stiff from laying on the stone floor, and almost instinctively he snuggled into the warm chest, clinging to him, nuzzling his face against him. Farkas carried him inside, laid him down on the bed and then turned, shutting and locking his door.

He'd been all over town. When finally he had calmed down enough to use his senses, and smelled him out. He couldn't believe that he'd actually gone in there. Getting his clothes off, he pulled Fillim's boots off and laid down next to him. Wrapping his arms around the freezing little Mer, he pulled him close. Fillim just stared into his chest.

"I can't lose you..." Licking his full lips, "If I lose you, I'll die Fillim... I'll die."

Farkas shook his head, looking down into his face. "I give in. I do. I don't think- " He could tell Farkas was struggling with what he wanted to say. Silently, he watched him take a deep breath and start again. "You're not a slave Fillim... not anymore. Don't you understand? I just... I just wanna give you everything." Farkas closed his eyes, his voice cracking. "But... I want you to be happy."

He was going to cry again. They both were. Fillim clung to him, reassuring him. "You're not going to lose me. I just need some say. I need some independence, just a little, Farkas. I love all that you do for me, but... I want to do for myself too."

Leaning his forehead against the Mer's. "Alright, we're gonna start on the house. I need you to draw up some building plans." Fillim's face had completely lit up!

"When the house is done, will you at least back off on some hours? Please?"

Kissing him, "I promise, Farkas... I can't wait!" He was completely giddy, beaming up at him.

Farkas let out a deep breath, and he could tell that it was one of pure relief. Noses touching, his lips brushed against Fillim's. "I wanna be your husband, Fillim... you know."
For a moment all Fillim could do was look at him. Just look into those eyes in stunned disbelief at what his ears had just heard.

Even with the huge smile that spread all over his face, tears overflowed from his eyes. "Are you proposing to me, Farkas?"

The most beautiful smile came over the Nord's face, he just couldn't get over how breathtaking... how good, he was. Through and through. He couldn't imagine someone hurting him. Taking advantage of him.

Farkas looked down, his long, ebony lashes kissing his face, sucking in his lower lip to bite on it. "Yeah... I guess I am." His eyes moved back up to Fillim's, both their faces were flushed.

Moving in closer, he took the Nord's upper lip in his mouth, kissing him. Parting briefly to look into his eyes, "I would love that, Farkas."

Farkas knew that if his brother didn't feel the same way yet, he would in time. They would wait to say anything until Vilkas could make his feelings known to Fillim, or to his brother. Sometimes he would talk to Farkas about how he felt. But in this case, he didn't think he would. They talked about it that night, and had numerous times over the last two weeks.

It helped Farkas get through the times when he couldn't see Fillim, and he'd been in better spirits for it. Working on the house gave them something to keep busy and take their minds off their troubles.

It was a goal. It's completion meant that they would all be together, have their own space... their own home.

When Vilkas was ready to tell Fillim how he felt, to make his own proposal, then they would make plans. For right now, it was enough for them to know, and to be together.

*******

After their bath, Vilkas had gotten their meal ready and brought it to his room. Talking and eating, now they lay in each other's arms. The fire's glow dancing throughout the room. Just the fact that he had declared himself, Fillim knew, it would only be a matter of time.

He was more than ready.

Chapter End Notes

**Proposal Farkas style. Much better than in the game in my opinion. Sheesh! "Guess were married now... doesn't feel like I thought it would-- "**

Who in the hell wants to hear that?! First time I married him and he said that, my feelings were literally hurt. I had built it up in my mind, thinking that it was going to be something really great, and then to hear that.
Chapter Summary

He didn't know a whole lot about this thing that they had. But whatever it was, it was different than anything that he'd ever seen. He'd never seen anyone that slept so little and yet, could still function. And as much as he sometimes wanted to know the details, part of him didn't. There was a reason that they were unwilling to tell him. Why they had tried so hard to hide it from him.

He also had a feeling, that it had something to do with the problems amongst the circle members. Whatever struggle was taking place, it was separating them.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

***********

It seems what's left of my human side
Is slowly changing in me
(Will you give in to me?)

Looking at my own reflection
When suddenly it changes
Violently it changes (oh no)
There is no turning back now
You've woken up the demon in me

***********

He knew that Vilkas had laid awake, while he slept. The Nord might act like he slept, but most of the time, he just dozed. Laying there holding him, thinking... as much as he knew, that went on in that man's head, he knew that's what he did. Farkas as well. He wasn't dumb, he had noticed the patterns. That's why, when they actually did sleep, he left them alone. Because they needed it.

He didn't know a whole lot, about this thing that they had. But whatever it was... it was different than anything that he'd ever seen. He'd never seen anyone, that slept so little and yet could still function. And as much as he sometimes, wanted to know the details, part of him didn't. There was a reason, that they were unwilling to tell him. Why they had tried so hard to hide it from him.

He also had a feeling, that it had something to do with the problems amongst the circle members. Whatever struggle was taking place, it was separating them.

Vilkas spent a lot of time, speaking privately to Kodlak... while Farkas didn't seem to feel a need to. Skjor and Aela, even with the fact that they seemed to be a couple, were spending more and more time away at night. Not getting back, till early in the morning. After he had thought about it, that had probably been going on for awhile, and he was just now noticing.

Since he'd started working, and leaving early to train with Anoriath, he had seen them coming in
just before dawn. He'd say good morning to them and leave. And of course, the day that Vilkas had argued with Fjolrin... what he'd said. That he had decided to go through with the initiation?

All he knew, was that he wanted them all safe. And he didn't want to involve himself in anymore grief. More than he already had, anyway.

Vilkas was snoring... and now he couldn't sleep. What he needed, was some tea. Not wanting to wake him, he very carefully eased himself off the bed, slid into his breeches and crept towards the door. Hopefully, with the sex and the hot bath, Vilkas would be relaxed enough to sleep for awhile.

Hoping, as late as it was, that he would have the kitchen all to himself, he eased the door open. Tiptoeing out into the hallway, he quietly pulled the door closed.

Not really feeling the need to cover up completely, he had breeches on after all... he walked to the kitchen. Working the pump, he filled the kettle, and then placed it over the fire to heat it. Knowing it would take awhile, he walked over to the pantry and looked for the particular leaves that he wanted. Tilma kept a good supply, and he was thankful.

Tea had always seemed to calm him, making it easier for him to sleep. Especially, now that he'd backed off on the mead and wine. From the time he'd been with Anariil, until just awhile ago, he'd drank a lot... drank to numb himself, way more than he should have, from all of his pain. He didn't want it to become a problem, so he backed off.

Now, he only had it twice a day. Mead with midday meal and wine with evening meal... that was it. He had tea every morning and sometimes late at night, just like tonight. He had even gotten Farkas to drink it in the morning. Which was a feat, in itself!

Three different leaves... he'd helped her put together a good blend. Given, to relax and calm. Opening up a clay jar, he spooned some into the tea strainer and set it into his cup, waiting.

Leaning over the chopping block, resting his head down onto his arms, the kettle's whistle jolted him awake. Grabbing the fireplace poker, he pulled the kettle out from over the flames, and folded up a towel so he could handle picking it up.

He let out a deep breath, as he poured the steaming water over the strainer and into the cup. Now he could have slept, he was so tired, but after going to all the trouble, he still wanted the tea.

Laying his head, back onto his arms... it would take a few minutes to steep. Then, he could take it back into the bedroom and sit at Vilkas' side table to sip it, so he wouldn't wake him.

A low shuffling noise behind him, startled him awake... Gods, he needed to get back to bed. Bleary eyed, he looked around... nothing. Standing up straight, he stretched up onto his toes and ran his hands through his hair.

The tea was ready... the aromatic steam, making him long for bed that much more. Pulling the strainer out, instantly, all the small hairs on him stood at attention, as a breeze flowed through the room... carrying the strong smell of a wet dog.

Whirling around, Fjolrin stood so close to him, that he literally had to bend back onto the block, to be out of the Nord's face! Taking a minute, for the panic to leave him, and what was happening to register... just looking at him, smelling the mead on him... he knew he was drunk.

The whole thing was like deja vu. Fillim stared up into his face, silent...

His expression was relaxed. Heavy lidded, sky blue eyes scanned lazily over his body, back up to
Fillim's face. Fjolrin literally reeked of mead, and wearing nothing but breeches as well, the Nord moved even closer and laid his hands down, onto the block... one, on each side of him.

His deep voice, slurred... 'Lookin at you from the backside... with all that hair... I almost thought you was a wench..' He chuckled, giving him another once over. His blonde head, cocking to one side, "But ah.. yer missin' somethin' up front here I see... to be a wench."

Swallowing, Fillim fought the urge to be sick. This man, was deadly enough sober... let alone inebriated. Even with being blocked in... as tired as he was, he was fed up... and his mouth, ran away from his brain. "You're losing your touch... I heard you this time!"

Not waiting to see the reaction of his words, he raised his hands to the Nord's massive chest and pushed! Turning his back to him, he faced the block and grabbed the cup. Furiously attempting, to keep the waver out of his voice... "Do you know how rude it is, to sneak up on someone?"

The Nord was completely silent... and now, he smelled like them. He tightened his shaking hands around the cup. Closing his eyes, "Fjolrin...."

Instantly, his body was forced into the block! One massive hand, closed around his throat... the other, fisted into up his hair! The cup fell from his hands, hot water running down over his bare feet. Attempting to scream, his voice was choked off, as the hand moved up from his throat, and clamped down over his mouth! The hand in his hair was forcing his head back. Fjolrin's mouth, was in his ear... "Next time Elf! You won't hear me!"

Tugging on his hair with each word, Fillim's eyes teared up. Pressing him into the block, until his whole midsection felt as though it would be crushed, he growled into his ear... "I've been curious bout somethin'... bout you... Elf!"

Fillim's fingers, dug at the hand over his mouth... he couldn't hit him with fire or lightning, lest he hurt himself... he was trapped!

The Nord's nose and mouth, ran all along his neck... his ear... the hair that he had hold of, taking in his scent. Tears spilled from Fillim's eyes, running down his face and over Fjolrin's hand.

"I smell Vilkas on you Elf..." His voice sounded wanton, low and needy, as he breathed heavily against his neck... "I smell so, so much..."

Droplets of warm fluid fell onto Fillim's shoulder, running down his chest and back. His mind flew to all the possibilities of what it could be! He wasn't bleeding, was he? Even with the discomfort he was in, he would know if he'd been cut.

The sudden realization of what it was, sent his mind reeling! filling him with dread.

Saliva... Fjolrin was drooling...

Hot breath, flooded into his face... he could smell blood, mixed in with all the drink that he'd consumed. His stomach lurched and rolled over, his mouth was watering... he was going to puke!

Releasing the hold, he had on his hair... the hand holding his mouth, now pushed Fillim back into his body and held him there! Fjolrin's other hand, now free... ran down the length of his chest, down to his stomach, running down over his crotch... squeezing him hard! Fillim's hands clawed fruitlessly at him... he was too strong, there was no way he could stop him! Growling into his ear... "If you'll do for my brothers... you'll do for me!"

Hot, wet tongue, ran down the length of his ear... over his neck! Fillim's cries, remained muffled
against the large hand... he could feel the Nord's erection pushing into his back!

Almost as if Au-riel himself, was aiding him, Fjolrin's grip slid... just enough, for Fillim to find purchase onto his thick finger! Biting down as hard as he could, his small fangs, sunk in until he tasted hot copper! Fjolrin's reaction, giving him just one more opening, he swun his elbow back into the Nord's stomach, and he was released.

Dodging around the block, he grabbed up the tea cup and hurled it at the Nord! Fjolrin swatted it away, laughing as he slowly, progressed towards the retreating Mer.

Tears ran down his face and neck, as he held his hands out in warning!! Blue lightning, flowed out from his fingers, crackling around them... his own shaking voice, adding to his terror! "I'll kill you! STAY BACK!"

Fjolrin, laughed... "Not afraid of you, little one! You gonna bite me again?"

His speech, sloppy and slurred. "I like it rough... and I got my own fangs now! Guess who's are bigger!"

Fillim's back hit the wall... his hands, stretched out in front of him... Gods! he knew he didn't stand a chance. All he would accomplish, would be pissing him off ever further, and then his own end would be that much worse!

He sobbed out, "At least, I don't have to turn into a monster, to have mine!!"

Just a few more steps, and he would be on him! Closing his eyes, before he could even scream, he was hit! His head, slammed into the stone wall... and all he remembered, was the earsplitting sound of roaring...

***********

Skjor reached the kitchen first, Aela and Kodlak, behind him. Before they could even take in the situation, Vilkas exploded into the room! Moving through them, like they weren't even there! Full force, his body slammed into Fjolrin's back, pushing him into Fillim! Hitting the wall, the Mer passed out, falling to the floor.

All he could see... was red! Latched onto his back, his jaws sank down onto Fjolrin's shoulder! Claws, ripping at him as the Nord flailed about! He was trying to shift and couldn't... his body was too weak! He'd already gone too long in his wolf form. His body wouldn't handle another transformation, until he'd had time to rest.

He didn't hear anything, but his prey... not even the screaming of those surrounding him!

Nothing...

His giant feet, braced themselves, against the Nord's back, his sharp toenails digging in, as he fell to his knees... blood, splattered through the room, as he shook his head, tearing the shoulder he held apart!

Seeing Fillim's body on the floor, he paused... Aela was crouched near him, trying to get him clear of the brawl.

Arms, bigger than his own... covered in black fur, came around him, pulling him back! Stumbling over the steel armor, that laid all over the floor, they both fell. His brother's arms, locked around him, crushing him in their grip! His legs, coming around his and locked together... he was pinned.
Kodlak, stood in the hall... watching the display, screaming for the the whelps to get outside... to get to the back porch. Skjor ran in to get Fjolrin away from the twins, not wanting to take the chance that Vilkas would break free from his brother's hold.

Vilkas' yellow eyes, followed him as he strained against his brother's grip! Thrashing his head back and forth, snarling, saliva flung out in strings across the kitchen's ruined floor. Farkas held on for dear life! No matter what had happened... this man, couldn't fall by their hand! The whole fate of Skyrim rested with him... even if he was an asshole!

The Nord was covered in his own blood. He'd be lucky to make it. His back was shredded, and because of the situation, they couldn't get the healer involved. Just being what they were, their healing was accelerated more than the average human. He didn't know if him being dragon born, gave him any extra, but right now... he'd need all he could get.

He called for Tilma to grab potions, as he and Skjor hauled him to the whelp's quarters... dragging his feet behind him, leaving a trail of blood behind them.

*************

Slowly, they both came back. Aela, seeing that Fillim was alright, he was simply unconscious, left to help Tilma. As soon as Farkas let him go, he crawled to where Fillim lay... cradling the Mer's head in his hands... unable to see if he bled, as his own hands and arms were covered.

Wrapping his arms around him, his eyes zeroed in on his mouth... blood covered his lips. Lowering his face to him, he smelled... darting his tongue out, he tasted it... it wasn't his. Panic shot through him, as he realized what had happened... squeezing his eyes shut, his head falling back, he cried out in despair. "Farkas... Oh Gods! No... Nnooo!!"

Farkas, watching him... backed away until his back hit the wall. This couldn't be happening... not to him!

Farkas bolted out of the kitchen! Running down the hallway, hitting his room, he grabbed some breeches and threw them on! He knew, they needed time to work on him... try to save him, but after that... he wanted some fucking answers!

Chapter End Notes

Lyrics ~ Down With The Sickness
by: Disturbed

Now remember, there's a tiny bit of a gap between him taking the blood, and them hitting the Silverhand in this. I honestly don't think that after someone's first shift, they'd be up to that kind of fight. It would take time for someone to get a grasp on it I think. But that's just me. So, I'm fitting it around my story.

Instead of fighting, my Dragonborn gets hammered. New wolf blood... urges, full moon sensitivity and alcohol... not a good choice either.
He remembered, when he first took on the blood. He felt invincible! The sheer power, they held within them... the capability, to smell and hear the blood rushing through their prey... it's heart beating. To be able to sense, the emotion coming off from another, and know what they felt. The advantages it gave you as a warrior, were tremendous!

But there were other things, that it gave you as well. The need to breed was strong, especially when the moon was full. The need to feed... blood lust, was easy to fall prey to, if you didn't have your head about you.

Complete chaos, ran through the downstairs of Jorvaskr. Skjor was screaming for Athis... knowing they needed anyone, that had any healing capability at all. Pushing past the others, that had huddled by the doors to hear what was taking place. He ran into their quarters... Tilma could hear him wretching. And Skjor yelling at him to pull it together!

As soon as the doors opened, the others flooded into the hallway... staring at the now ruined carpet, that ran down the hallway and into their quarters. Hands up to mouths... gasping! Athis pushed his way out of the room, falling onto his knees in front of his comrades... emptying his gut onto the floor.

Tilma ran into the kitchen, she needed hot water! Grabbing up the kettle, she set it down onto the block, it would have to do. Just looking at the kitchen, she wanted to cry. It was a wreck... blood and saliva was everywhere, cookware and wooden dishes, lay scattered amidst Farkas’ discarded armor, that he'd broken out of to transform.

Shaking her head, and trying not to slip on the blood covered floor, she went into the pantry, and began pulling the potions they would need off from shelves, dropping them into a basket. Aela had already gathered bandages, she didn't know what they were going to do. He was hurt so bad.

Lifting the kettle from the block, she ran down the hallway... hearing Aela's voice, "Look! He's trying to heal himself... look!"

Pushing past Skjor and Kodlak, as soon as she got a good look at him, her stomach twisted up in knots...

He was sprawled face down, onto one of the whelp's beds... arms and legs hanging off from the sides. His back and shoulder, had been opened up for everyone to see.

His long blonde hair, now red from all the blood, lay tangled in the massive gashes and jagged flesh, that lined his back. Aela knelt down by him... attempting to pick pieces of it up the best she could, and lay it to the side of his neck. Deep puncture wounds, lined his lower back, buttocks and
sides, where Vilkas' long toenails had dug into him. Raw muscle and connective tissue, were visible all the way down to bone in some places.

His shoulder, or what was left of it, lay in shreds. Teeth marks, so deep in the bone, that they had filled, like small pools with his blood.

His body jerked and shook with spasms, as he struggled to raise his hands. As soon as they were close enough together, bright light from each hand, formed into a ball at the center... within seconds, it had passed over him... surrounding his body.

They all stood and watched, as little by little, the wounds began to knit back together. Fjolrin cried out in anguish! Weeping, as his flesh began to reform. The kettle fell from her hand, water sloshing out onto the floor, as the light faded... his hands falling limp, he passed out.

Athis, holding his stomach, with an apologetic look on this face, came back in from the hallway, knelt down and lifted his hands to Fjolrin's back. Light poured from them, flowing over him... after just a few minutes, it stopped. He lowered them, looking up at Kodlak. "That's all I can do for now, Harbinger..."

At least, he wouldn't die... just from that little bit of healing, he looked much better. No bone was visible... the gashes, were now shallow in appearance. Still... the wounds were severe, and it would take time to heal, time to recover and regain his strength. He wouldn't be going anywhere for a long while.

Tilma sat down on the edge of the bed, dabbing at the wounds with healing and numbing fluids, while Aela used the hot water to clean him up. Kodlak just looked at Skjor, all the questions he had in his mind... he knew, there was no use in voicing them. What was done, was done. There was no turning back. All he could do now, was hope that they could recover from what had just happened.

Which brought him to Fillim... none of them, but the Mer and Fjolrin, knew what had happened in the kitchen. He had his own ideas on it though...

It was evident, just from the smell that had filled the kitchen... pheromones, mead... and fear.

They hadn't explained enough to him. The moons were full, the time when they struggled the most. He was newly turned, so many new senses... all the power, it was like a rush... overwhelming! And then, to mix it with so much drink... when he already, wasn't in control.

He remembered, when he first took on the blood. He felt invincible! The sheer power, they held within them... the capability, to smell and hear the blood rushing through their prey... it's heart beating. To be able to sense, the emotion coming off from another and know what they felt! The advantages it gave you as a warrior, were tremendous!

But there were other things, that it gave you as well. The need to breed was strong, especially when the moon was full. The need to feed... blood lust, was easy to fall prey to, if you didn't have your head about you.

For the weak man, the blood would overtake him... some, would go completely feral... choosing to stay in wolf form the majority of the time. The longer you stayed in that form, the easier it was to forget what being human was like.

What took the strength from you, was the transformation. Those that constantly went back to human form, could only go through it once a day or so... it took a massive toll on you physically. Your body needed time to recuperate... it actually sapped, some of that power from you.
They had all seen that in the kitchen. He was trying to transform, and he couldn't.

Choices... they needed to be made wisely.

Fjolrin was drunk, they could all smell it. Once he healed, he would need to back off on it until he had more control. Then... well then maybe, he could help him with what he needed... if there was still time. His own health was fading, with each day the rot that was consuming him worsened.

Right now, he needed to check on Fillim, talk to him and find out what exactly had happened.

Dawn was approaching...

***********

Farkas held Fillim's head, both of them in a panic. Dipping a rag into a bucket of water, he wiped his mouth off, ringing a tiny bit inside to flush it out. When he woke, he was choking and gasping for air! Farkas turned him over... water and saliva, pouring from his mouth, as he gagged.

Farkas sat him up, clapping him hard on the back. His vision was still fuzzy, and all of a sudden, before he could even react, his mouth was being opened. He could hear Vilkas telling him to swallow, a bottle coming up to his lips. He swallowed, and instantly, just from the taste... he could tell what it was. Cure disease potion... followed by a healing remedy, being dumped into his mouth. Swallowing again and again... he held his hands up, as the images around him swam into view.

Vilkas, still naked and covered in blood and bits of gore, propped Fillim up. Squatting down next to him, he forced another bottle into his mouth! Fluid and bits of ingredient, ran down the sides of his lips, dripping onto him and the floor. "Fillim! You have to drink this! Now!"

He was going to wretch! lurching forward, away from Vilkas, he went down onto his hands and knees! Vilkas came with him, wrapping his arms around him, forcing his hand over his mouth and nose! Tears ran down Vilkas' face, "You will not throw it up! Do you hear me! Keep it down! Swallow!"

All he could smell, was the blood on Vilkas' hands... it was all over! Everything in his stomach came up! The hand over his face, clamped down even harder! Tears flowed from his eyes, as acid burned his nose and throat! With no choice, but to swallow... that's what he did.

Needing air, he went into a panic, fighting against the hands that held him! Realizing what was wrong, Vilkas let him go. On his hands and knees, Fillim desperately wailed out, crawling into the corner!

Vilkas held his hands up to show he meant him no harm, slowly creeping closer to him. "Fillim, it's me... it's me... no one's going to hurt you."

Farkas got onto his hands and knees, moving closer, whispering. "Brother, maybe you should wash up... "

Fillim just stared at him... tears leaving streaks on his blood smearing face, where Vilkas' hand had been. Vilkas shook his head, he had to be in shock. He knew, just looking down at himself... he was a mess. Standing, he went into the corner and filled the basin.

Farkas grabbed the water bucket he'd brought in from the kitchen and edged closer to Fillim, "You need to have some water Fillim, here."
Lifting the ladle to his mouth... Fillim's eyes were locked on his brother, watching him, as he washed the blood from his body. Compliantly, he opened his mouth, and swallowed the water. The burn, slowly being washed from his mouth and throat, a relief.

Raising his hand to the Mer's jaw, he gently turned his head to face him. "Fillim, can you tell us what happened? What happened?"

Grabbing the rag, that lay over the bucket, Fillim dunked it and wiped around his face, getting the stickiness off, trying to rid himself of the smell. His eyes kept moving to where Vilkas stood... watching him, his voice quiet. "I was in the kitchen, making tea... Vilkas was finally asleep.. I didn't want to wake him, so I went in there to make it."

His hands went into his hair, fingers combing through it as he stared into his lap. He was so sick of this. All of it! "Fjolrin, came up from behind me and... "

Gods! He couldn't even fucking say it! Licking his lips... he took a deep breath, looking up. Vilkas, partially cleaned up, now wearing breeches... was staring at him. Waiting...

Farkas sat there, watching him... Kodlak's voice, startled them all, "And what, Fillim?"

Fillim's eyes shot up to the doorway. Kodlak stood there, hands folded at his waist, watching him as well. Great!

Fillim's head dropped back down, his eyes boring into the floor, seeing nothing! This was humiliating! It was bad enough to go through it, but now, to have to tell them all what had happened. It was too much! He couldn't take anymore... even after everything he'd been through with Anariil, he never had felt this close to the breaking point. Ever!

Putting his hands to the floor, he pushed himself up. He couldn't look at any of them, he just wanted to leave. "He attacked me! Okay!"

His face flushed red... he brushed past Kodlak to leave, the Harbinger's hand came up, grabbing his arm... stopping him. "Fillim, there is no shame, in telling us what happened."

Fillim stood there, looking at all the blood on the floor... he just had to get out. "That is what happened.. he attacked me. I... I can't tell you or anyone else, what he said to me... what he did... I won't!"

Raising his face, away from the bloody mess, he looked at Kodlak. "That's what happened... now, I'd like to get cleaned up. I have to get to work."

Kodlak's hand held fast... his eyes looked into the Mer's... remorseful. "I'm sorry Fillim, I can't let you do that. Not until we know that you're going to be alright."

From behind them... Vilkas' voice, spoke low and soft. Fear and sadness flowed from his words, "You got his blood in your mouth Fillim. We have to watch you for a few days... make sure that you're well."

Yanking his arm free, he turned in the doorway, looking accusingly at Farkas and his brother. He was near panting! His face, pleading, incredulous... this just couldn't be happening!

Turning, he bolted down the hallway, going into Farkas' room, and slamming the door shut! Running to the wardrobe, he flung it open, the doors straining against the hinges, he frantically grabbed his clothes and stuffed them into a knapsack. The door opened behind him. Farkas closed it and leaned up against it, folding his arms. If this was going to be a regular thing, there would be
no good outcome.

"How long have you known Fillim?"

He stayed facing the wardrobe... slowing, "From the first time I saw you... here, on this bed. I just didn't want to face it."

His voice, quieting to a whisper. "Then... when I fell in love with you... it didn't matter. You saved me, I love you... both of you. That's all that matters."

Farkas just watched him... and even in his relief, he still couldn't let him leave. They would have to feed him cure disease potions throughout the day and into tomorrow. It was the only way to be sure. He hadn't gotten much of the blood, but still. Sanies Lupinus... would change the one afflicted, and within just a few days time, he would be a werewolf. If he wasn't cured before then, it would be too late.

For them, with the ritual they underwent... to actually drink the blood. It was immediate! To say that the change, was extremely intense, was a gross understatement.

Pressing his backside harder against the door... "I'm thankful, that you feel that way... but, I can't let you leave Fillim... not for at least two days."

Whirling around at him, his face full of desperation... tears ran down his cheeks. "Is this what you want?!" Throwing the sack onto their bed! "I'm going to lose my job Farkas! But I guess, that won't upset you! Will it!"

Instantly, Farkas' face had gone red, his fists clenched up at his sides. And everything that came out... he regretted. As soon as it was out.

it was too late.

"Fine Fillim! You know what, that's fine! I'll go down to Adrianne, tell her that there was a problem here! I'll make sure, that you're fucking job is safe! Then, when this is all done, you can leave! You don't ever have to see me again!"

Chapter End Notes

**I did some looking into the lore surrounding Lycanthropy in Skyrim, to get the info for this, because I wanted to make sure what I wrote was accurate. Also, in the last chapter, when Fillim is thinking that he doesn't know a lot about what they have. He knows what the affliction is... he knows its a disease. He simply doesn't know that much about it. The first time he'd ever seen a Lycan, was in Skyrim... Farkas.**
Fillim gawked at him! He couldn't believe it! Walking to him, he looked up into Farkas' face, right into his big, icy eyes. Lowering his voice, "I am not, a possession! I am a Mer, Farkas. I have feelings... needs, just like everyone else. And I'll not be told who to sleep with either!"

The moment he took hold of the door knob, Farkas' hand, came down softly onto his shoulder... his voice, so low, that it was almost a whisper. "Don't try and leave, Fillim. I'll stop you, if you do."

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They just stared at each other. The look on Farkas' face, had changed immediately, to horrible realization, as soon as his words were out. And Fillim could see it. He looked like he wanted to take it back, but he also wanted to hold his ground.

Pride. It was too late to back-peddle now.

The thing running through Fillim's mind, was... if it had come out, was that how he really felt?

Would it be too hard, for him to accept, that Fillim needed to be his own Mer? That because of his past... the fact, that he'd never had a chance to grow, to follow his heart, to do anything... have anything, just for him. And he so needed to!

Why, was what he needed... what anyone would need, going to be the ruin of them? His heart completely ached. It felt like he was losing everything... simply because he wanted some independence. He wouldn't cry! He wouldn't!

He had never felt so torn in his life... not ever. Nor, could he believe, that this was happening all at once.

No longer being able to stand the silence, he reached over and took the knapsack from the bed. He didn't know where to go... he didn't want to be there and yet, he couldn't leave. He couldn't go to work and pound out his frustrations on a piece of metal.

He didn't want to run to Vilkas. Doing that, would only drive more of a wedge between them... him turning to the one that wasn't mad. Never, in his life! Did he think, that he would be having this problem with Farkas. He had always thought, it would be his brother.

After the first bad fight they had, Vilkas had actually told him, Farkas had a tendency to be possessive. He wasn't usually aggressive... but when he found someone that he cared for, he felt they were his.

He didn't want to be angry. But, the more he thought about the situation, the more angry he got. "Where would you like me to sleep? In the whelps quarters... with my attacker! and everyone else that hates me here!"
Spreading his arms out in exasperation, he could feel the heat rising up in his face! "In the hallway..."

Farkas' jaw clenched up, "You're bein' a bit of a prick! Don't you think!"

Huffing out a breath of air, he stood back, pointing inward, at his own chest "Me? I'm being the prick? If that's the case, Farkas... I think I have a bit of a right to! After everything that's happened! I can't even go into the fucking kitchen... without being fucking attacked! What did I do, to deserve any of this! What!?"

He could literally feel the heat flowing off from him... that dreaded itching, crawling up into his face... tears, finally overflowing.

He was sobbing, his nose running down into his mouth. Swiping his arm across his face, attempting to mop it up, and only accomplishing in smearing it across his cheek. His voice choked, "If that's how you really feel... then get out of my way!"

Farkas stood aside, looking down at his feet. "You can go sleep with my brother. He'll... he'll let you stay in there, with him." That's not what he wanted. But it was obvious, they needed a break. Things needed to be sorted out and they were both way too upset, to deal with it properly now.

Fillim gawked at him! He couldn't believe it! Walking to him, he looked up into Farkas' face, right into his big, icy eyes. Lowering his voice, "I am not a possession! I am a Mer, Farkas. I have feelings and needs, just like everyone else! And I'll not be told who to sleep with either!"

The moment he took hold of the door knob, Farkas' hand, came down softly onto his shoulder... his voice, so low, it was almost a whisper. "Don't try and leave Fillim... I'll stop you if you do."

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Opening the door, he stepped out into the hallway... and felt lost.

There was no where for him to go, where he wouldn't be invading someone else's space. Moving into the main hallway, his knapsack flung onto his back. Kodlak was instructing Vilkas and the rest of the circle, to take the ruined pieces of carpeting up. It needed to be taken out back and burnt. He couldn't see Aela... perhaps she was attending to Fjolrin. Tilma was mopping up the stone floor, and none of the whelps were within sight.

Laying down the sack, he knelt, grabbing a tunic from it and throwing it on. Slinging the pack, back over his shoulder, he walked into the kitchen. Much to his disbelief, Skjor, was picking up dishes and wiping down anything that had blood on it. Farkas' armor, was laying in a pile in the corner.

"Can I help?"

Turning to him, he dropped the rag he held into a bucket of soapy water. "No, you're not to get near it... no one is."

Skjor took a deep breath, putting his hands onto his hips. He'd changed into casual attire. And Fillim was sure, he could count on one hand, the times that he'd ever seen him without his armor. He looked like he'd aged.

"Are you alright Fillim?"
He nodded. He hadn't really been hurt. More shaken, than anything... he felt invaded. Other than that...

He stepped closer to him, lowering his voice... "I mean, are you really alright..." He had heard, what had transpired between the twins and Kodlak... he knew.

He just shook his head, "I don't feel any differently, Skjor... if that's what you mean."

Skjor went to the pantry, motioning for him to follow. Walking in, he shut the door behind them... talking low, while he pulled potions off the shelves, handing them to Fillim. "You'll know if you do. First, will be heightened sense of smell... taste. Your hearing and sight, will be next." Fillim's eyes grew with each word... his mouth, dropping.

"Then, not being able to sleep, feeling the urge to rut... to feed. The very last stage is transformation."

Turning to him, he aided the Mer in shovelling them all into his pack, along with some apples, dried beef and cheese. Fillim stood there in shock, as Skjor closed the knapsack and tied it up.

"Drink four of these... today and tomorrow. If you haven't noticed any of the signs by tomorrow, you should be fine. But drink them anyway... just to be safe."

He really thought they'd caught it in time. It was those that were attacked out in the wild, far away from any kind of town. No supplies, no remedies, walking for days to get anywhere. Those were the ones, that were just shit out of luck.

He looked him in the eye, "I know, that we did the right thing in helping you. But, Fillim... you need to get out of here, while you can. See if you can stay at the Huntsman, or with Adrianne. It may not be safe here before too long."

The Nord's hands, came up to his shoulders, taking them in his firm grip. "Keep working... keep doing what you're doing, and things will turn around. And don't lose faith in Farkas, or his brother. It'll work out. I helped raise Farkas, he'll come around... you just gotta have patience with him."

He couldn't help but chuckle, "He's a bit of a hard head... always has been." If the truth was known, both of them were. But, Farkas was almost always, harder to get things through to sometimes.

Taking a deep breath, he lowered his hands. Fillim just stood there, he couldn't believe what he was hearing. But, he trusted him... and he would do as he said.

Skjor whispered, "Go upstairs... near the doors, when you see a chance, you take it! They won't haul you back if there're outsiders around. But, they will be keeping an eye on you. You can guarantee that!"

Raising a hand to his forehead, Fillim rubbed it in worry. "If I do that, Skjor... they will never forgive me. After everything they've done for me, Farkas will be furious!" That's what he was mostly worried about. He and Farkas, were already on shaky ground, he didn't know if their relationship would survive him doing this.

But now, he didn't feel like he had a choice. He couldn't take being there, and it wasn't the people there, that he cared for, that were the problem. It was the ones that he didn't. It was the ones, that made him feel unwanted, and unwelcome. He couldn't start over here. It was making him sick.

No, the only way, was to get out... he would have to stay somewhere else, until they could have their own place. If they still wanted to be with him after this.
Skjor just shook his head, "They're not trying to keep you prisoner, Fillim. They just want to make sure, that what happened to you, doesn't happen to someone else... or maybe worse. What happened here, was my fault. I didn't take enough time with him... and, I'm truly sorry."

The old warrior let out a big sigh... "Look, Farkas will be pissed. But he loves you Fillim, they both do. They'll get over it... I can promise you."

Fillim nodded, his throat tightening up. "Thank you Skjor... I won't forget all you've done for me."

Taking each other by the arm... Skjor nodded. "Remember what I've told you Fillim... and, good luck."

Opening the pantry door, he went out into the kitchen and walked into the hallway. He could hear Farkas down at the other end, talking to his brother and Kodlak. He needed to go to Vilkas’ room. His satchel was in there, and it held all his alchemy ingredients and bottles. His boots... that he'd left, after they'd taken their bath.

In fact, his dirty clothing from yesterday was still in there... as well as a set of clean clothes, that Vilkas kept for him in his wardrobe. At least now, he'd have enough to get by for a few days without having to do wash...

The steel dagger that Vilkas had Eorlund make for him, without his brother’s knowledge of course... was in there as well. He’d been surprised and touched, when Vilkas had given it to him. His name was engraved in it... and Vilkas, had done the engraving himself.

Knowing that Farkas would be upset if he knew, he planned to train him only when his brother was gone. Hoping that maybe sooner or later, Farkas would come around in his way of thinking.

He didn't like having to keep anything from Farkas. But, learning archery meant a lot to him, and training with Vilkas did too. It was something they could do together... and it meant a lot to Vilkas. He definitely wasn't leaving without the dagger.

Trying to act nonchalant, he headed towards the bedroom.

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Skjor watched as he walked out... he would have to get Fjolrin back on his feet, and soon. They needed to rebuild their numbers, if they had any chance of taking the Silverhand down. If they weren't, they would never be able to live in peace... not while another one lived.

And with the twins no longer wanting their gift, it was going to have to be up to the three of them. Even if they did still want it, they would never put up an actual fight over the blood, not without a cause they believed in. They didn't feel the same way that he and Aela did.

He knew that Fjolrin was the one to help them... strong, and powerful. Once he got his head out of his ass, maybe he'd see their side of things.

Grabbing the rag from the bucket, he stared into the empty doorway. There was a war coming...
Trials III

Chapter Summary

Putting his hands up to Vilkas' chest, grabbing onto his tunic, "Stop!"

Shaking his head, he couldn't take it... he just couldn't! "I can't talk about this... don't do this!"

Raising his hands, he softly stroked Fillim's face... he was so beautiful. "Did you think that we would get involved with you... allow these feelings to fill our hearts for you, and not realize, that one day we would both be gone... and you would still be young."

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

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Refolding his clothes, and trying to make them all fit in the knapsack, along with all the potions, and food that Skjor had shoved in there. It was going to be tight. He paused... hearing Kodlak pass by, he let out a quiet breath... he had to hurry!

He could tell, just from the direction he was moving, the old man was headed for his room. He wasn't well. As much as he tried to hide it from everyone, Fillim could tell by the remedies he constantly drank, that he was in pain. Tilma had asked him for special herbs... herbs for a stronger pain remedy. Evidently, he had built up a tolerance to the weaker ones... that wasn't good.

Fillim had stocked her up, showing her how to make them. He had even given her some smoke for him. It would help relax him, and help him eat... which of course, was helpful in keeping up his strength. She had told him that at first, he was hesitant to smoke it. But, after awhile, and probably a talk with Vilkas, he had given in. Now, he was smoking at least twice a day.

Elrindir grew it, and he supplied the alchemist as well. When he had gone hunting with Anoriath... they had been sitting around the campfire that night. He had pulled out a pouch and pipe from his satchel, a big grin on his face.

Fillim had just laughed. In fact, he hadn't laughed so much, in Gods... longer than he could even remember. It had been a lot of fun, a huge relief from all the stress he had been under. He hadn't smoked, since he was with Anariil... except it wasn't this. And it wasn't just for laughs... it was for sex.

Both the Bosmers, were very curious about him. In fact, the first time he'd walked into the Huntsman, Elrindir had been speechless. Just standing there, taking him in. Fillim had smiled, saying 'Hello,' Anoriath had finally swatted his brother on the arm, clearing his throat trying to get him to snap out of it. After a few seconds, and closing his mouth, he had apologized... offering his hand.

He'd made friends with Anoriath somewhat quickly, just from shopping at his stand. They both seemed very eager to have some Mer company, as the only other one in town, was the Dunmer that
stayed there part of the time. Anoriath, invited him to join them for midday meal, telling Fillim that he had told his brother all about him. Evidently, Mer like him, were somewhat of a rarity. At least here.

They had talked and talked, about the Isles... about his past, and their homeland. Which was also his mother's.

That's when he had been invited to go on the hunt, Anoriath offering to teach him. Even going so far, as to make him his first and only, long bow. As a gift.

Telling him, that for a Bosmer, it would be a complete travesty, if he didn't learn! Fillim had politely reminded him, 'I'm half Bosmer, Anoriath... remember?'

The Mer just shook his head, 'Doesn't matter. Half is enough...'

Just thinking about it, made him smile... then, remembering what he was about to do, the happiness swiftly left him. His pack was ready. Dagger, laying on the bed next to it. Reaching back, to braid his hair, he turned and froze-

Vilkas stood in the doorway... watching him. Very quietly, the Nord closed the door. Standing in front of it, speaking low, "What are you doing Fillim?"

He felt like a child, that had just been caught in the sweets. He looked down, his face flushing. "I'm just getting ready."

"Getting ready for what, exactly..."

Vilkas hadn't moved, but he couldn't look at him. Just from the tone in his voice, he could tell that he was hurt. Fillim swallowed, biting on his lip. He felt like he was betraying him... betraying both of them. Just yesterday, they had declared themselves to each other... and now. Taking a deep breath, staring down at the floor. "I'm leaving. Vilkas... I can't."

Slowly Vilkas approached him, wrapping his arms around him. His voice, a choked whisper, "Sit with me... just for a moment, please."

Keeping his arms around the Mer, they both sat... Fillim, staring into his chest, Vilkas... staring at him. There was so much, that he wanted to say. But, even with all that raged within his heart, he knew Fillim needed this.

Raising a hand from around him, he stroked his hair. "I won't try to make you stay Fillim."

A tear rolled down his cheek. Fillim raised his face, looking up into his pale eyes. There was so much pain in his expression, it made him hurt even more, to just see him like this.... knowing, that he was hurting him.

"I have never, loved anyone... the way, that I love you." Fillim's face pinched up, as he let out a quiet sob. Vilkas continued, "But... I understand why you're making this decision... and... and I won't try to stop you. I won't beg."

Resting his forehead against the Mer's, "If this is how you really feel, I will let you go. But... you have to know, Fillim..." Vilkas’ icy eyes... staring into his. "I will be here. And I'll not be with another, ever. I will always love you."

Fillim completely broke down. Burying his head into Vilkas' throat, he sobbed... "I love you too! I love both of you... I just can't take being here!"
Vilkas rocked him, holding him tight. His tears landing in the Mer's hair, Fillim's hands clutching at the back of his tunic. "I have to have some freedom."

He knew, what all of this was over. The stress from those that didn't want him there. His brother's over possessive behavior, and the fact, that Fillim had never been able to be himself. He had never had anything, that was just his... just for himself. He had gone from being a slave, in an unhealthy, very one-sided relationship, right into being with them.

He also knew, that this was what he needed and perhaps, it was what Farkas needed as well. Maybe, once Fillim had some space... some time for himself, he would want to try again. And if that happened, and he could only hope that it would, they would all be ready. He could only hope.

Whispering into his hair, knowing that no one had ever told him, or showed him, what he needed. His words so choked, he could barely speak... he would tell him now! "You are so... so special, and so loved. Fillim, you deserve so much!" His body shook, as he held him. All Fillim could do, was cry... "The best thing, my brother ever did... was find you."

Pulling away, he grabbed his face, looking into his eyes... into that beautiful amber. Their faces, wet from tears, "You are the best thing, that has ever happened to me! And even with all the grief... even with losing you. I would never change it, you have to know that!"

Fillim's face pulled into a grimace, shaking within his grasp. "You're not losing me... I promise... I promise!" Pulling away from Vilkas' hands, bringing their mouths together... he kissed him. Whispering against his lips, "I just need some time."

Releasing him, Vilkas sat back, wiping his face. "I understand... I do. My brother will too, in time..." Looking back up at Fillim. "He does love you... he just..." Vilkas blew out a deep breath, his heart hurt so badly. "He just needs to learn, that you need to be your own... perhaps, this will give us all some room to grow... eh?"

Grabbing a bottle of mead, he gave Fillim the first drink, then took some for himself. Setting it down, "Let me braid your hair... one more time?"

Fillim turned, as silent tears made their way down his face. He held onto Vilkas' leg, as he brushed his hair and started to braid. "It won't be the last time, you know... this isn't goodbye."

Taking all his strength to speak without losing it... "I want you to do, what is right for you, Fillim... and if that leads us back together, then we will be here. We will still be finishing the house... and it will still be yours..."

Wrapping the leather, around the end of the braid, he turned him, looking him in the eye. "And it's not charity! It will be your home! Your name will be on the deed. Even if we're not a couple, you will have your own home to do with as you please. And when we are gone-" his voice caught, cracking and he paused, "... to Sovngarde, it will be solely yours."

Putting his hands up to Vilkas' chest, grabbing onto his tunic, "Stop!"

Shaking his head, he couldn't take it... he just couldn't. "I can't talk about this... don't do this!"

Raising his hands, he softly stroked Fillim's face... he was so beautiful. "Did you think that we would get involved with you... allow these feelings to fill our hearts for you, and not realize, that one day we would both be gone... and you would still be young."

Damn his treacherous eyes! Once more, tears found their way down his face. Fillim slowly shook his head, as he continued. "Do you not know, how many times, we have both thought, struggled...
with how selfish our union would be?"

Putting his hands up to Vilkas' face, his heart was breaking! he couldn't take this pain... The Nord, just looked deep into his eyes... "Even knowing, that we would eventually leave you, that you would be left with grief... neither of us, could turn away from you. Fillim, there is no one, that I would rather spend my last days with... than you."

Closing his eyes... his voice wracked with pain, he knew how much Vilkas was hurting... for him to say it. "And I you, Vilkas... I love both of you, more than I've ever loved! Why is this happening? Why!"

Letting out a deep breath, Vilkas pulled him into an embrace. "It's happening, because it needs to. It'll work out Fillim, I know it..."

Pulling away, he looked at him squarely... nothing was going to get accomplished, with them standing in here weeping on each other. "Now, come on... lets get you to work, shall we? We still have my brother to get past, without making a scene."

He knew, there would be some hell to pay for that, and he'd pay it. His brother would suffer, just as he was now, but they would be there for each other, and they would get through it. Then, perhaps seeing Fillim flourish, would break through some of the ice, in his brother's thick head.

He would also answer to Kodlak... but he would handle that in their way.

Gesturing toward the pack and dagger, "Leave your things with me, it'll be all the easier for you to leave without a struggle, if you're not loaded down with all that when we walk out. I'll bring them to you later today, after some of the storm has passed." Vilkas gave him a quick wink.

Fillim knew, Vilkas meant his word, he didn't doubt him. He just nodded and wiped his face, listening as Vilkas talked to him about the blood again, they readied themselves to walk out the door.

Vilkas was kind of surprised, that he actually felt like a weight, had been lifted from him. Even through all the pain, he felt that there was hope. Now, if he could just get Farkas to see...

"You have potions packed?" Fillim nodded. "Take at least three or four today, and lay off the mead at least for a few days. I'll try not to be too long in bringing your things to you."

"I'll be staying at the Huntsman... I know they'll have the room, and they won't charge me as much as the Inn."

A fleeting look, crossed Vilkas' face. Already, Fillim knew what he was thinking. "It's not that way Vilkas... they both prefer females. And no! I'm not going to choose a Mer over either of you! So... you can get whatever your brain is cooking up, right out of it!"

Vilkas leaned in and kissed his forehead. "You know me well, don't you..."

He wouldn't tell him, just how much his words had actually relieved him. The relief he felt at them, was enough for now. It would help him get through this, even if it didn't make him feel more selfish.

He, and his brother both, were keeping the young Mer from being with one of his own race. That was something, that he'd spent many a night going over in his mind. But in the end, he remained resolute. Their lives as Nords were short. And if he could find just a few years of happiness with this young Mer, he was going to take it. Knowing that Fillim would still be young enough to heal
from his loss of them, once they were gone, and move on to find a mate that he, himself could
grow old with.

Each time he thought it over, that was the thing that used as his reason for not giving him up, to
find someone now. That when they took their place in Sovngarde, *(if* that was where they actually
ended up), they could smile easier knowing he'd live on to find happiness.

Turning away, he walked over to his wardrobe, and opening up a strong box, he took out a bag of
coins and laid it in Fillim's hands. "Put this into your pack, if you don't, I will anyway. You don't
have to be so independent, that you can't accept a gift you know." Fillim sighed... laughing.

As far as Vilkas was concerned, Fillim had never had enough done for him. That being the reason
why, they had both wanted to do so much. He understood his brother's need to protect him... to
provide for him. He had those same desires himself. But he also understood the Mer's needs. He
respected him for wanting to do for himself, and not be coddled.

Taking hold of the door handle... "We're going to go outside, onto the back porch. We're going to
sit for a moment and talk, and then, you're going to get up and leave. Understood?"

Fillim swallowed, nodding. His eyes huge, "Try to act calm now, or the circle will know that
something's wrong."

Turning the handle, they walked out into the hallway.

Taking a minute to scan their surroundings, and get the feel of the atmosphere, Vilkas could hear
Kodlak moving around in his room. He took Fillim's hand, and they headed down the hall. Tilma,
was finishing up the floors, and he could hear Skjor in the kitchen, grumbling.

He smiled over at Fillim reassuringly. Getting to the whelp's quarters, they paused. Looking in on
them, Aela had moved a chair to the bed and was helping Fjolrin get a potion down. Fillim turned
his head. As much as he wanted to be angry with him, he couldn't. Saying he looked horrible, was
an understatement. He looked like someone that should be dead. Fillim couldn't believe with just
what he'd seen in a glance, that he wasn't.

Making up his mind, he let loose of Vilkas' hand, and walked into the room. As soon as Fjolrin
saw him, he closed his eyes and turned his head. Fillim could tell that even with the remedies he
was being given, that he was in great agony. The pain that he had endured, after being whipped...
having his back flayed open. He, himself knew of agony. But this Nord, with his shoulder... the
other injuries on top of that, he couldn't believe that he still drew breath.

Raising his hands to Fjolrin's back, he closed his eyes and focused. Aela stood up from the chair
and stepped away, as Vilkas stood beside her. Both of them watching, as the bright light flowed
from Fillim's hands and circled around the Nord.

Finally, the light ceased... looking down at him, he already looked so much better. Raising his head
to Aela, "This should help his pain. Have Athis heal him again tomorrow... if he still needs more,
I'll be glad to help. Right now he needs broth and tea."

She stood there, silent...

Without looking back down at him, he turned to Vilkas... "I think I'm ready for that fresh air
now..."
Try to remember... that someone else, told Fillim these same words. "I have never loved anyone, the way that I love you..." {Not too long ago...} Well, not the same words... but they meant the same thing. Basically the same thing, with {felt} in place of {love}...
Trials IV

Chapter Summary

Trying to brace himself for Farkas' reaction was useless. Just the look on his face, was enough to kill him.

The only thing he could think about... the only thing, he could compare it to... was the look his brother had, when the first woman he'd ever loved, told him that she didn't love him. That she was leaving...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

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Hand in hand, they walked out to the back porch. Vilkas didn't care who saw. He wasn't going to let anything get in the way of their last few minutes together. Even with the melancholy, that kept threatening to overwhelm him... he tried to keep Fillim's words in his mind... 'he wasn't losing him.' Fillim loved them both... 'this was temporary.'

Now he knew the agony, that his brother had faced before. But, even feeling it... he wouldn't regret his love. Even with all the pain he now felt. It would make them both, all the better for it. It had to. His brother had to learn, that he couldn't smother the Mer. He had to let him live.

He did know one thing... he was going to bust his ass, getting the house done! Even if they had to hire another builder or two. It was going to get done.

The sun was just rising good, it was going to be a warm day. Taking a seat on the back porch, they could hear Eorlund, pounding away. As soon as he saw Farkas, his chest knotted up. He was down on the main training area, burning the last of the ruined hallway runner and shoveling up the remains into a basket. He knew they'd be dumping them out the underforge opening later.

Vilkas held his hand, as Fillim watched his brother. Even if he couldn't have felt the pain, that was flowing off from him, it was all over his face. It was evident.

He whispered to him, squeezing his hand. "It will be alright... he'll be alright."

Fillim's brows gathered up, lowering his voice. "He won't ever forgive me Vilkas... I don't want to do this. I love him, so much... I just-"

"Fillim..." They both looked up, as Anoriath walked around the side of Jorvaskr.

Everything in him wanted to cringe, but he fought it. Standing, he turned to the Bosmer, trying to keep his voice calm. "Anoriath..."

Farkas had not only quit what he was doing, but was now on his way up to them, wiping his hands off with a rag, watching them...

Anoriath could tell, just from looking at Fillim, and then to the twins, that something was very,
very wrong. Fillim's face was completely wrecked. His eyes were swollen and red. It was more than evident, that he'd been weeping. His nose was red and raw looking, from obviously blowing it. And now that his keen vision was able to really give him a good go over, there were what appeared to be light, bluish marks, like bruises, all along his jaw and throat. What worried him even more, was the fact that he looked like any second now, he was going to bawl.

The look on Farkas' face, was giving him the overwhelming need to fidget. He looked nervously, between them all, his fingers worrying the hem of his tunic. "Um... you didn't show for morning meal... and uhh, when I checked at the forge, Adrianne said you hadn't shown yet either." Fillim just stood there... silent.

Anoriath eyes widened, as Fillim audibly swallowed, glancing at Farkas... who's gaze was locked onto Fillim... his massive hands, clenched into fists at his hips.

The Bosmer actually clasped his hands at his waist, in a fruitless attempt to still them. His fingers finding purchase on the worn leather of his belt. "She said you've always been early... she's worried. So, I told her I'd come check on you..."

Vilkas stepped in between his brother and the Elves. He could tell, Farkas was readying his mouth to say something, so quick like, he intervened. "He's coming, right now... we had a bit of a situation here this morning... nothing to worry over."

Vilkas literally spread his arms out and leaned back into his brother, as a loud "WHAT!!" boomed into the back of his head! Keeping his body braced against his brother, he knew that would only work for a few minutes. Fillim needed to leave, before things got out of control!

Fillim stood there, looking like he was trying not to weep... Vilkas and Anoriath both, could tell he wanted to say something so bad... but he just couldn't. Vilkas nodded to him, "Fillim, go now! We'll talk later!"

Fillim backed away, moving to the stones that led around the side of the building, watching Farkas, as he grabbed hold of his smaller brother's shoulders. Vilkas just raised his hand to him, quieting him. He knew he couldn't speak on it, or force Fillim to stay. Not with a witness. There would be no way to explain it.

Anoriath backed up, gaping up at Farkas, he'd never been around the Nord a ton. But, the times he had... he'd never seen him like this and he would never want to again. He looked furious. Fillim turned, and grabbing the Bosmer's sleeve, they walked around the side.

Putting his hand, up to Fillim's back... he spoke low. "What's happening Fillim? Are you... are you... alright?"

What he wanted to ask, was if he was afraid of Farkas. He knew about their relationship... the three of them. Fillim had confided in him and he was honored, that they seemed to be close enough, that he felt comfortable in doing so. He knew, that his training needed to be kept secret. And that worried him.

The fact that Fillim had to sneak, to do something that he wanted. He had suspicions, that maybe things weren't so good in the relationship. But every time he even hinted at that, Fillim would tell him no. He insisted, that Farkas was just very protective and somewhat possessive. Both of them, tended to be protective and a bit jealous. But Fillim had explained why and it mostly had to do with his past.

Anoriath, had tried to understand... he had, but he still couldn't. He valued their friendship and he
didn't want to pressure him about it, lest he not feel he could turn to him.

They slowed to a stop on the steps, the Bosmer leaning into him, wrapping an arm around his shoulders. Fillim wiped at his face with shaking hands. He looked absolutely exhausted. He turned to Anoriath, very quietly, "I am. I just... I need a place to stay for awhile. Would it be okay?"

"Most definitely. As long as you need to Fillim."

*********

Farkas shoved Vilkas away, glaring down at him! "What the fuck!"

Grabbing two bottles of mead, Vilkas silently walked down to the fire... they needed to try and keep it somewhat private. And that meant, that he couldn't be bellowing about it... even inside. The whole thing was touchy at best.

Farkas looked around, took in a deep breath and followed him down there. Vilkas handed him a bottle and leaned down, grabbing the shovel. And with what he had to tell his brother... he'd be keeping it.

Taking half the bottle in one drink, he raised the hand that held it, to his brother... pointing in his face! "You know the rules Vilkas! You know what Kodlak said! He needs to be watched!"

Vilkas drank his mead, listening to him... he needed to take a minute, this wasn't going to be easy. Looking down into the fire, "He's fine. He's going to be drinking potions for the next two days... we've gotten it in time."

Looking back up to his brother's eyes. "You need to give him some freedom Farkas... we both do. I regret getting upset over him working. I know now, how he really feels."

Draining the bottle... Farkas eyed him suspiciously. "What do you mean? You know now?"

Struggling to control the pain, that still gathered around his heart... "He's going to be staying at the Huntsman..."

Trying to brace himself, for Farkas' reaction, was useless. Just the look on his face, was enough to kill him.

The only thing he could think about... the only thing, he could compare it to... was the look his brother had, when the first woman he'd ever loved, told him that she didn't love him. That she was leaving...

She had been with him for status, and money. She wanted to be seen on his arm. And when she realized, that there wasn't going to be any fancy homes... that he wouldn't be leaving Jorvaskr. That he wasn't sophisticated, and wouldn't be escorting her to gatherings... when she realized, that Farkas... was Farkas. She left, and took what she could, with her. The next two, weren't much better...

His brother was a simple man. But, there was more to him, than that. More to him, than just the giant warrior, that everyone saw. He was honest, and he was loyal. He had the biggest heart, of anyone he had ever met. He'd give you the shirt off his own back, if that's what you needed.

And that, was the problem. It made him an easy target. And because of that, he'd been hurt way too much.
Vilkas' stern nature, had made it easy for him to turn away unwanted attention... admirers, that he knew were up to no good. And after seeing what his brother had gone through, and how he'd suffered... he'd allowed himself, to get just that much colder.

Until now.

Complete panic, took over. His face, contorted into a mask of pure agony. Tears, made their way down his stubbled face, leaving trails in the soot and sweat on his skin. Swallowing, he turned and dropped the bottle, his shaking hands, going up to his hips... then to his face.

The back doors, to the porch opened... Vilkas hollered for whoever it was, to go back inside. Hearing the doors instantly close, his brother needed some space. The only reason they hadn't gone back inside, was because he knew that everyone would see his brother's state. There was way too much going on inside right now, for them to have the privacy that they needed, to deal with this.

Slowly, Vilkas made his way around the fire, coming to a stop before him. One large hand was covering his eyes... the other, was over his mouth. The hand over his mouth, moving just enough so he could get words out. Vilkas could tell, it was taking a great amount of effort, for him to control his voice. His words were shaky, and filled with grief. "I proposed to him..."

His shoulders shaking, as he wept. Going down onto the stones, he landed on his butt and crossed his legs... his arms going over his head, as he buried it into his lap. Vilkas got down onto his knees, in front of him. He hadn't known...

Putting his hands to his brother's shoulders... "Come on, lets go into the underforge. We'll have privacy there."

Farkas pushed himself up, as his brother walked to the tables, gathering more mead. Wiping his arm, across his face, he joined his brother at the stone door. All he could do, was look toward the steps... remembering the way Fillim had looked at him, as he left.

Vilkas, taking a bit of his sleeve, pulled him away from the sight, and into the sanctuary of the ritual chamber.

Sitting on the floor, Vilkas leaned against the fountain... his brother, against the wall, so they could face each other. Growing up, they had spent many an hour in here.

When they were little, they had played. Snuck in there to sleep... getting found later and chastised by Tilma and Kodlak. Skjor had only thought it amusing.

When they were older, it was a place to be alone... a refuge, during their adolescent years. Then... it was almost revered... their initiation into the circle, and all that had meant to them.

Now, it was a curse... a place, they had avoided for some time... simply for the bittersweet memories that it held.

Holding onto their bottles, he watched his brother. A steady stream of tears, flowed down his face, dripping onto his shirt. Clearing his throat, "I didn't plan to ask him... it just came out. That night, we fought over his job. You were gone... we fought over it." Running a hand over his face, he let out a shaky laugh. "I fought over it... he was calm. He got up, got dressed and left."

Tipping his bottle, his head leaned back into the cool stone. Almost as if he was seeing it again. "He came here... this was where I finally found him, after running all over town in a fuckin' panic. He was curled up in a ball, on the stone... asleep."
Taking another drink... he lowered his head, looking at his brother. Regret, was written all over his face. "If I had any fuckin' brains, I'd have paid attention then! But, no! I pushed and pushed, until he felt the need to get away!"

Vilkas just shook his head, it had taken him a long time, trying to get Farkas to understand, that it wasn't his fault, that the women before, had left him. He refused to let him get down on himself... feel that there was something wrong with him! That wasn't the case. There was nothing wrong with him. In those cases, it was the ones that sought him out. They were the wrong sort, no good for him. As everyone had seen.

He was never really overly possessive, until he met Fillim. He knew, it was just because, he had finally met the one, that he knew he was supposed to be with. His true mate. And he didn't want anything to take that away. It was hard... fighting the feelings that their wolf blood gave them. When you found your true mate, possessiveness came natural. And, as they were finding out, it didn't work so well, where people and Mer were concerned.

Draining the bottle, he set it down on the stone. "I picked him up and carried him back to my room. And, we talked. Things were okay... we compromised. And then... I asked. Well... I pretty much said, that I wanted to be his husband.. and he said he would love that."

His voice broke again, his head went back into the stone. "We talked about it over and over... and he sounded so happy! So happy, that we were building the house..." He wiped at his face... squeezing his eyes shut, "What do I need to fuckin' do, Vilkas? What do I do? I can't live without him!"

Setting his empty bottle down, he let out a deep breath and looked at him. "What you do, is give him the space he needs... he told me, that he loves us both, Farkas. He was torn up over it. But, you have to understand... he has never been able to live, without someone ruling over him. He is his own Mer. Even if he is with you... with me. He has to have that freedom... he needs it Farkas. Its not over... I know it's not. We just need to be patient."

Pushing himself over to the wall, he sat next to him. No matter how old they got, no matter the fights they had... their bond held. Nudging his shoulder, he smiled. "You remember, when we snuck out of Jorvaskr with our bedrolls, and slept in here?" They had been just little whelps then...

Grabbing another bottle for them both, Farkas laughed heartily, his body shaking against his brother's. "Yeah... won't ever forget it. Tilma had Kodlak and Skjor lookin' everywhere for us..." He laughed harder, holding his stomach. "Even had the guards searchin' for us."

Both doubled over, their stomachs and faces aching. Vilkas wiped his eyes, opening his bottle. "It was so late, Kodlak said the last place they thought of, was in here. Got in here, and we had a lantern lit and both of us were curled up around the fountain... fast asleep. Bag of sweet rolls next to us... crumbs all over the stone."

They both got quiet... looking around, remembering. It all seemed so long ago. Farkas' voice, broke through the silence. "When do you think we'll see him again Vilkas?"

Inhaling deeply, he looked at the fountain. "I'm going to take his things to him in awhile... his potions and clothes... some coin. I'll tell him, that you're alright. He was worried over how you would take it. Lets give him a few days, alright?"

He knew it would be hard... they needed to focus on the house. Focus on the positive.

Raising his bottle, Farkas watched him. "I told him, we would be finishing the house. What it boils
down to brother, is that he can't stand the tension here, and we need to treat him like we want to be treated. He doesn't need a leash... he needs his own place. Hell... we all do."

He turned his head to look at his brother, knowing he needed hope. "He promised me, it wasn't the end."

Pushing himself up, he gathered the empty bottles. "Come... let's go work on the house, maybe find another builder or two, huh?"

Walking toward the door, his voice low... he felt kind of stupid, he hadn't asked this in so many years. "Can I sleep in your room tonight? I just don't wanna be alone..."

Just hearing that, made is heart ache. He stopped, looking at him... after all these years, even with his size... what he saw, was his brother, that in so many ways... seemed like a little brother, that was simply bigger than him. He couldn't remember how many times Farkas would end up in his bed... his big arse, crowding him and stealing the covers.

He smiled... the memories warming his aching heart. "Yes, you can sleep with me..." Nudging him with an empty bottle, he eyed him warily. "But your taking a bath first..."

Farkas laughed... "Do I have to?"

Thank the Gods, he had a bigger bed now.

Chapter End Notes

Again... Nazeem and his wife, do not live in the Huntsman, in this story. It absolutely makes no sense to me, how someone that owns their own farm, would be living at a Tavern. And besides... I think he's a bit of an asshole. I truly feel for his wife!

So, in my stories... they won't be there.
Trials V

Chapter Summary

Opening his bottle of mead, "Vilkas stopped by the stand. Gave me Fillim's things."

He fingered the label, thinking. "They're worried that he'll choose a Mer over them. He didn't say that, but, I can tell. It was written all over both of them this morning, and again just now. I made sure to reassure him, that's not how it is with us. He's just a friend. We're just helping him out."

Pulling some meat off the roasted leg that sat between them, Elrindir paused, thinking it over. "If he were mine and I was a Nord... I would be worried as well."

Chapter Notes

The first part, going over stuff in Skyrim and the second, going back to the Isles.

**

"Boy, you look like shit!" The giant Nord let out a friendly chuckle, his eyes taking in Fillim's ragged appearance.

Hearing her husband, Adrianne came around from the back, handing him a mug of warm ale. Crumbs tumbled down his dark beard, as he raised it to take a swig, washing down his biscuit.

Adrianne's eyes widened, just taking in his appearance, she knew something was wrong. Even if he hadn't been late, he was always tidy about his appearance... well put together. Not meticulous, but very neat, and his clothes were always clean... he was always clean. Right now, he was a mess. His clothing looked like he'd slept in it... his eyes were bloodshot, shadowed by the dark circles that surrounded them.

Really, he wasn't even late. She hadn't even finished eating yet. He was just late for him. Normally, he was there at least an hour early, going over every order for the day, organizing everything. Just another reason that they were doing so well. With his help, she didn't have to try and handle as much. Before, she'd been helping her husband with sales and orders, plus doing all the smithing. Of course, she knew much of that was her own fault.

She felt guilty that her husband did most of the cooking and tending to their home, along with handling the money they took in, plus sales. Their hands had been full.

Now, with Fillim taking on so much of the smithing duties, she could work on the areas that she felt she needed to hone. Help more with sales and the coin they took in, easing things up on her husband some as well. She'd even been able to take a day off, which she hadn't done in years. Giving her husband a break at the cooking and giving them, a little much needed, time together. Time where she wasn't exhausted at night.
Fillim just stood there, watching as she approached him. He was completely drained, so tired he could barely think. He had a splitting headache from all the crying... all the emotional stress. And he was ashamed. He'd never been late. Ever! And this was his first real job. He didn't want to do anything to jeopardize it. Most of all, he didn't want Adrianne and her husband to lose faith in him. Their opinion's meant the world to him, they were good people. And the chance that she was giving him, meant everything.

Ulfberth leaned on the counter. "You can't let him work the forge like that Adrianne, he's about to fall over."

Adrianne raised a hand a little, quieting her husband. Fillim looked down, "I'm so sorry I'm late. It'll never happen again. I'm fine, really... I-"

She put her hands up to his shoulders. "Fillim, I don't know what's happened, but you're not fine. I can tell just by looking at you."

His brow wrinkled up, glancing up to Ulfberth and back to her. Her golden hair, shining, her tan skin, sparkling clean. The only time she wasn't covered in soot, was first thing in the morning, before work. They'd been married a long time, and yet, Ulfberth still looked at her with longing. Telling Fillim one afternoon while she was outside, that she was, and will always be, his one and only love. He'd never met a more beautiful, determined, and devoted woman. The only regret they'd ever had, was not being able to have a child. They had tried for a long time, but it simply wasn't meant to be. They had both mourned for awhile over it. But it hadn't changed anything between them. There was no point in ruining the life you had, over something that you couldn't control. Life was good enough just having each other and their business.

They had kicked back at the counter, mugs in hand. 'She's real happy having you here, Fillim, and I am too.' He had given him a friendly swat on the arm. 'You're helping us out... that means a lot.'

He didn't want to disappoint either of them. "I want you to go and rest..."

Eyebrows gathering up, his eyes flashing between them, shaking his head. She raised a finger to him, stilling him. "Now listen, I was able to take a day last week because of you. A day, that I had needed for a long time. Now it's real obvious, Fillim, that you need a day off. Get some rest. You've earned it. We're doing good, the only thing we have is the Imperial work, and Jon will be by later to take the load that's already done."

It was apparent that she didn't plan to speak anymore on it. She walked to the door and opened it, standing aside, so that he could pass by. Turning, his head low. Anoriath stood out front. He had waited, just to see how it would go. He knew she probably wouldn't let him work in the condition he was in.

Adrianne looked at Anoriath, "Would you make sure that he gets some rest. He's too busy thinking about everything and everyone else, to take care of himself."

The Bosmer nodded at her, grinning. "I'll have him here in the morning, good as new."

Fillim just rolled his eyes, stepping past her. Without another word, she closed the door behind him. Quietly, they walked over to the Huntsman. Even as bad as he felt about not being able to work, he was relieved. He needed the rest. "I've got an extra bed in my room, Fillim, you can have it, alright? My brother has tea on as well. It will do you some good, help you rest."

All of that, sounded so good.
Anoriath had taken the clothes that he'd had on, putting them to boil over the fire, along with his own dirties. He shaved some soap off a block with a knife, and let it drop into the cauldron. As soon as Fillim had drank his tea, he'd passed out. Laying down in just a breech, the Bosmer covered him up with some furs and closed the door. His brother, promising to tend not only to the wash, but to Fillim, should he need anything.

**

Preparing to head back for midday meal, Anoriath closed up the stand and turned. Vilkas stood there, alone. Holding Fillim's satchel, with his coat slung over it. And in his other hand, was his knapsack, full to bursting. Setting down the knapsack, he extended his hand. Anoriath accepted it, waiting for the Nord to speak.

"I'd like to apologize, for the.. for what happened this morning. And... I'd like to thank you for helping Fillim. He means a lot to us, Anoriath. I presume you know... "

Anoriath nodded, "I do, Vilkas. He's told me. And, I'd like you to know... there's nothing between us but friendship. That's all."

Vilkas nodded his head in understanding. The Mer evidently knew how important that was, for him to mention it. And Vilkas didn't feel the need to express just how relieved he was to hear it.

Looking down at the pack, he lowered his voice. "My brother... he means well. He loves him dearly. He's just afraid of loss. We're hoping that this separation will do us all some good. Improve things."

The Bosmer nodded, watching the Nord as he struggled to get out what he felt. Feeling sympathy for him, he spoke up, hoping to make it a little less uncomfortable. "These are his things?"

Vilkas cleared his throat, "Aye. I was going to take them to him. But, I think he needs some time. Would you?"

Anoriath nodded, "Sure I will. Adrianne gave him the day off. She's not upset at him, he wasn't even really late. They've taken a real liking to him, you know? He ah... he was so tired... after. Well, you know. Anyway, he had some tea and passed out. He was asleep when I left. But when he wakes, I'll make sure he knows that you brought them for him."

He wasn't going to be able to take much more. Just talking about him and thinking about it all, was making his heart ache something horrible. He just needed to hold on to that hope. That's all he could do. "There's ah... there's a note in there from the both of us. Would you let him know?"

"I will Vilkas."

The Nord nodded and turned, heading toward the front gates. His brother was still at the property. When they left to go there, after Fillim had gone, Farkas had all but run out the gates, fearful that he would see Fillim at the forge. Both, thankful and sad, that they hadn't.

By the time he'd gotten out of the city, he'd been wiping his eyes. Vilkas had just walked after him, carrying a bundle, food for midday and mead... lots of mead. Gods, they'd need it.

They had talked to one of the stable hands, and a couple of the guard. They now had three part-time builders to help them with it.

The foundation and framework for the bottom floor was done. He was sending a courier to the mill in Riverwood. They knew a mason that lived in town. With his help, they'd be able to get the rest
done a lot faster. He also had an order in at the mill. A huge one for furniture and for the greenhouse needs. Another load of lumber was on its way.

Knowing Adrianne had just gotten stocked up for the Imperial order, and the fact that she would need what she had, they had put in an order with Alvor. He'd be supplying them with the metalwork they'd need for the doors, hinges, locks, brackets and whatnot.

At first, Fillim had put up a fuss. But after realizing how busy he already was, and the work it would require to meet the needs of the house, he'd understood. The Mer simply couldn't do everything that his mind thought he could. Later on, he had agreed.

He wouldn't have felt right, doing things for his personal needs, when Adrianne was counting on him to help with the extra order that she'd taken on. Even with him paying for the ingots, it would've been taking away from what the Maiden needed.

In the end, Vilkas realized, the Mer always did the right thing... for everyone.

And, he'd spoken to Fjolrin. After what he'd done, and the fact that Fillim had helped heal him. The fact, that because of all their help, he was mending quickly. He owed them. He owed Fillim.

When the house was almost complete, they both wanted to take Fillim away for awhile... to Solitude. Do some shopping. Let him pick out some things for the house. He'd already designed the blue prints how he wanted the house to look. How he wanted it laid out. They both wanted him to be able to pick things out that he wanted. Give their home, more of his personal touch.

And after all of this, if things ever got to be good between them again, they would need the vacation.

**

Coming in the backdoor, his brother met him at the spit. Anoriath looked toward his bedroom door.

"He's still asleep. I checked on him a bit ago. Sleeping sound, too. He's not even snoring. Laundry's hanging over the railing, should be dry by tonight."

Opening the door to his room, he set Fillim's things next to the end of the bed. Pausing to look at him, his brother was right. He was out. Stepping out, he quietly closed the door and joined his brother upstairs to eat.

Opening his bottle of mead, "Vilkas stopped by the stand... gave me Fillim's things."

He fingered the label, thinking. "They're worried that he'll choose a Mer over them. He didn't say that... but, I can tell. It was written all over both of them this morning, and again just now. I made sure to reassure him, that's not how it is with us. He's just a friend. We're just helping him out."

Pulling some meat off the roasted leg that sat between them, Elrindir paused, thinking it over. "If he were mine and I was a Nord... I would be worried as well."

**

With land barely in sight, they had dropped anchor. Below decks, wine glasses sat at the ready. His bare feet propped up in his chair with him, they poured over the documents. Many of them were literally his father's different duty orders that had nothing to do with Tarenen, or his ex-lover. Upon seeing what those were, Undilar set them into a separate pile. No need to even bother with them.
They all sat together. Tarenen, surrounded by Carene and Volana... his support. Undilar sat on Volana's side, a hand, periodically moving over his back. The papers that interested them the most, were the papers showing who sold Fillim to Anariil.

Telindil Larethian.

All their eyes centered on Tarenen. Volana dropped the parchment, sitting back in his chair. "Do you know who this is? Tarenen, are you certain that this is Fillim's father?"

"Yes. Fillim told me that only my father and myself knew. Other than his father's servants, of course. He said that it was a secret that must be taken to the grave. I wasn't even to tell my father that I knew. He didn't even want me speaking to Fillim."

Volana and Undilar exchanged glances, but remained silent on it. A very aged piece, went over a raid that Anariil had led in Valenwood some twenty three years ago. And the fact that he brought back a female Bosmer. A prisoner. Attached, was another parchment showing the purchase of said Bosmer, by Telindil Larethian.

Volana let out a deep breath, taking his goblet, he drained it. Tarenen simply held his and sipped on it. He wanted to be strong, but right then the shaking in his hands was a dead giveaway of just how upset he really was. He had to hold onto something.

"That Bosmer was Fillim's mother, he said his father fell in love with her. She died giving birth to him."

Finishing off his own wine, he rubbed Volana's back, watching as Carene stood to pour them all some more. Grabbing another, Volana read. "Fillim's travel papers." He licked his lips, "These travel papers state that Fillim was traveling as Ancano's servant. He was to be Ancano's servant while he served at his post in Skyrim."

He handed it to Tarenen, the young Mer's eyes widened. "What!? My mother told me that father had him exiled! Why would he do that!?" Carene wrapped an arm around him, shooting a concerned glance at their instructors.

"I think I understand." Undilar turned to Tarenen, they had all read the letter from Ancano. Noting of course, that it had been crumpled, most likely in anger, and then smoothed out, to be put in with the rest of the documents. It was starting to become clear.

"When we exile someone, we send them out on a small boat with nothing. The whole idea behind it, is for the one being exiled, not to survive. Or to at least give them the littlest chance possible. We will not go to any expense to get rid of someone that we don't want here. If that person actually does survive, we have given all rights to them away. We no longer have any hold on them. In doing this the way your father did it, he still has ownership."

Volana handed his partner the parchment, reading it further, he shook his head and looked up to them all. "The way this reads, he was extending ownership to Ancano, just for the term of his duty in Skyrim. He can call him back at any time. In fact, he can do whatever he pleases with him and the Dominion will let him. They won't interfere with what he does, as long as it doesn't directly violate the Concordat. Of course, the Empire won't interfere either. Not where Dominion property is concerned. And that's what he is I'm afraid. Your friend... your ex, he thinks he's free. He's not. He is still a slave."

Carene grasped his hand as Tarenen gaped at them! "Why!? Why would he do that? I don't understand... I don't- "
Volana stared at the parchment. "I do. To get his revenge. You told me how enraged he was, when he found out that Fillim had been with you? This has to be just that. A way to get revenge."

Undilar picked up the journal. "As if whipping him and sending him away wasn't enough of that. I think there is much more to it than just revenge. And I think that all the answers we seek, are in here."

It took several more hours just to comb through the journal. Carene had let loose of Tarenen just long enough to light lanterns. Undilar read to them, skipping the unnecessary entries and focusing on the ones that pertained to Telindil and Fillim.

And of course, the more he read, the more they knew just how deep the love was that Anariil had for his friend, one of the Dominion's most powerful royals, was. Telindil held so much power. Just the fact that he was involved at all in this, meant they had to proceed with the utmost caution.

Volana and Carene watched Tarenen, watched him struggle to reign in his feelings while Undilar read. The young Mer jumped to his feet, pacing back and forth, wringing his hands together and staring at the floor. It wasn't so much sadness or hurt that ruled his expression, but anger. Undilar continued.

Just the fact that Fillim's father didn't know! He didn't know any of it! Anariil had used Fillim, in the most horrible way! And if he did... would he even care? The injustice of it all, completely enraged him.

Not feeling the need to comb over every detail of his feelings for Fillim, his guilt for feeling them and his own self loathing. Folding the journal around his finger to keep his place, he told them. "It's quite obvious, that your father used him as a substitute. He wasn't planning on falling in love, and he did. But, even though he knew he would never have his friend's love, he still felt guilty over what he had done, and what he was doing. But his need for love, and what he felt for Fillim had become so great, it simply wouldn't allow your father to give him up... to stop."

Volana sipped on his wine, "The problem was, with Fillim's status and breeding they could never have a normal relationship out in our society. So he felt he could never really declare himself. And thus, Fillim's needs drove him to you."

Tarenen stopped, looking up from the floor to them. The weight in his chest almost unbearable. Before, it was bad enough, knowing what had happened to Fillim... but now. Now knowing everything, he could barely stand it! "He could just never tell me. The whole time that he was with me, he was being used by my father. And he, himself, never knew the real reason why he was even there."

Carene stood, going over to him, handing him his goblet. Staying near him, Tarenen's eyes had a far away look. "It was my fault."

Both of their instructors spoke in unison, their eyes wide in shock! "What!?"

Raising his hand, he shook his head, his eyes moving between them. "What I mean is... it was my fault that he was even with me that night."

Letting out a deep breath, his shaking hands coming up to his face, to wipe away the runaway tears that he had tried so hard to hold at bay. "Normally he would never come to the house if my father wasn't going to be gone over night. My mother kept track of his duties. She would tell us when he had overnight stays that would keep him away from home. She was taking a risk herself, we knew. But I couldn't wait to see him. I just couldn't. It'd been more than three days and I missed him. So,
even though I knew that my father was coming home that night, I begged him to come... and he did. And we were caught because of me. He was whipped!

He let out a laugh, but there was no joy in it. Moving his gaze away from them, his hands over his heart, almost as if he could take away some of the pain that surrounded it. The tears rolled down his cheeks freely, "You have no idea, how that has plagued me... all of it. I was the one who initiated our relationship. I was the one...

Volana rose from his seat, approaching him, "Did you ever stop to think, Tarenen, that perhaps Fillim agreed because he wanted to be caught. Perhaps, subconsciously, he wanted it to be over?"

He looked Tarenen in the eyes, "I believe that he really loved you. I do. And there was no way he could've known exactly what was going to happen. But can you imagine how hard living like that would have been for him?"

Undilar opened the journal, continuing to read. He was at the end. The last page. They all turned to him and stared. Their mouths open in shock. Undilar just closed his eyes, laying the journal on his lap.

Now they knew what Anariil planned to do, and why he had arranged everything the way he had.
The Root

Chapter Summary

Volana held him as he shook from his sobs, "I screamed... begging them to stop! My father yelled, that if I made another sound in such a sinner's defense, that he would cut out my tongue! I had to remain silent! Silent, as I was forced to watch him bleed to death."

His hands slid down to cover his face, speaking muffled words through them as he wept. "He looked over at me before he died... and he told me that he loved me..."

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Welcome to my world of truth
I don't wanna hide any part of me from you
I'm standing here with no apologies
Such a beautiful release, you inside of me

**

Breaking away from Carene's grasp, he ran into the sleeping quarters, slamming the door!

Rage and grief completely consumed him. His heart and his mind. He was truly out of control for the first time since that terrible, terrible day.

Wiping at his face, attempting fruitlessly to rid himself of the endless tears that escaped his eyes. The helplessness he felt... the powerlessness, just refueling the horrible feelings that roiled within him once more! All the things that he had struggled to force down since then.

There was nowhere that he could run to escape it! His eyes darted around the room in his panic, his hands clutching his head! The need to scream out into the night was overwhelming! The need to give back to his father, just a fraction of the pain he felt, and he couldn't! That fact alone was enraging!

If he could have destroyed something... anything to take his pain and anger out on! But there was nothing... nothing that he could do! After everything that he had tried to overcome, tried to forget, for him to end right back up at square one all over again. It made him feel that he would never be able to achieve what his superiors had. What Carene had. That he would never be free of it. That there would never be any justice!

Dropping down to his knees, his vision swam in and out as his mind flew right back to the beginning of that horrible, horrible morning. All he could hear was his father's voice. A voice, so full of bitter jealousy... pure contempt.

There was no love in him! How could there be? No love.

Gentle hands wrapped around his shoulders. He was surrounded by those that loved him... and yet, all he could feel was pain. It had to end.
Undilar picked him up like a child and sat him down onto the bed, sitting down next to him as Volana wiped at his face with a damp cloth. Carene stood by, hands up to his mouth, looking on in fear as his elders tended to the one that he'd given his heart to. Praying to Au-riel that he would come back from wherever he'd gone.

Tarenen's voice was coming out in a hoarse whisper, his eyes were so far away. "I begged him..."

His face twisted up, streaked with tears. His whole body shaking and trembling as he sobbed out! "I was on my knees begging him! And he wouldn't stop!"

For someone that claimed to love, to do such a horrible thing, and for his own mother to stand by... to stand by and do nothing! To allow his father to treat him the way he had before he had even called Fillim to their house! She had literally closed the door to his father's study, and walked away. The whole time his cries went ignored!

His voice went down to a whisper... he stared down at the floor, his face taking on a look of amazed astonishment. "She allowed him... allowed him to bind me... her own son."

His breath was coming out in pants... he stood, his hands clutched into his chest. Walking to the door, he turned to them, speaking through clenched teeth! "She allowed him to bind me! The whole time I was begging!"

Clutching at his shirt until the buttons were ripped free, his voice coming out in all his anguish! "I WAS BEGGING!!"

Carene looked at him in shock. Volana lightly took hold of his shirt and pulled him over to them. Tarenen needed to get this out. He had tried so hard to bury it, so hard. But none of it had been properly dealt with, and it was all coming out right now. The three of them sat on the bed watching him.

His eyes shifted between them, the pain was all but gone. The worst of that part was almost over. Now... now came the rage.

Undilar spoke low to him, "How do you feel, Tarenen? How does what happened make you feel?"

His fists clenched at his sides, the cords in his neck standing out as he bared his teeth! "I HATE HIM!"

Furiously, he paced! "I HATE HIM! BOTH OF THEM! That is NOT love!"

His hands flew up to his head, his eyes wild! "How could she let him do that to me! HOW COULD SHE!!"

Volana held Carene's arm, whispering into his ear, trying to reassure him that he would be alright. "This is needed! He needs this." Carene nodded silently, his chin trembling as he wiped his own tears away.

Undilar stood, slowly walking toward him, talking low to him, he looked into his eyes. "What do you want, Tarenen? What will it take to make you whole again?"

A look of complete abhorrence came over him. His voice was low, he didn't yell. Undilar could feel the absolute loathing that was flowing off from him. "I want retribution! I want justice! Not just for me! But for Fillim!"

Raising his hands to Tarenen's shoulders, he lowered his face to his, "You shall have it, Tarenen..."
and then you will finally be free."

Upon hearing the promise he'd just made to Tarenen, Volana closed his eyes. The raw emotion that flowed throughout the room, making his small hairs stand on end. Tarenen was just like his love... he had suffered greatly.

Now he feared not only for Tarenen, but for Undilar. For him to aid their protege... for him to get what he needed to heal, and right the wrongs that had been done, the price could be great.

Taking Tarenen's hands he led him to the bed, scooting them all the way back to the wall, he situated pillows for them to recline against. He needed to come down. Come down from all the adrenaline that had flooded his system. In awhile he would be completely exhausted.

Volana and Carene stood and walked to the bar, they opened two clay jars filling cups for each of them with the liquid. The room quickly filling with the heady aroma of Sujamma.

When they had all settled on the bed in a circle, he spoke. "I will tell you, Tarenen, what I went through is not all that different from what you and your lover went through." Taking a deep breath he tilted back his cup, feeling his partner's hand tighten on his leg.

"I was born, the illegitimate son of a priest."

Taking another sip of his drink, not looking up to see their faces, he couldn't. All he could do was focus on telling him. He needed to know... it would help him, and then he would never speak of it again.

"My mother was a young Altmer royal who became smitten with a priest at the temple. She was pure, and against his vows, he became smitten with her and he bed her, taking her purity."

They had all drained their cups, Volana reaching over, taking the jar to refill them. The young ones were glued. He himself, he of knew this pain, for he had been the one to help Undilar heal from it.

Undilar looked down into his cup. "She began to sneak away more and more, making excuses to go to the temple. Their lovemaking becoming more and more frequent, until she became pregnant."

He took a drink, his eyes far away. "When her family found out that she was pregnant, they sent her away, giving excuses to all that knew them until I was born. Forcing her to part with me, instead of killing the one that fathered me and risking exposure, they gave me to him."

His eyes went to Tarenen's. "That was his punishment. He would raise his own bastard son!" Placing a hand gently down onto Tarenen's. "I know what it is like to have a monster for a father. And that's what he was! For a Mer that was supposed to teach love and patience... healing... the wisdom of the Gods, he was a monster."

Tipping his cup, he emptied it, Volana pouring him more. He knew they'd end up smoking after this, all of them probably sleeping together. His mate would need all the comfort he could get after recalling this, for he hadn't spoken of it in so many years.

"He took me in, claiming that I was an orphan... an orphan from the war. I can't tell you, Tarenen, how many times I yearned to end my own life. His resentment of me was so very fierce! He would make any excuse to beat me or hurt me... to punish me. To the point that even the other priests would give me comfort."

Taking a deep breath, he leaned his head back against the wall closing his eyes. "I needed love so very badly. One night, I crept into one of the other priest's beds, still bearing the stripes that he had
given me after evening meal, for whatever I had done that angered him. I didn't know. The male willingly opened up his blankets for me."

Volana took his cup as Undilar's shaking hands came up around his own neck. "He pulled me into his body, wrapping his arms around me and he held me. He whispered against my neck, how beautiful I was... how good I was... how much I deserved love. And then, he loved me..."

Opening his eyes he looked at Tarenen. "It was the most beautiful thing that had ever happened to me. I felt, for the first time, that I was worth something. And from then on I knew that I would do anything to feel like that again! To have that closeness, that love! Just... that wonderful feeling. That I was here on Nirn for something other than just pain."

Undilar swallowed, his white brows gathering, his face pinching up in the pain of his memories. "I fell in love with him. And any chance that we had, we were together. He took me under his wing, teaching me the ways and gifts of restoration. He moved me into his quarters, telling my father that I would be his apprentice. At first my father was relieved, he felt free of me."

Taking his cup from Volana, he downed it. He couldn't even open his eyes from the pain in his heart, so great at reliving his loss. "Evidently after some time had passed, my father began to have suspicions. Perhaps I was acting too happy, too content. And that bothered him. He wanted my misery! One night we were making love... we were quiet, so as not to be caught. We always were. But that night it hadn't mattered. He watched us. He stood in the shadows, looking through a crack in the door and watched us until we were done."

His hands clutched tightly onto his cup. "He burst in! Bringing the other priests with him! He pulled me from the bed, restraining me as they bound my lover! They bound him to his bed. His arms and legs stretched out. The whole time, my father screaming and pointing at him. That he had corrupted me! He had defiled me! That we both, must be shown the way back from which we had fallen!"

Tears ran down his face. Tossing the empty cup away, his long fingers threading through his hair! Volana grabbed onto him, holding him. His deep smooth voice, wavering through his clenched up teeth. "Even with all that he himself had done! He was to stand in judgement over me! Over the one that I loved! The only one that had ever shown me love!"

The hands in his hair tightening into fists! "My lover screamed at them! That they were being fooled by him! That he had been with females, that he was an abuser! A liar! They had all seen it for themselves, but it made no difference! None of it."

His head shook and he swallowed, his voice lowering, "No authorities would be called, lest all their own secrets come out! They would deal with our punishment in their own way. The way they saw fit. My father wrapped his arm around my throat, and on my hands and knees, his hand in my hair, he held my head in place and made me watch. Watch, as they cut the genitals from him."

Volana held him as he shook from his sobs, "I screamed... begging them to stop! My father yelled, that if I made another sound in such a sinner's defense, that he would cut out my tongue! I had to remain silent! Silent, as I was forced to watch him bleed to death."

His hands slid down to cover his face, speaking muffled words through them as he wept. "He looked over at me before he died... and he told me that he loved me..."

Volana waited for him to calm some and as soon as his hands lowered, a filled cup was placed in them and an arm around him. Needing the comfort, Undilar leaned into him, holding firmly onto his cup. "I was beaten. Beaten until I couldn't walk. Caged and starved in my father's quarters for
three days. Attempting to heal myself at night without waking him. So dehydrated that I drank my own urine, even as it was mixed with blood. I drank it until my body had nothing left to put out. The very first night he let me out, I waited until they had fallen asleep, loaded a pack with bread and what rags I had to wear and I ran away. I was but fifteen."

"In just a few days my bread was all gone and I was once again starving. Too terrified to beg, for fear that someone would turn me in and send me back. Trying to get as far from the city as possible, I wandered out here... to this very estate. Volana's mother caught me drinking from their rain barrel."

Looking up at Volana, he laughed. "At first, I was going to try and run, but she seemed so gentle. She put up her hands to me, talking quietly to me. I'll never forget her words, 'I won't hurt you... you're alright...' I let her bring me inside. And I met you."

Tears now flowed down both their faces as they looked into each other's eyes. "I met you."

Turning his eyes to Tarenen. "Volana helped me bathe, I was so tall that she had given me some clothes from his father's wardrobe to wear, as they were the only ones that would fit my length. But I was so sickly thin that they literally hung off from me. She sat me at their table and she fed me."

Volana looked at them, their faces red from their own tears. Their eyes and mouths wide in disbelief. "My father, when he came home and saw the state..." he swallowed, remembering what Undilar had actually looked like and his father's expression, "the state Undilar was in... he was appalled. My parents took him in, and treated him like he was their own. Mentoring him, until we were both ready to enroll."

Undilar held out his cup as Volana filled it again. "We became close fast. Volana's gifts... his talent for conditioning, literally kept me from self destruction. When Volana wanted to tell his parents that we were in love, I was terrified. But, they accepted it. They accepted me."

Volana held up the hand that bore his binding ring next to Undilar's. "When we wed... they both stood for us. Our gift, was this home and all it's property. Where he was saved."

Turning once more to Tarenen, "But even with all that I had. I struggled. I tried so hard to forget the pain and suffering I had endured. I wanted him to suffer! I wanted him to know my pain! And no matter how much I tried to bury it, no matter how successful I became at my position, it was always there underneath, clawing at my soul, trying to work it's way up to the surface."

He looked into the eyes of his partner... his rock. The one that had stood by him through it all. "You never gave up on me. You were always there, loving me through all my grief... all my anger."

A slight smile slowly started to form on his face, "One day, a prisoner was brought in to us. He was to be used as a training tool. In the same fashion that the Mer was that you saw the other day in Volana's class. A priest, who had been caught with a Thalmor Justiciar's daughter. He had been tried and was facing execution. The Thalmor had told the Elders that he thought the Mer would serve better use to his people as a training tool for their students... an example." 

Letting out a quiet chuckle, "Of course, as soon as I heard how he had come to us, I knew that it wasn't so much for the sake of the Thalmor students, as it was to satisfy the Justiciar's need for further personal retribution. You see, a quick beheading just wouldn't give him that. This way, he knew the priest would suffer. However, even though he was given permission to witness, he denied it. Evidently just knowing how the Mer that had sullied his daughter would meet his demise, he was more than satisfied."
"Curiously enough, I hadn't been given the name of the priest, even with all the information I had gone over before the class had begun and that was Volana's doing. He was afraid of what could happen to me if I knew before hand and had too much time to think about it. So it was done as kind of a surprise. He knew that I needed this."

Undilar gave his hand a gentle squeeze, "When I walked in and saw him, I froze. Even with the Mer blindfolded, I immediately knew who it was."

Volana rubbed his leg, looking at their students, "He called my class in to witness, knowing by then of course, that it was no mere coincidence that particular piece of information had been kept from him, as I was the only one who knew his personal relationship to the Mer. I stood close by, just in case he needed support. But I couldn't believe how calm he was... how at ease."

Volana's eyes went to Tarenen, "Of course in this case, the class went a little differently from how your's did Tarenen. Given the personal nature of it and all."

His face was completely calm as Undilar stared into Tarenen's eyes. "I pulled off his blindfold, and as soon as he saw me he began to scream. When his mouth opened, I grabbed his tongue with a pair of pliers and I quickly cut it out. I didn't want to hear him beg me! I had no interest in any words he might say in his defense, or even if he chose to apologize. I cut it out, so that he would be forced to hear me and me alone, as I spoke to him."

Volana's students, I was told, had looked on in not only interest, but in terror as they watched me work. I remained silent as I bound his bleeding mouth to quiet him. And as soon as I once again had his full attention, I pulled him free from his loin cloth, and I castrated him."

Audible swallows came from both of the young Mer as they listened to him. Gazing across the room, as if his eyes beheld something that only he could see, Undilar continued.

"It was not the quickly done job that his fellow priests had performed on my lover, either. I slowly walked around the rack that held him and tightened all of his binds. All the while, him knowing exactly what I was going to do to him and that he was helpless to do anything to stop me. Unable to even utter a single word of plea. Just like I was, when he had held me all those years before."

His eyes cleared as he pulled his gaze away from the past, and turned it toward his students. His hand absentmindedly tightening on his mate's. "I handled him gently, as in the same manner that a surgeon might handle his patient. I would not let him see an ounce of anger or sadness in me. I would not allow him to think that he or his actions, and past treatment of me, had any control over me. The entire time that I held him and cut his flesh away, I was at ease. The last thing I did, in order to force him to be alert as long as possible, was to slice through the vein that fed him. When he had been freed of it all, I lay what belonged to him on his chest, and while he bled to death I spoke to him."

"I told him that I was free."

Draining his cup, his eyes moved to Tarenen's, looking deeply into them. "From that day on... I was. I was free. Do you know why, Tarenen?"

Tarenen whispered, "Recompense was made."

Undilar nodded, smiling. "He was the root of my pain... and I cut him out."
When Undilar says he castrated him, he literally removed everything. In ancient times, castration often involved total removal of it all. Normally in doing it this way, the ones carrying out the task were doing it to kill the victim, as removal of just the testes would pose less risk of bleeding to death.

Also in ancient times throughout the entire world, and not just in instances of slavery, only the testes were removed for many numerous reasons. Especially due to religion, I won't name which one had a prominent history of doing this, you'll have to do your own research if you want to know. But it again, was done for numerous reasons. Of course, all of the reasons were wrong and unjustified. Regardless of whom it was being done to, and for whatever sick reason the one carrying it out was doing it for. It was horrendous! (There, now I can put away my soap box.)

Even though this chapter was hard for me to write, I had Undilar's past already mapped out. Not just to show that he had gone thru his own suffering, and could relate to Tarenen's pain. But that it would give him a personal need to protect and aid him. I also had my own personal reasons for creating this particular character the way that I have, along with the particulars of his past, as well as Tarenen's. What was done to them... why... and by whom.

Lyrics ~ Underneath
by: Adam Lambert
Worth The Risk

Chapter Summary

Raising his hand, he pointed toward the room where their partners sat. "That Mer in there... he would give his life for you! He will be loyal, like no other! Just like mine. You will have a partnership that will stand the test of time... one that will last through all the ages..."

He took Carene's hands, holding them as the Mer's head leaned into his chest, his slender shoulders shaking as he wept. He whispered to him, "None of it will be easy Carene... but it will always be worth it. And you will never regret it... I know I haven't."

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

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Without warning, Tarenen wrapped his arms around Undilar and held onto him. Speaking against the older Mer's shirt. "I am so sorry, Undilar."

He smiled... knowing that it wasn't pity he was giving him, but understanding and love. They had this link now, between them. Tarenen knew now, that he had someone that could relate to how he felt.

Undilar held him tighter, "Thank you, Tarenen... I am also sorry for what you have endured. And even more sorry for the one that you loved. You need to know, you have our support. You are loved! And we will aid you. I will aid you in this. And in time, you too will heal."

He wanted to reassure him so badly. Make him understand that this, in time would get better.

Volana motioned for Carene to assist him in the other room, gathering things for them to smoke and then eat... it would be relaxed. They all needed it. Going into the Captain's quarters, Volana collected a small pipe, some bud and an ash bowl. While Carene put together apples and cheese onto a tray.

Walking into the kitchen area, he could see the concerned look that Carene wore. The Mer had been silent through everything. Completely silent.

Setting all the items onto the tray, he placed an arm around the young Mer. "What troubles you, Carene? Please tell me."

Turning to him, pain so apparent in his warm eyes. Almost a mirror image of himself in earlier days, before Undilar had been completely healed. He knew what this was over, for he himself, had faced the same fears and had felt the same way.

Carene's brows knitting up in worry, a tear, made its way down his face as he whispered, "I know that Tarenen has every right to feel his pain, and I feel it with him... I do. It hurts me to see him suffer over this! But does it not prove, that he is still in love with his Mer? That he still feels so
strongly for him? Him being with you... even with Undilar last night... it was different! That means no threat to our love, I knew that he loved me. That regardless, he was mine. But now, seeing these feelings..."

Sitting them both down at the table, he took hold of Carene's hands. "You are so like me Carene. I too, came from a good home. I had never known loss. My parents loved me and supported me. Just like you with Tarenen, Undilar was my first real love. And he needed for so much. As you have heard, he was never loved. But even more than that, besides the absence of any love and affection, he also faced such horrible abuse and neglect. He was so weak and malnourished when my mother found him. Completely covered in bruises. He had internal injury from the last beating that he'd endured. So much so, that my father and her both, had to heal him for days, lest they fear for his very life."

Just thinking about it... remembering how long it had taken him to look healthy, made him want to cringe.

Reaching up, he wiped the young Mer's tears away. "It didn't take me very long to fall for him. And when I realized that I loved him, I had to be patient, because he was still fighting ghosts. The male that he loved, was not only his first love, but he was the only love that Undilar had ever known. The only one that gave him the hope to carry on, and he was taken from him in the most horrible of ways. He had to heal... he needed time. It took him a very long time, just to learn to trust."

Turning to the tray, he began pulling apart the bud... remembering. "It was hard at times, for me. I was afraid to tell him that I loved him. For fear that he wouldn't be able to say it back. Fear that he would feel pushed or rushed... pressured. I always showed him how I felt... but telling him... well, that was different. I ended up turning to my parents. I asked them the same thing that you just asked me. Could I really love someone that still loved a ghost? How could I ever compete? Could he ever love me back?"

Turning his head to look at him, Carene holding to his every word. "And I will tell you the same thing that they told me then. He is in mourning. He is mourning the loss of his love, and what he had to endure. Even though Fillim is still alive, Tarenen lost him. He was forced to watch as he was tortured. In that, just the fact that his own parents did this. His father binding him... his mother doing nothing to defend him. That alone, was a horrendous act! Now, to find out just how horribly the one that he loved was handled and the fact that his father still plans to do him harm. He is so overwhelmed by the injustice of it all right now. He doesn't want to help Fillim so he can return to him Carene. He wants him to be free. To have the life that he really deserves. That will help them both heal."

Wiping the stickiness from his fingers, he turned back to Carene. "That doesn't mean that what he has declared to you isn't real. It is, and I can tell you, I did not make a mistake in pairing you. Be patient with him. Do not doubt what he says he feels. He just needs time to heal. I will also tell you, being with these Mer... Mer that have gone through so much suffering, it will not be without trial. You will have to be strong Carene. Stronger than you ever thought you could be. For he will need you. But even through these trials, it is worth every minute... every minute!"

Raising his hand, he pointed toward the room where their partners sat. "That Mer in there, he would give his life for you! He will be loyal like no other! Just like mine. You will have a partnership that will stand the test of time... one that will last through all the ages..." He took Carene's hands, holding them as the Mer's head leaned into his chest, his slender shoulders shaking as he wept. He whispered to him, "None of it will be easy Carene... but it will always be worth it. You will never regret it. I know I haven't."
Taking a minute to dry his eyes, they walked in bringing the tray to the bed. Both Undilar and Tarenen seemed to be in better spirits. Tarenen's face lit up as soon as Carene walked in, holding up a hand for him to sit along side of him. Volana and Undilar both watched them... Undilar knew. He could see it in Carene, his pain... his fear.

They needed to be here for them, to aid them in this struggle they would have to endure. He could look back and see where things had been hard for Volana, and he was so grateful. Grateful that he hadn't given up, when he so easily could have. Grateful, that he felt their love... their lives and future together, had been worth the fight.

They lit up, passing the pipe... watching the two young Mer as they snuggled into each other. Carene's expression, getting lighter by the second. Tarenen exhaled, nuzzling him. "I love you."

Carene smiled, another tear sliding down as he hid his face in Tarenen's neck. Tarenen looked up at them, "I don't mean to bring it up again, but how did you find out about your mother?"

Undilar blew out his smoke, relieved they had it. He already felt so much better. But he understood the question and why it was asked. "The Mer that fathered me... he had told me one night, after a little too much wine."

Carene lifted his head, curious. "Have you ever met her? Does she know you?"

Passing the pipe back to the young Mer, he caressed his love's leg, as he thought over the question. "Volana's father was the commander of the training center when we enrolled. He felt it was important for me to at least know the bloodlines from which I hailed. Knowing my father's of course... he was not royalty mind you, but he was of pure lineage."

Tarenen, along with anyone else that saw him could tell. Undilar was of pure stock. His features, as sharp as they were. His height and coloring. His beauty! Gods! He was breathtaking to look at.

"Asking me first, knowing that it would be difficult for me. I told him yes, but that under no circumstances was contact to be made. I didn't want to disrupt her life, I simply wanted to know who she was."

Taking a sip of his drink, "It took some doing, and he was aided by some friends of his. Higher ups that vowed to keep it quiet. He told me her name, and started to tell me about her family. I had held up my hand, stopping him. I didn't want to know of her husband and her other children. It hurt too much, knowing that she'd had to give me up. But then, later, I had gone to him. He sat down with me, telling me that she had wed into royalty, to a good Mer. They had one female child and were attempting to have another."

He took a deep breath, "I had a sister. Half, but still... a sister. Volana's father actually went through the legal steps and adopted me prior to our enrollment, giving me his last name. It meant so much to me, not to be connected to that dispicable Mer."

Volana eased in closer to him, snuggling up. "I have only seen her once. It was on our graduation day ceremony. Volana's father came to me when it was over, and Mer were greeting their family members that had sat in the stands. He leaned in close to me, telling me... 'There is someone special that has witnessed your accomplishments today.' Guiding my eyes up into the stands, to where she was."

His head leaned back against the wall, looking up at the ceiling, as if he could see it all again. "I
stood there... just staring at her. She was the most beautiful Mer. Long, white blonde hair... pulled up. She stood... her hands were clasped together over her heart, and she stared back at me. Both of us, for a few minutes, just looked at each other. I could see myself in her... see my features, my coloring."

He swallowed, "Then, she smiled and turned... walking away. I watched her as she left. Volana's father stood next to me. Very quietly he said, 'She is very proud of you... very proud.' He smiled at me, and walked off to greet the parents of the other students. He never told me how she came to know where I was, and I never asked him. Just seeing her that one time, knowing she knew I had done well, knowing that she was proud of me... that was enough."

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The smoke gone, they munched on bits of apple and cheese. Deciding that the young couple needed some alone time, they went to their own quarters. Letting his clothing drop to the floor, Volana edged in next to him, wrapping his body around the larger Mer.

Undilar held him close. "I feel so protective of them both, Volana. I've never felt like this before. It's confusing..."

Nuzzling his neck, his voice, thick from the smoke... sleep coming on. "I understand how you feel in that respect. I too feel protective over them. How does it confuse you?"

Rubbing slow circles onto Volana's back, "They are so like we were after we met. I know that Carene has a good family, but Tarenen, he has nowhere now... no one. He's told me that he couldn't bear the thought of going back to his home. And doing that, would just work to undo any progress that he has made in healing."

His hand stopped, "How would you feel, if I told you that I would like to offer them a place here... with us?"

Volana sat up on his elbow, looking at him. His long hair, falling over his shoulder onto Undilar's chest. "I'd think that our hearts are one in the same. I've thought about that very same thing myself."

Gods knew they definitely had the space, and when the younger couple wanted to strike out on their own... later, when they were established, they could. But they would always have a place there. They would always be like family, and through these rough years, they would have the support they needed. Emotionally and financially.

Laying back down, he snuggled into him, smiling. "Should we discuss it with them? Perhaps on the way back, let them think it over?"

"I'd like that." Nuzzling him, they both got comfortable. Volana's voice slowing down as he fell asleep... "I love you."

Staring into the darkness, he stroked Volana's skin, listening to his breathing as it slowed, he whispered. "And I love you."

Knowing with all that he'd had to relive over the last few hours, sleep would be awhile in coming. He lay there, listening to the two young Mer talking quietly in the other room until all was silent.

He couldn't stop thinking about Tarenen's mother. Volana and Tarenen both had told him, that she had some fear of his father's temper. But was that an actual excuse for allowing the horrible things his father had done? The attack he'd endured at their home. Her just closing the door and walking
away. Hearing him and not helping him! Then, to let his father bind him! Forcing him to watch such an atrocity!

As much as they had been taught to deal with torture, to handle things of such nature. To have it inflicted upon you at the hands of your parents... someone that should be coming to your aid!

Volana's father and mother had told them both, how Mer that have some of the marriages purely for blood, sometimes lacked compassion for their offspring. The only thing that mattered was what society saw, and the fact that their child was of pure blood.

The fact that neither party really loved each other, the fact that they were too occupied finding personal gratification and happiness elsewhere, meant that there was no sense of family. No bond.

Their young Mer, grew up seeing that, lacking essential components to have a successful relationship, or the know how to have a good family life when they started one for themselves. Most of these Mer had been raised by nannies and servants, their parents rarely home. Just like Tarenen's, his father had his lovers, and she had hers. Now there was no one at home at all! No one to care enough to even see how he was doing! To be there for him or care about his accomplishments. Now the only thing he had of his family, was his name and his blood. That was it.

They had both seen how some of the instructors, along with Volana's father, had struggled, helping students through emotional turmoil. Hence, another strong reason they believed in conditioning. They all needed aid in coping, some more than others.

She may have hidden their relationship from Anariil, she may have helped them see each other, but when Tarenen really needed her, she had failed him! Fillim... well, he was the result of the flaws in their society all together. As much as many of them would like to change those types of things, he was afraid something like that was a long time in the coming. He and Volana did as much as they could themselves, to help where they could.

With everything that he'd been through at the temple, at the hands of the one that had fathered him, he didn't feel animosity for those that were poorly bred. And after Volana had helped him, became close to him at such an early age, seeing what one of pure blood could go through... he didn't either.

Volana's parents, even though of pure blood, were open-minded Mer. They had taught Volana well, and they were the only family that he had ever known. He lay there, rethinking everything he'd read... Anariil's journal, along with with the rest of his secrets.

No. If he had a child, he would defend them. He would defend them with his life! No one would ever touch them or hurt them the way that he had been hurt! Regardless of the fact that she feared Anariil, Tarenen was her son! Her flesh and blood! None of what had happened should have happened!

Letting out a quiet breath. He knew Volana wasn't going to like his decision. But they didn't have the power to proceed on their own. Having the documents... the journal... he knew what he had to do. He would talk it over with him in the morning, before they set sail back to the shore.

Just the sail back would take most of the day, giving them time to go over the details and speak to their students about their offer. The evening would be spent preparing for the beginning of the week at the center. He only had one class on Morndas and as soon as that was over, he would be taking the journal and dropping in on the only Mer that had the power to aid them.
He had never felt so complete... tightening his hold on his mate. Au-riel had truly blessed him. To have such a wonderful family, and a mate that loved him more than life itself. And now, these two young Mer. Mer that needed their aid so badly. Mer that they would mold and hone into the Dominion's finest. There was a reason why these two Mer had fallen into their hands.

It was a chance. A chance given to them by Au-riel himself! With his divine aid they couldn't fail.

Chapter End Notes

*Also, Volana's parents knew that their son loved Undilar way before Undilar knew they did. Before he himself knew the depth of their son's affection for him. They had already accepted him and their love. But after all he had endured and them being his only family, he was afraid to lose it when Volana wanted them to stand together before his parents and profess their love.

*Just didn't want a bunch of confusion over that. Sometimes I go over things in my mind and forget that everyone else may not be right there with me at the same place. [laughs]
Hiding My Fear

Chapter Summary

His own voice cracked, betraying him... "You have *always* been my strength. My rock. Always..."

Clasping his hands behind Volana's back, he pulled him closer. Pushing his face into the Mer's bare chest. "Where... where is it now? Do not... *please* do not take it from me..."

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

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Letting his eyes clear from sleep, he looked about the room and feeling around the bed with his hand, the other side was empty. He smelled tea... tea and biscuits.

Running his long fingers through his short hair, attempting to straighten the mess it was in, he gave up and stood.. pulling on his bottoms. It was nice having a personal relationship with all that were present. He didn't have to worry over covering completely.

The bright sunlight, coming through the porthole windows called to him. Tea and biscuits on deck. Ocean breeze, sunlight, his love and their company... it was going to be a good day. Walking out of their quarters into the kitchen area, Volana was the only one up. Currently bent over the table, arranging a tray for them.

Quietly, he crept up behind him... smiling sneakily.

**********

Blast his hair! Falling around his face as he tried to rush with their breakfast... he wanted to surprise him! Normally Undilar was up first, cooking for them and serving him. Even at the center, the Mer either did most of his own cooking, or assisted his servant with it. He loved to cook... and he was good at it.

With everything that had happened... all of the stress, he had actually slept in. Which was rare. As soon as he had woken and realized that his mate still slept soundly, he'd quietly slipped out and got it prepared.

With them being aboard the boat, they were limited to what they could cook. They both detested dried meats, so most of what they ate when they sailed, were different fruits, cheeses and greens. Perhaps some bread and tea, wine or other drink. They didn't live aboard, so usually it was just a day or two at a time.

He had warmed yesterday's biscuits, which had been brought from their estate. Laying out some herbed goat cheese and some sliced apple, their tea was ready. Flicking his hair back over his shoulder, he let out a shriek, as hands wrapped around his hips and hard length, was pressed up against his bottom!
Sucking in a breath, he grabbed the edge of the table! The tea cups clattering against the saucers, as Undilar ground into him! Wrapping a hand, around Volana's throat, he pulled the Mer back into his chest, his other hand roaming freely down his lover's smooth skin... moving down between his legs. "Shhhh..." he growled into his ear.. "you'll wake them."

Volana's eyes closed. His mouth open, pushing his bottom into Undilar's groin. The invading hand, now sliding under the waistband of his silken bottoms, caressing Volana's growing length. He moaned out... his voice breathless and full of need. "You rotten Mer..."

Whispering roughly against his pointed ear. "Will you think me rotten when I fill you... make you call out my name..."

Taking his hands away from the table, he pulled at his bottoms, letting them slip down over his hips, pooling on the floor around their feet. Undilar released his throat, bringing both hands to his back, he gently pushed him down over the table, chuckling as he reached above them to grab the oils from a shelf. "Don't spill the tea now..."

Oiled fingers replaced the hard length, sliding between his cheeks and grazing over his hole. He kept his legs tightly together. They wouldn't be able to take a lot of time. They weren't alone after all. But he knew Undilar secretly loved the thrill of possibly being seen... caught. Being at the center, he couldn't indulge in his little kink, lest they lose their positions and that wasn't an option. They could however, do it now...

Still, they needed to proceed quickly, and he knew just the trick.

Fingers entered him, preparing the way. Undilar's hand grabbed onto his shoulder, holding him in place as the other held his cock... guiding it into his lover's hole. Volana's back arched, sucking in a breath as he was breached.

***********

They had laid in bed holding each other, enjoying the serenity of where they were and who they were with. Carene squirmed against him, whispering. "I have to pee... just a minute." Tarenen moved his arm, allowing the Mer to stand. Quietly, he moved to the bucket in the corner. He would've rather, just went up on deck and gone over the edge. But, hearing some movement in the other room, he'd decided against it.

It'd been pretty quiet up until now. Hearing Volana scream out... Tarenen sat up, looking toward the door. They both listened. At first, a bit alarmed... they knew the four of them, were the only ones on the boat. But then they heard whispers. The clatter of dishes. At first, they thought it was error. Someone had bumped something, perhaps spilled something. But now, with the noise becoming constant...

His head turned, smiling at Carene, motioning toward the doorway with his finger. Shaking himself off, he tiptoed to the door, as Tarenen eased from the bed following quietly. Getting down onto his knees, Carene eased up to the keyhole in the door... looking through. Tarenen sat on the floor next to him, watching as Carene's mouth fell open, then, as a huge smile spread across his face.

Tarenen whispered... smiling. "What!.. what is it?"

Carene's hand went up to his mouth, covering his smile. Still watching, "They're having sex... on the table..."

Tarenen's mouth went into an O, his eyes widened! "On the table! Let me see!" Pushing at Carene,
the Mer landed onto the floor, trying to stifle his laughter, as Tarenen shoved his face up to the keyhole... looking through.

Volana was standing upright... the front of his thighs pressed into the table. The angle in which they were positioned, he could barely see Volana's cock. But from what he could see, just a glimpse of the head, it was erect.

Undilar's forearm was wrapped around his chest, holding him back against him... both were completely bare. Their bottoms, laying in a pile at their feet. Volana's head was laid back against Undilar's shoulder... his mouth opened up in a silent cry, his eyes clenched shut. Both Mer could hear his breathing through the door... coming out in pants, as his larger partner ground into him from behind.

Tarenen's mouth hung open, watching them. Undilar was completely buried in him... all the way. His legs on the outside of Volana's... keeping them tightly together. Carene playfully pushed him away, moving his own eye in... watching as the muscles in Volana's legs and what he could see of his bottom clenched up! Undilar groaned out... keeping him pinned against his chest, he bent them over... bringing a knee up and onto the table top, rocking hard against him, he took hold of Volana's cock.

Carene whispered... "Undilar's going to cum..."

He knew what Volana was doing... Undilar had told him when they were together. After years of being a couple, they knew each other well. And the Mer knew all the tricks to getting him off, and getting him off quickly when time was short. Even though Undilar wanted it to last, he loved what Volana did. The Mer had excellent muscle control.

They both stayed in the best physical condition. They had to, to perform their duties, but Volana had told him that it made their sexual experiences just that much better. After years of taking a Mer as large as Undilar, he did specific exercises that helped keep him nice and tight.

Volana had always been the bottom with his mate. The only time he wasn't, was when he was with one of them or they had their gatherings. He didn't bottom for anyone other than his Mer.

Undilar was never the bottom. He hadn't been since his first love had died. And over the years, even from the very beginning of their relationship, he understood and respected his mate's wishes. He had no desire to pressure him into something that would cause him emotional upset. Undilar had been his first, and from the very start, he'd told him he had emotional reservations about it. If there ever came a time that his feelings changed, he would know. Until then he was satisfied. Just being with him was enough. They were both happy, and that's all that mattered.

Tarenen eased up next to him, watching through the keyhole, as Undilar's perfect body completely locked up... his hold tightening around Volana, he growled into his mate's ear. Volana whining out, "I... I... can't- "

Tarenen eased back from the keyhole. Looking around him, Carene was no longer beside him. His eyes moving to their bed... Carene lay there, watching him. He had been so engrossed that he hadn't even heard him move away. Standing up, he walked over to him... Carene's hand patting the empty bed next to him... smiling, as he brought a hand to his cock...

They would give their elders the privacy they needed, even though they had done some peeking.

Now, they would have their own.
After cleaning up, not only themselves but the table. They had eaten, leaving the remainder for the young ones. Sitting on deck, still in just their bottoms, they sipped on their tea, basking in the morning sunlight. Soon they would need to raise the anchors and set off. The wind they needed couldn't always be depended on, and they had to make it back prior to night fall.

But right now with what weighed upon them, they needed to talk.

The Journal and all the parchments, had been carefully gathered from the other night and sealed in their room. Neither of them, none of them, could completely stop thinking about it. Knowing that dealing with it was inevitable, and necessary. The risks involved for all, and the pain it would mean if it didn't work. The healing it would mean, if it did.

Just like he knew his partner was, Volana had been praying. Praying to Au-riel, that they would all come out of this alive and alright.

Undilar watched him as he stared out over the water. Watched, as his expression grew more and more somber. Quietly, he let out a breath, swallowing. "You know I have no other choice... he is the only one who can stop this."

Not trusting himself to look directly at him, he kept watch over the water. Fighting to keep his voice even, "I know. I know we have to act. I would have it no other way." He closed his eyes against his threatening tears.

Just seeing him. Seeing the way he struggled, brought the reality of what they were about to do, full force into his mind... his heart.

For one such as Volana, one that always had his control at the ready, to be so heavily affected. He knew his mate was terrified. Terrified, not just for them all... but for him. There was no choice. He had to do this. If he didn't, a horrible injustice would be committed and Tarenen would never recover.

Volana wouldn't think about all the what if's, he couldn't. Doing that would only bring him to hysterics, and he had never been one to succumb to such useless emotions. To do that, would simply magnify what he already felt, rendering him incapable of any coherent thought and action.

He knew that when tomorrow came, he would have to conduct himself in a manner befitting his station, and instruct his class. Knowing that his mate... the love of his life and his entire existence, was walking headlong into what could be, not only his demise... but Volana's as well. And if that happened, he feared for Tarenen. Because if something happened to Undilar, he would no longer care to live. Of course, he would never tell Undilar that. Ever.

He knew he would be needed. Needed, to help the two young Mer, that lay down below deck right now. And if he lost him, he really didn't know if he would be strong enough to do that. That alone, was enough to terrify him.

Setting down his tea and moving from his chair, he got down onto his knees in front of Volana. Easing between his legs, he wrapped his arms around his bottom and looked up at him.

That's all it took for him to break. He turned his head. Keeping his eyes closed, his voice a whisper as he spoke through trembling lips. "Please. Undilar... don't. Please don't do this to me."

His shaking hands came down to rest on Undilar's shoulders. He knew just what to do to make him show his weakness. If he only knew, he would beg at his feet. If that was what he truly needed. He
would beg.

His own voice cracked, betraying him. "You have always been my strength. My rock. Always..."

Clasping his hands behind Volana's back, he pulled him closer, pushing his face into the Mer's bare chest. "Where... where is it now? Do not... please do not take it from me..."

Wrapping his arms around Undilar's head, he held him close. His tears falling into white hair as he struggled to speak. "It is here... as it will always be. Always..."

As much as his existence made him fight to be his strength... he was his only weakness, and deep down Undilar knew that. He knew he was the only weak spot in his partner's armor. Just as Volana was his. That knowledge alone, was at times enough to make his heart ache, just as at times enough to make him rejoice. Enough to make him fear just what would happen if something were to happen to either of them.

The fact that Volana was a gifted natural in conditioning... as well as Undilar, in Restoration and healing. They had been requested to stay on as instructors after they had graduated. Actually being offered their positions. But, it was their love for each other that had been a huge factor in their decisions to take the offers that had been given. Deep down, they both knew it meant that neither of them would be called to fight. It meant their safety.

The fact that each of them relied so heavily upon the other, all that it did was prove that their race was not without it weaknesses. Even as much as they tried to harness it and control it. Deny it.

He knew Volana feared for him. He knew he was being selfish, forcing him to be strong right now... to not admit his fear of losing him. His own fear of what he had to do and the risks it involved, he had to have Volana's strength, lest he not be able to face the one he would tomorrow!

Staying on his knees, he took hold of Volana's arms and gently pushed him back into the chair, looking up at him. "When this is all said and done, and the two down below are here with us, safe and healing from all the wrongs that have been made! Once again, I will speak my vows to you! And prove to you, that I will never leave you! Ever!"

Volana threw his head back into the chair, sobbing out! His hands clutching at the arms that held him. "Why! Why do you insist on seeing my tears!"

Undilar watched him cry, raising up a hand to wipe them away, he smiled. "Because that is what you need, and only I can provide it."

Chapter End Notes

Literally just trying to convey that as different, and of course, as harsh as the Thalmor come off, that they themselves face their own struggles. Not just the Thalmor, but the Altmer living under their rule in the Isles. Each Mer in the order, has come out of that society, bringing with them things from their past... their own upbringing.

Trying to give an inside view to my version of them, and the problems that each Mer would possibly face with the way that their society is run. That they aren't devoid of feeling, and the steps that would have to be taken to overcome their own struggles, in order to gain control. Like what Undilar and Tarenen have faced, and that control is a
way to get past their pain and ensure that they don't go through it again... that they become stronger for it.

It that aspect, I don't really think that we are that much different.
Slap In The Face

Chapter Summary

The guard removed his helmet, holding it as he whispered. "I've kept watch... just as you asked... the port."

Taking a deep breath, he leaned over the desk... even though they were whispering in a closed room, he looked about in fear. Lowering his voice, even further... "Anariil boarded a ship this morning... not two hours ago, it set sail."

"Undilar swallowed. What little was in his stomach, felt as though it would surface. Gods! Even though he already knew the answer... he had to ask. "The destination?"

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

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I am shielded in my armor,  
Hiding in my room, safe within my womb.  
I touch no one and no one touches me.  
I am a rock,  
I am an island.

And a rock feels no pain,  
And an island never cries.

***

His class was over. Now all there was left to do, was prepare for the inevitable. The parchments had been left at their estate. He didn't even want them here. If things didn't go according to their plan, he didn't want anything here that could be further held over their heads.

They both knew that if Anariil found out, that they had any of these things, he would do everything in his power to destroy all of them. And the way he felt about his own son right now, he would probably have him expelled.

The problem was the one, that he would be meeting with within the hour. If he felt that Undilar was planning on using the information that they had to try and blackmail him, or hurt him in any fashion, they would not only lose their positions... but, he could call for their execution.

Even if they fought it and won, they would still be ruined. The fact that they all could face imprisonment, death, or banishment.

He closed his eyes, giving his head a shake in attempt to clear his fears away. He needed his mate, and right now, he couldn't have him. He had to be strong.

His door flew open, slamming against the wall! Stepping back in shock, he dropped the journal and looked up. Trying to calm his heart as the guard rushed into his office, skidding to a stop in front of
The young Altmer was completely out of breath. "Forgive me Master Undilar. I have important news!"

Holding up his hand to quiet the guard, he stepped around his desk and walked to the door, closing it. Walking back over to his desk, he spoke low. "We must be quiet! What do you have for me?"

The guard removed his helmet, holding it as he whispered. "I've kept watch, just as you asked... the port."

Taking a deep breath, he leaned over the desk... even though they were whispering in a closed room, he looked about in fear. Lowering his voice, even further... "Anariil boarded a ship this morning... not two hours ago, it set sail."

"Undilar swallowed. What little was in his stomach felt as though it would surface. Gods! Even though he already knew the answer, he had to ask. "The destination?"

Concern, evident in the young guard's face. "Skyrim..."

The guard knew not why Anariil sailed there, but if he himself was going, something important must be happening. Important, but not good.

Undilar stood silent for a moment, processing the news. The journal mentioned his plans but not the dates on which he planned to carry them out. This could only mean that his summons had already been sent. Sent ahead of him.

Leaning further over the desk, speaking low. "How many were in his party?"

"Eight... what remains of his personal guard."

The furrow in his brow deepened, he didn't understand. "What do you mean... what remains?"

"Eight is all that remains sir. All the others were relieved of their duty days ago..."

His eyes widened, staring at the guard, trying to maintain the appearance of control. He knew the guard had no idea why. Just as Anariil's personal guard wouldn't have been told why they were being let go. They would've simply gone back to the barracks for reassignment.

There were also very strict rules in place over the spread of gossip. The ones relieved of their duties all knew what could befall them should they attempt to besmirch Anariil's name or status, with any personal information they had attained during the time they worked for him.

There was no point in asking him... he already knew. He just couldn't believe that this was actually happening.

Standing upright, he straightened his robes and opened a drawer, taking out a coin purse he tossed it to the guard. "You've done well. Now, forget that we had this conversation."

"Yes, Master Undilar!" Giving him a slight bow, the guard turned and left, closing the door behind him.

Reaching down to retrieve the journal, he looked at it. Letting out a deep breath... there was no choice. If Telindil refused to help, there would be nothing that any of them could do.

***************
He didn't tell him when he left. He didn't say goodbye. After all, it wasn't goodbye. He already knew that Volana was concerned enough. They all were. And seeing him before he left would only aid in breaking his resolve... weakening him.

The carriage ride wouldn't take long. The training center was less than an hour from the heart of the city. Enough time to collect himself and yet hopefully, not enough to succumb to the fear that kept wanting to creep into his heart and mind. Releasing the journal just long enough to wipe his sweaty palms onto his pant legs, he looked out the window of the carriage.

After going through all the upset the evening that they had read the documents. Then their own personal turmoil the morning after, they had decided to wait on mentioning their offer to the young ones. They all had enough on their minds. One more thing added to the pile would only complicate things further. Once this was all done, then they would sit down with them and discuss it. If they could.

The carriage slowed to a halt and a guard stepped forward to open his door.

Taking a deep breath, he stepped out and walked up the steps. Wearing his best Thalmor robes, dailies, but still the best that he had. Wearing his dress uniform for no apparent occasion, would have definitely been inappropriate, as they were only to be worn for special occasions and functions. His robes had never had a hood, he absolutely deplored them. He felt the hood only hindered one's peripheral sight and therefore when he chose his, they were without.

Telling the guards who he was there to see, even with him knowing where his office was, he was escorted. The journal tucked under his arm, he approached Telindil's secretary. An elderly male Altmer, who upon seeing him, had looked down at a book that sat open on his desk. Staring suspiciously up at him, the old Mer spoke, "How may I help you?"

"I am Undilar, Senior Master of Restoration at the training center. I've come to see Master Larethian. It is of grave matter."

The elderly Altmer watched him for a moment, thinking. "It is highly irregular for anyone to see him without a formal appointment."

"I do not wish to show disrespect in any fashion, but there was no time. I would ask that an exception be made in the case of this matter. It is an emergency."

Eyeing him, his elder finally closed the book on his desk and stepped around. "I will see if he has a moment to spend with you. Please wait here."

Attempting not to fidget, he straightened his posture, staring at the doorway where the Altmer had gone. After a few moments the door opened and the old Mer stepped out, motioning for him to come. "He will see you."

Holding the door for him, as soon as he walked in it was closed behind him. He stood there, taking in his surroundings. The Dominion's current banner, as well as the old, adorned the walls. Antiques and priceless artifacts were arranged throughout the room. The finest rugs in all of a Tamriel lay beneath his feet.

Catching himself, he looked up. Telindil was standing behind a massive, ornately carved wooden desk of the darkest wood, polished to a mirror shine, waiting for him. His grip tightened on the journal as he approached.

He walked up to the desk, bowing... "Thank you for meeting with me, Master Larethian."
Waving a hand at the seats before them, "Please, have a seat... would you care for some wine?"
Undilar noticed he was already pouring it, and propriety would now demand that he drink it.

"Yes, thank you."

Telindil breathed in deeply through his nose as he poured, not bothering to look at him until he had taken his goblet and situated himself behind his desk. Undilar watched him as he took a drink and then took hold of his own. Taking a small sip, he waited for Telindil to speak.

The Mer was older than he by at least thirty years. He knew around how old Anariil was... seventy, perhaps seventy two. The journal had stated that they had schooled together and so they were around the same age. He still looked very young. A powerful looking Mer. The same warm, amber eyes as Volana and Carene. Wearing the most expensive tailored attire, his long, white hair tied back at his neck.

Folding his hands in his lap, he reclined back in the chair. "It's not very often that someone from the training center comes to see me. I understand that you are one of Tarenen's instructors. How is he?"

Undilar smiled, the tempo of his heartbeat increasing. Telindil was aware of who he was... the fact that he instructed Anariil's son. "He is well. In fact, he is one of the reasons that I am here today."

The look on Telindil's face, instantly turned to one of concern. He sat forward, a hand reaching out to set down his wine. "Have you contacted his father? Is he well?"

"It concerns his father as well..." the breath he let out wavered, and even as he attempted to control it in his voice, it was audible. And if he could hear it, then he knew that Telindil had as well! "As well as... your son."

He thought he would be sick. Trying to shield how he felt, the terror that was consuming his heart! A sheen of sweat had sprung up all over his face and under his robes. Beads of it, now streaking through his hair and down under his collar.

Telindil froze. He sat stone still and stared at him. Undilar knew he was thinking over, not only the reasoning behind his coming to see him, but how he knew. Whether or not he wanted something. Right then, there must have been a million things running through the Mer's head.

Instead of waiting for him to speak, against propriety, he spoke again. "I am here to beg for your help."

Standing, he held out the journal to him. "If you would but read this... "

Telindil's eyes narrowed. Slowly, he raised his hands to take it... looking at the book, then back to Undilar. "What is it?" Looking back at the book he held. Numerous pieces of thicker parchment stuck out in different places, and it was incredibly worn from what looked like constant use.

Undilar sat back down and picked up his wine. He knew it wouldn't be alright to down it, but that's exactly what he felt like doing. "It is Anariil's personal journal."

Setting it down onto his desk, he stared at him, his expression one of anger and confusion! "Anariil is a very dear friend of mine! How did this find it's way to you!?"

Holding up a hand, he shook his head, "Tarenen's mother brought it to him at the center several days ago. She had read it and was quite distraught. Tarenen wanted her to take it back, to put it where she'd found it. She refused, all but forcing him to read it. When she left, he came to me for
help. He was very close to Fillim...

Undilar knew that he couldn't count on Telindil to care whether or not Anariil hurt his son. After all, he had sold his own flesh and blood to his friend. What he was hoping would make him care, was being told and reading, about how Tarenen felt. And the hope, that finding out what Anariil had done. The horrible injustice of how he had plotted, and the reasons behind him even wanting Fillim, would make him want to take action.

He could only hope.

The Mer literally flinched as soon as he spoke the name. He could see the recognition in his face, the horrible realization! "He is in horrible danger, Telindil... please! You need to read it, right now."

Lowering his eyes to the journal, he licked his lips and took a drink. "What are these areas that are marked?" His eyes raising back to him.

Lowering his goblet to rest on his thigh, "I have marked the areas that pertain most to the current circumstances."

Opening it up, he paused. "If Fillim is in danger, why do I read this? When I could be sending my guard to his aid, even as we speak!" He stood, holding onto the journal. Undilar could see the worry etched across his face. The question racing through Undilar's mind, was whether he was worried about a scandal? Or was he actually worried about Fillim?

Undilar just looked at him. He could tell he had no idea that Anariil would be at fault for the fact that his son needed aid. For if he were, there would be nothing he could do about it. Except talk to Anariil and try to stop him. Try to correct it. Fillim was Anariil's property, and legally, he could do whatever he pleased to him. Perhaps Telindil figured that with them being such close friends, that Anariil would take that into consideration before doing something that would hurt his son.

"Because Fillim is no longer here... he is in Skyrim."

One hand clutching the journal, the other clenched into a fist! His enraged voice, thundered through the room! "Skyrim! How?! How did he get- " Stopping himself, he looked back at the book in his hand.

Still standing, he grabbed his goblet and downed the wine. Turning away from Undilar to face his window, he opened the journal and read. As soon as he turned his back, Undilar guzzled his wine, watching him.

Telindil's free hand immediately went to his brow and he started to pace. Pausing momentarily to put a hand to his mouth, he continued on. Refilling their goblets several times while Telindil read. By the time he was done, he had leaned against the window frame for support. His eyes closed... a hand over his mouth.

Slowly, he closed the journal and turned. "Where is Anariil now? Do you know?"

Undilar stood. "He is already on the water... his ship sailed this morning."

Telindil actually groaned out, leaning up against his desk, his breathing labored. Eyes, clenched shut... his voice cracked. "Au-riel... what have I done?"

Undilar could tell he was making every effort to keep from weeping. His face looked like it had aged in just the short time since he had arrived. His superior licked his lips as he opened up a small
drawer, bringing out a piece of parchment and a stamp. Dipping his quill, he hurriedly scrawled across it, and then pouring out just a drop of ink, he pushed the stamp in. Rolling it up, he handed it to Undilar. "Whatever you need... this will get it!"

Undilar began to speak and Telindil stopped him with his raised hand. "I do not wish to know your methods!" Leaning over his desk, his face desperate. "Do whatever you have to... use whatever means..."

Holding up the journal, "I'll be keeping this. And Undilar... If... If my son... if he lives, and he wishes to return, please make sure he has safe passage."

Undilar nodded, bowing to him. "I will."

As his hand reached the handle... "Thank you. I will be waiting for any word."

Undilar stepped out, hearing behind him as Telindil spoke to his secretary. "Cancel all of my appointments with haste! I want my door locked! I am not to be disturbed for any reason!"

***

Going over to the bar, he grabbed a bottle of Colovian Brandy, walked back to his desk and sat down. Pouring it over the wine that still remained, he began pulling the tabs of parchment from their places. He would read it. All of it... in all of it's horrible, heart wrenching entirety. He owed him that.

He owed his son much, much more.

***

Getting back into the carriage, all he could think about, was all that they had to prepare and how quickly they had to do it. He also understood why Telindil himself, couldn't be involved. It had nothing to do with Fillim being his son. It had *everything* to do with who they were being sent there to stop.

Anariil was extremely smart. He knew what he was doing, just like he knew the law of their people. The Dominion would be on his side. He owned Fillim. The Mer was *his* property. Legally, everything he had done, was within his rights to do, and no one would lift a finger to stop him.

Telindil, in doing this, was acting outside of his own laws. Laws that he had, in fact, had Mer punished for breaking.

He opened the scroll of parchment, reading what Telindil had written. Telindil's fastest ship, was being sent to assist Anariil in his endeavor in Skyrim.

Undilar, was to be given whatever he needed. The warriors, would be provided by the Specialty Unit Instructor, Lovidalf. That would be believable as well... after all, their most skilled came from him. From all three of them.

Everyone in the Thalmor knew, Anariil and Telindil had long been friends. No one would question it. None of it.

They had to be on the water by nightfall... time was running out.

Chapter End Notes
Lyrics ~ I Am A Rock
by: Simon & Garfunkel
Chapter Summary

Fjolrin lowered his voice, "See, I guess the guards are good for something after all. I mean, even your brother... who was sleeping with him, didn't even know any of what I just told you! But the guards did! What does that mean, Vilkas? What does it mean, when your lover is keeping things from you?"

Turning away, he walked out, "To me it means that your lover is unhappy."

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

**********

I lay my weapon down won't fight no more
Try to get you by my side.
Though I've been in love before,
They could never take my clouds away.

Babe if you were mine,
I won't hesitate at all,
You just let me know,
I'll be the one to catch your fall.

Anything you need,
Don't give me away,
You make me so confused,
The one I love, loves someone else.

**********

Even as hot and sweaty as he was... even with the noise of the grindstone. None of it kept him from knowing who was behind him. For some reason he could just tell. For some reason, his body had the exact same reaction every time. And that reaction was a dead give away.

Every small hair on him was standing erect. Letting the stone slow, he took a deep breath. "You're up and about? Your bow is inside. Adrianne will take your payment."

"I uh... I need to talk to you Fillim. That's why I'm here."

Fillim stood up from the seat and walked over to the smelter, grabbing up his water skin, he turned to him. Figuring that if he wanted to speak to him, it needed to be at least somewhat private. Fjolrin had moved a little closer, standing by the forge, watching him. Taking him in, he could tell he still wasn't a hundred percent. The way he held his arm, meant his shoulder still had some mending to do. And he was pale, even for a Nord. Finally realizing that Fillim wasn't going to budge, he moved closer to stand by him.

Taking a drink from the skin, he stared at him. "What did you want to say?"
Fjolrin looked around, taking in a slow, deep breath. The hand holding his weak arm, fidgeting with the material of his tunic sleeve. He could tell, whatever he planned to say wasn't easy, which made him wonder. Wonder if he hadn't been pushed into saying it. Or perhaps, he was just a stubborn Nord that wasn't used to admitting his wrongs.

Fjolrin took a step closer, licking his lips. "Look, what I did... I..."

Fjolrin let out another deep breath, looking away. Color was staining his cheeks. Fillim could tell he was at a loss for words. At a loss, but that didn't mean that the Nord didn't know how he felt. He did. It was just simply getting it from his brain, past his stubborn Nord pride, and to his mouth.

He could have saved him from it. He could have spared him this little bit of discomfort. But he wasn't going to. He would let him suffer. He needed to.

Fillim stared at him. Fjolrin huffed out a breath, getting irritated! "Do you have to look at me like that!"

Lowering the water skin, he spoke softly. "Like what Fjolrin?"

Without waiting for his answer, he motioned for him to come closer, the Nord giving him a wary look. "Come over here and sit with me. I want to check your shoulder."

Fjolrin's brows gathered up and his mouth dropped. "I've already seen the healer!"

But even as he complained, he stepped forward, dropping down onto his bottom next to the smelter.

Without saying anything or asking, Fillim gathered up his tunic in one hand and unlaced the neck with the other. Fjolrin's face, getting redder and redder by the second. He looked away, as Fillim inspected his shoulder. "You're doing this, just to see me suffer! That's why!" Turning his head back towards him, "Isn't it!"

Running a hand lightly over the pink scars, as the light flowed from his fingers his eyes never left Fjolrin's. As soon as it dissipated, he released the cloth. "Would you prefer that I be angry? That I not accept your apology?"

Straightening his tunic, he looked at Fillim, his eyebrows gathered! "Yes! That would make it easier!"

Fillim chuckled, "Well, I'm not angry with you. I'm also no longer afraid of you. I've had some time since I've been gone to think over why you've done some of the things you've done. You don't have to admit to me, why you did what you did..."

He stood, flicking his braid back over his shoulder and brushing off his bottom. Picking up the water skin, he looked down into Fjolrin's blue eyes. "You need to admit it to yourself Fjolrin, not me."

The look on the Nord's face, was enough to make him laugh! He wouldn't though. He could tell Fjolrin had taken enough. Baby steps after all. Admitting feelings weren't exactly among the Nord's strongest suits. Any of them, for that matter.

Springing up from the ground, his color was already better, and not just from the irritation either. Fillim smiled at him, raising a hand to cover his mouth. Fjolrin glared at him, "First you insult me! Now you laugh! When a man's trying to apologize?!"
Now he was chuckling, and fighting the urge to hold his stomach. He just couldn't help it. "How is the truth an insult? And you have yet to speak your apology. But I will take your presence as one. I know it took effort."

Huffing out a breath, he brushed past him! He wasn't going to admit shit! "Truth my ass!"

Stepping out onto the road, he started the walk back to Jorvaskr, fists clenched up at his sides! Hearing Fillim yell behind him. "I want to see that shoulder in two days Fjolrin."

He turned, pausing to yell back at him. "Go piss in the wind Elf!"

Turning back around, he continued to walk, hearing Fillim's laughter follow him down the street. The people that had stopped to watch, now resumed what they were doing. Running his hand over his shoulder as he rotated his arm, it did feel better.

************

Freshly bathed, he lay uncovered, staring at the night sky through the smoke slats in Anoriath's room. Even with a bottle of mead and his evening tea, he couldn't rest. His mind kept wandering to everything that had happened in the last week.

Anoriath watched him.

Letting out a small laugh, he turned his head to the Bosmer. "What's the matter? Can't sleep as well?"

Propping himself up against the wall, he reached over and popped the cork on a bottle of wine, filling a cup. "Would you like some?"

Letting out a breath. "Why not..."

He knew his lack of sleep wasn't the disease. He didn't have any other symptoms. He'd downed every potion Skjor had given him. Taken every other healing remedy he could think of. He'd eaten healthier and drank water and tea. In fact, he felt better then he had in ages. But then, he hadn't had the stress he'd had either. All he had now was heartache. Everyday, he had worked himself to the point that he'd pass out at night from exhaustion, simply just trying to keep his mind off from it.

Fjolrin's visit, even as good natured as it had been, brought some of it back. He hadn't seen the twins since he'd left. He'd heard of course, from everyone, that they were still working on the house. Nothing escaped anyone in a town this size.

They were working on it almost daily. They'd even hired more help. The guards, running their lips over all the coin they were spending in Riverwood, the Mill, the Mason and the Smith. Even Adrianne had mentioned things to him. Travelers from Riverwood, plus townsfolk, came into Whiterun daily to trade or just stay on their way to somewhere else. Being as close as they were, it was to be expected.

He almost dreaded seeing Farkas. He longed to. He missed him. His heart ached for him. But to see hurt in his eyes... on his face. He didn't know how he was going to handle it. And he knew if he hadn't seen them, there was a reason. They had purposefully avoided coming in and out while he was working, or when they knew he'd see them.

Anoriath stood and walked over, handing him the cup of wine. They were both nude. Neither one thinking anything of it. To him, it was no different then being around his brother or any other male. At first, simply because of Fillim's preference, he thought it might be. But there was no attraction
between them. Fillim had told him, that it was nice to be relaxed around another male without worrying over whether or not one of them would get excited, or any expectations would arise.

He'd laughed, he had never had that problem. He was definitely learning a lot having Fillim there. The other side of things. They both had been very interested in him as a friend, though. It was giving them a lot of insight to things they had never known. And an insider's view of the Isles, somewhat. At least from Fillim's perspective.

"I bet I can guess what's on your mind."

Holding his cup, he turned to his side, propping himself up on an elbow, taking a drink. "I don't know... it's a lot."

Anoriath smiled. "Hmmm, lets see. Your past... the twins. Fjolrin? Maybe?"

Fillim let out a deep breath. All of it weighed on his heart. And none of it, he wanted to talk about. But if he was to be honest, it was all three. He was concerned over Fjolrin's actions, all of them. He also knew that Anoriath was his friend. He knew he just wanted what was best. He was trying to help.

Pouring more into his cup, he set the bottle down. "Fillim, I've kept a lot to myself, simply because I don't want you to feel pushed. I know that there is so much that weighs on you right now. But I also know that you need support. You need someone to talk to. And sometimes one that is not so closely involved in what you are going through, can see things that you can't. Do you understand what I'm trying to say?"

Fillim just looked at him, sipping his wine. "I do, and you're not pushing me Anoriath. If you can give me some advice, I'll listen."

He sat up, crossing his legs on the bed, holding his cup. "Right now, I feel lost. All I know is what I feel. And what I feel, is pain. My heart aches! But I'm also confused. Confused over what to do. And all of it is making me fear that if I choose any path, I will hurt more than what I already am."

Setting his cup down, his head bent, he put his hands over his face. He could hear Anoriath coming over to his bed. The bed creaked as the Bosmer sat down next to him.

Folding his own legs, he faced him. "I am so sick of crying Anoriath... so sick of it!"

Even as he spoke his words, tears fell through his hands. "I am so sick of all the struggle... all the pain."

Anoriath knew he was also referring greatly to his past. For his age, the Mer had faced more than some would face in an entire lifetime.

Raising his head up to look at him, his face wet, his expression pulled into a mask of anguish. "Why? Why do I feel so much guilt over leaving! But yet, I felt as if I would be crushed under the weight of it all if I stayed. I am so torn! I don't want to be without them... either of them. But, I don't know if I can take the demands..."

Shaking his head, his eyes clenched shut. He thought it would kill him to even say it. "I don't know if I'm capable of being with both of them." His body shook as he sobbed out. "But to be without either... just the thought, is tearing me apart! I love them both so much! And so differently."

Anoriath laid a comforting hand on his shoulder, just listening. He would be his ear.
Fillim downed his wine, wiping an arm over his face, he stared into his empty cup. "There is only one of me, and sometimes I just don't know if I'm enough. Or if I can handle it. I've never felt safer than when I'm with them. But also..."

He took a deep breath, holding out his cup as Anoriath got up to fill it. "I also felt smothered under it. I long for freedom."

Taking a drink, he shook his head. "And I honestly don't know if I would've felt that, had Farkas eased up some."

Turning his head to the Bosmer, once again sitting next to him. "If he hadn't been so over-protective and let me work and do the things I needed to do. If I hadn't had all the opposition that surrounded me! I don't know. What I do know, is that I feel loss. But I can't go back to the way it was."

Taking a deep breath, Anoriath looked at him. He'd been thinking this, just from what Fillim had told him. He just hadn't said anything till now. "Then maybe what is best, is perhaps for you not be with either?"

Just the pained look on Fillim's face, was enough to make him hold up his hands. "Just hear me out. I know that it wouldn't be easy on any of you. But Fillim, don't you think that it would be better if you were just with one man?"

Setting their cups onto the nightstand. "Look, I know there is no way you can be with one twin and not the other. Not now, after you've been with both. I think I know what that would do to their relationship. I also know, the fact that Farkas saved you. The fact that they started this house over the turmoil at Jorvaskr, and the fact that they are still building it, makes you feel indebted! It makes you feel that you have no other choice."

He thought he would be sick. All of it swam in his mind, overwhelming him. "I love them Anoriath. I am just so confused. I know if I could just have the freedom to live."

"Fillim, look at me... please."

The young Mer looked so scared... so torn. "I am much older than you. I know though, that I haven't been through a fraction of your pain. But, I do know that just trying to make this dual relationship work, isn't the only thing you will have to face down the road. And I don't want to give you more than you already have on your plate. But there is a reason that there aren't too many Mer coupled with Nords. Do you know what I'm referring too?"

Turning his head... he knew. But that didn't mean that he could handle talking about it. "I do... and I don't want to discuss it. Whoever I end up with, I will face that pain when the time comes. It wouldn't sway my decision to leave or stay."

Anoriath just licked his lips. Not only did he understand, but he respected him for it. Not too many would have the strength or the depth of character to make such a stance. Now, on to his next idea. "Alright then, consider this. From what you've told me about Fjolrin, and everything he's said and done. And his visit to you today, it sounds like he's interested. So, wouldn't being with one man, be easier on you than two?"

Fillim took his cup and drained it. "Putting aside the fact that I'd have to break the hearts of the two men that I love very much. Fjolrin doesn't even know what he wants Anoriath. He's conflicted. And I know this, as a male that feels the need to be with males... I know. After everything that he's done, things that he has said to me. He's struggling with it. That also doesn't dissolve the fact, that
he also likes to be with women. He's been with two different women in town. One of them, right there in Jorvaskr!" Holding the cup in his hand, he pointed in the direction of the mead hall.

"I'm not going to... look! Even if he is interested, he's embarrassed by it! He's unsure of how he feels. And that, to a male that knows what he needs... that is comfortable with his choice. That can mean heartbreak. Like I don't have enough of that already. I can't even consider him."

Just looking at him for a moment. "Fillim, I know I'm not accustomed to your ways. But I do know that there are probably many males, that feel the same way that you do. They simply don't have anyone else to talk to over it. I also know, that I've seen female warriors together. That is quite common. In such a cruel land, where death is prevalent around every corner. Many do not want the chance of bringing a child into the mix, when life can be so short. Many out there are living dangerous lives."

Resting his back against the wall, he stretched out his legs. "I realize that."

Anoriath stretched out next to him. "What I'm trying to say is, perhaps he felt this way before he met you and literally didn't have the option of being with a male. It's a huge possibility that because of how the Nords are, with pride and such, that he simply was afraid to approach another male. For a Nord... Gods, Fillim! If he thought another male was interested and it turned out he was wrong. I can't even imagine it. So, perhaps when he saw your relationship with the twins, it gave him hope that he could start to deal with how he felt. That there were others that felt the same way that he did."

Fillim laughed, "I see your point again, Anoriath. But that still doesn't help me with this situation. I can be his friend. But I'm not strong enough right now, or even in a position to be anything else. I can't be his trial run. And that's what I would be. And if he is afraid to admit it to himself, what would I face? What hope would there be for us?"

Not when he had two that he loved dearly, that were not ashamed of how they felt... ashamed of being with him. So much so, that they were willing to take the steps they had taken for their future together.

Giving his shoulder a friendly pat, he stood and walked back over to his bed. Getting under the furs, he turned his head to Fillim. "I do understand what you mean. I do. But take into consideration all that I've said. Take into consideration, that perhaps he's not embarrassed by how he feels, he just may not have ever had any chance to speak on it, and simply doesn't know where to start. Or how to."

Fillim lay down, covering himself up. "Thank you Anoriath... I will."

And he would. He would think it over. But he couldn't consider it... or him. It wasn't an option.

**********

Vilkas stood at the door to the whelps quarters and watched him. Watched him, as he packed. "I know you're standing there, you may as well speak up."

He stepped into the room, stopping behind him. "Alright... I'll speak up. Where are you going? You know we could use your help now that you're on the mend!"

Fjolrin cleared his throat, leaving the duffle on the bed, he turned. "I don't feel it necessary to answer to you Vilkas. But I will tell you... with all that's happened, I feel the need to go and stay at Breezehome. I myself, have a separate home too you know. I understand your need. And Kodlak
knows where I will be if there is a job for me. It'll be no different for the two of you, once your house is complete."

He turned back to his bed, continuing to pack. Vilkas stared into the back of his head. "Are you sure that it's not to be close to Fillim? That being close to him isn't the real reason for you leaving? We were told, you know. You were there to see him today. The guard saw him with his hand in your shirt!"

Fjolrin took in a deep breath, but didn't turn. Throwing things into his pack with more force, "Then you should also know, that I went there to apologize! And the reason he had his hand in my shirt, was to heal me!"

Whirling around, he now faced the shorter twin. Looking down into his cold eyes, he was used to seeing the sneer Vilkas' face almost constantly held, he wasn't intimidated in the least. "You know how the guards are in every town Vilkas. They're bored. They'll spin any tale, just to see things riled up."

Vilkas leaned into his face, the dark haired Nord's icy eyes narrowed... "That doesn't answer all that I said either! He's taken! Stay the hell away from him!"

Huffing out a breath of air in Vilkas' face, he leaned forward. Their noses almost touching. His voice, growing louder with every word. "Now that's funny! Cause I thought that someone leaving, meant that they were available to make their own choices. There is also no mark on him Vilkas! None!"

He took a step forward, moving them both back. "In fact, I have a job for the Greybeards that needs doing. Fillim had offered to make me some new armor. So I guess that means I'll be making another visit to him tomorrow to put in my order!"

Standing his ground against the taller Nord, Vilkas spit his words out! "He's gone because of you! Because of the ones that couldn't accept him here! You know that! Not because he wanted to be available!"

"I have no problem accepting him! I may have been drunk, but I knew exactly what I wanted! I wanted to breed with him. He knew that! Or didn't he tell you! I went to apologize over what I did, that doesn't mean I don't still want him!"

Of course, had he been sober, he would've gone about things differently. He wouldn't have lost control. The blood had just given him more of a push to take what he already wanted.

Vilkas glared at him, his fists clenched up at his sides. "I also know, Vilkas, that if you two hadn't had such a choke hold on him, he may still be here!"

Fjolrin turned, going back to the bed, grabbing the duffle bag and his knapsack. He turned back to him, Vilkas just stood watching him, silent. "You know Vilkas... it's pretty sad when someone has to hide the fact that they want to shoot a bow. If he was so happy here, under your brother's control... under yours... he wouldn't have fought so hard to work for Adrianne! He wouldn't have hidden the fact, that he was taking archery lessons each day before work from Anoriath!"

Standing aside, Vilkas let him pass. He paused in the doorway, turning to him enough to see his face. He wanted to see that the twin knew he meant business. "So, I guess that means, that I'll be seeing him as much as he'll let me, Vilkas."

Fjolrin lowered his voice, "See, I guess the guards are good for something after all. I mean, even
your brother... who was sleeping with him, didn't even know any of what I just told you! But the guards did. What does that mean, Vilkas?! What does it mean, when your lover is keeping things from you?"

Turning away, he walked out. "To me, it means that your lover is unhappy."

As soon as he turned the corner, he was nose to nose with Farkas. They stood, silent... staring into each other's eyes. Fjolrin could feel the pain coming off from him. There was anger too, but mostly pain. Pain and betrayal. Moving around him, he walked toward the stairway doors.

That was the fucking problem! Farkas felt betrayed, and he had no right to! If things had been the way they should be, the Mer could've just told him what he wanted to do and done it! He wouldn't have to answer to him, like he was his damned parent! That was no way to keep someone.

If he was his...

Chapter End Notes

I also know in the last chapter, Telindil seemed to take the fact that Undilar knew, quite well... it is so much to the contrary. You will find out in the chapters to come. And that's all I can say on that for now. Also, things will come to light regarding Fjolrin. I beg for patience. [He's not the asshole, that he seems, which just exacerbates things.]

Lyrics to: If You Were Mine
by: Anouk
Just seeing the look on Fillim's face, and hearing his heart rate increase... he raised his hands, slowly shaking his head as if to reassure the smaller Mer. "I promise on my honor as Dragonborn... I'll not touch you. As a gentleman, just as friends. If you'll join me right here..." gesturing to his home. "We can have a civilized meal and you can take my measurements there, while we talk."

Sucking his lower lip in to bite on it. Just the fact that Fjolrin could feel how he felt, was making him even more nervous. Keeping his voice low, "Just as friends..."

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

***************

There is nothing for me here,
Without you by my side.

Tell me what do I have to do?
Cause I know that I'm good for you.

***************

Vilkas about groaned when his brother walked in. Throwing a hand up to his forehead, he looked up at the ceiling in frustration! Just from the look on his face he could tell that he had heard, if not all of what Fjolrin had said, he'd heard enough. The last days had been rough on them both, but horrible for Farkas.

Now this.

Everything in him felt like it was falling apart. He couldn't have moved fast even if he'd tried. The pain, the sorrow, making it feel like he had weights tied to his feet. But even if it killed him, he had to know if it was true.

Putting a hand to his hip, the other dangling limply at his side. His brother just stood there, waiting for him to get it out. "Did you know? Did you know that he was doing that?"

Vilkas took in a deep breath, rubbing his forehead with his hand. "I knew he was going there in the mornings before work. I didn't know about the archery."

Instantly, he felt like he couldn't get enough air. He turned away, walking to the other end of the room. "You knew... that he was spending time, with..."

Vilkas yelled at him! "YES! I KNEW! and now he's doing more than just having a meal there Farkas! He's living there!"

Walking up to him, he grabbed his arm by the sleeve, turning him roughly! Looking up, he yelled
"Look! When will you learn, Farkas! What's it gonna to take? He's nineteen years old! He didn't need a leash! He needed some damned freedom! And we were too stupid to see that he got it!"

Turning around, he walked across the room, his hands laced into his hair! He didn't know what to do anymore. Both of them were too afraid to even approach the Mer, just to talk to him yet. Out of fear that he wasn't ready. Afraid that it would just push him farther away. He knew Fillim needed time to sort things out. He wanted him to want, to be with them. Not feel like he had to.

Turning back to face his brother, "I'm sorry that I kept it from you. I am. But Farkas... it was all of it combined. It was. And as much as I hate to admit that bastard's right, that's exactly what happened! There was too much pressure all the way around!"

He walked over and sat down onto Fjolrin's bed, dropping his head into his hands.

"Over and over, I thought about what I did. How I forced my way in."

Raising up his head to look at his brother. "I'm sorry brother. I really am." Looking down at his folded hands, "You two had a good thing going between you. If I'd stayed out of it, I don't know if things around here would've been any different or not."

Farkas was completely silent, watching him... listening to him. "But even with that, I can't deny what I feel for him. Just like I couldn't then. Even if I hadn't done what I did, I don't think I could've left him alone. Part of me wants to fight for him. But now I know that he has to be free to choose. We don't own him Farkas, he's not our property. And even if I hadn't pushed my way in, even if he hadn't had all the opposition he had, I honestly think that eventually he'd have felt smothered. I know I'm not without fault here brother. But you're way too possessive, and if we're to ever have another chance with him, you've got to reign that in! Or else it won't work. Him leaving has proven that."

Farkas just looked at him, turning a little to face him. "I know, I kind of claimed everything I guess. As soon as I found him, I felt like he was mine. I just couldn't help it, that's how I felt. Even if it was wrong Vilkas... I couldn't help it. I felt like I had to protect him. And I still feel that way. I do."

Standing up, he straightened his tunic, glancing down at Farkas. "Come on... lets go have a drink, and maybe some smoke, we'll talk it over alright?"

Pushing himself up from the bed, he followed him. "We can talk, but that doesn't mean I'm gonna be alright with Fjolrin wantin' him!"

Vilkas spoke low, as they walked down the hallway to his room. Farkas still hadn't stayed in his own room, not for days now. He'd tried once and ended right back up in there with him. "I'm not alright with it either Farkas, but what it boils down to, is whether or not it's alright with Fillim. And personally, I don't think Fillim is ready to be with anyone just yet. So Fjolrin may just be in for a bit of a shock."

**************

His bare feet pulled up into the chair with him, holding his cup of tea, he smiled as Anoriath sat down to join him. He was ready for work. All he had left to do, was get his boots on and braid his hair.

He loved the Bosmer's morning routine. It helped him prepare for the day. Every morning he had
spent here, he'd left in a good mood.

And just by looking at him, he already knew what was on his Bosmer friend's mind. They had both passed out right after their talk last night. And he felt better. He did. He still felt like he didn't know which course to take, but at least he knew he had support. And, he felt like he had a better grasp on what was going through the Dragonborn's mind. Hopefully.

What it boiled down to, was that right now he wasn't ready to choose anything. He just wanted to be. And in time, without all the pressure, he would be able to follow his heart down the right path.

Anoriath stared into his tea. Even with Fillim smiling at him, he struggled. "Fillim... about last night. I shouldn't have pressured you."

Lifting a foot from his chair, he moved it over to Anoriath's leg and nudged him with his toes. "You didn't pressure me. Everything you said helped me. So please, I don't want you to stop telling me how you feel."

They sipped, both of them thinking. "Thank you... I was worried. I know you already have enough to think on."

Setting his empty cup down, he stood and moved back away from the table to braid his hair. "The fact is, Anoriath... I'm not ready to make a decision yet. My heart is too clouded from pain. And, I need to find myself. I feel like I've just started to live."

Tying it off, he bent down and grabbed his boots. Setting back down, one foot on the chair. "I really don't want to feel like I have to have a mate right now. That doesn't mean that I don't want to have company now and then. But with everything that's happened and what I left. I just... I want to have a clear head and heart, before I make that decision."

He pulled on his other boot. Looking up, Anoriath was smiling at him. "Fillim, that sounds very wise. But whatever you choose to do, we will be here for support. I value our friendship, and I don't want anything to ever change that."

Standing, he took his satchel from the back of the chair and lowered it over his shoulder. Apples and cheese inside, his water skin was full. They took hands. "Thank you. Nothing will change it, I promise."

Fillim stepped out the door, thinking as he made his way down the steps. In fact, he had thought about it since he'd first opened up his eyes that morning. If they could get to a point where he could see them casually. Spend time here and there with each one. Just until he could really say that he was ready.

He could feel like he had freedom. He could work and make his own decisions, and then when he was really ready, if they all still felt that they wanted to be permanent mates, then they could all decide together.

The problem was, he knew how Farkas' mind worked. How his heart worked. And as soon as he opened that door back up, as soon as he let him know that he wanted to spend time with him. He was afraid that the big bear would just take it and run with it. Putting them right back at square one.

That's what terrified him. What he'd do is think it over. There was no rush. Once they'd all had some time, perhaps they would agree to it. Walking toward the smelter, he took off his satchel and set it down against the rain barrel. The sun was just rising. Grabbing onto the chain's handle, he pulled it down to work the bellows. After sitting overnight, it would need a good bit of air to get
the fire pot back up to optimal temperature.

He couldn't help but let out a laugh. Working the chain, he partially turned to see him standing there behind him. "You know, there's no point in sneaking up on me anymore. I know when you're around."

Fjolrin walked around to the side of him. Fillim took note of how he was dressed. Tunic and leggings on, boots. White blond hair, freshly washed and braided.

"Getting to like not having all that heavy armor on?" Quite frankly, he didn't know how any of them that wore it could abide it all the time. Most of the time, everyone at Jorvaskr had it on more often than not. Probably just the thought of being prepared for anything that could possibly happen, he guessed.

"I wasn't trying to sneak, I'm just quiet." He let out a deep breath, as he thought about it. "Yeah, it has been nice to take a break from it. Although that won't be lasting very long."

He didn't know how someone his size could be so quiet. Since that first time he'd snuck up on him in the whelp's quarters, he had pondered over it. But he'd let it rest for now. "You know I'm not able to heal you again for at least another day, your body has to rest."

"That's not why I'm here."

Fillim turned to him, releasing the chain, he picked up a rag and wiped his hands off. "Alright."

Fjolrin put his hands behind his back, clasping them tightly together. "I'd like you to make that armor for me... if the offer still stands."

Now, he was excited. He absolutely loved making something custom for someone. He smiled, showing his perfect, white teeth. Fjolrin's eyes roam over his face, zeroing in on the points of those little fangs. "Wonderful!"

Fjolrin smiled back at him. "I'd like to know what you think is best? What do you recommend for me?"

Fillim's face lit up even more and he tried not to stare, he really did, but he just couldn't help himself. The Mer was a sight to be sure! Just looking at him, and seeing how pleased he was made him chuckle.

Fillim's hands went to his hips. "Well... I think Ebony for sure. You've already got the weaponry to match and it's much stronger. You'd be well protected."

Laughing at his own words, his face flushing as he remembered their conversation out in the street that night. But every word he spoke was true, and after all, his job as a Smith was a warrior's protection, wasn't it? He cleared his throat, looking momentarily down at the ground, "And I do think it would suit you better."

Fjolrin smiled big, showing his teeth, recalling the same conversation. "Then Ebony it is... whatever the cost, I've got the coin. When can you have it ready for me?"

Fillim bit at his lip, looking at the supply of ingots they had. He'd checked the inventory again yesterday. Made the order last week. Today he was just doing repairs and small jobs due to their lack of metals. "Well, I'm working a short day today... we're expecting a shipment of ingots tomorrow. I could start on it then. It would take me a couple of days at least. And I'll have to get your measurements..."
He paused, worrying the fabric of his leggings with his fingers. "Um... Unless you'd rather have Adrianne take them, that'd be fine too."

"No, that's fine, you can do it." The thought of him being that close sounded fine... real fine. He swallowed, forcing himself to keep his eyes on the Mer's. "But, I have a favor to ask... and I don't want you to think I'm being too bold..."

Fillim pulled the chain again, but his eyes remained on the Nord. Too nervous to ask, he just nodded.

Fjolrin's voice lowered and he stepped a little closer. "You don't have to be nervous Fillim. I'll not try to do anything against your wishes. But, I would like to talk to you in private. Over dinner."

Just seeing the look on Fillim's face and hearing his heart rate increase, he raised his hands, slowly shaking his head as if to reassure the small Mer. "I promise on my honor as Dragonborn, I'll not touch you. As a gentleman... just as friends. If you'll join me right here..." gesturing to his home. "We can have a civilized meal and you can take my measurements there, while we talk."

Sucking his lower lip in to bite on it. Just the fact that Fjolrin could feel how he felt, was making him even more nervous. Keeping his voice low, "Just as friends..."

Fjolrin nodded, "Just as friends."

Feeling the heat flooding through his face, "I'm off just after midday. What time do you want me there?"

Fjolrin stared at him, all too aware of the color that was now rising up in his own cheeks. Even though he'd promised it just as friends, he still felt just like a lad that was asking out the first one he'd ever been sweet on. "How about dusk."

Fillim smiled, looking away into the forge. "Alright... dusk. Anything I should bring?"

Fjolrin started backing up, still watching him, and completely unable to wipe the smile off his face, "Just yourself, and a measure line."

He nodded, feeling the urge to giggle and bringing a hand up to hide his smile. He felt like an idiot. Turning, Fjolrin was gone.

*******

Adrianne took over after midday meal. Politely refusing to eat, he had munched on his apple and cheese earlier in the day. He knew Fjolrin planned for them to eat together, he would need his appetite. If he wasn't so nervous, that he couldn't eat.

Anoriath came into the bedroom, holding a bottle of mead. "Dinners almost ready."

He stepped in, looking at him. Fillim was dressed in a completely new outfit. Dark charcoal grey breeches, and a tunic that actually almost matched the color of his eyes, and black boots. His hair washed and tied back. He was pacing back and forth through the room, wringing his hands together. He paused, looking out the window at the sun... it was getting low. "I'm having dinner with Fjolrin."

He turned around. Anoriath was standing there, his eyes wide, his mouth open. Fillim walked up to him and stopped. He looked absolutely terrified. "I need your help. I don't know if I'm doing the
right thing."

Pulling him over to the nearest bed, they sat down. Anoriath's mouth curved up into a grin. Even with as nervous as Fillim seemed, he couldn't help but smile. The Mer looked magnificent! "Well, what's the problem?"

Putting a hand to his chest, he licked his lips, looking back out the window. It was almost time to leave. "I'm so nervous, but I'm excited too." He looked down at the floor. "Anoriath, I feel guilty. I'm betraying them."

Putting a hand to his arm, "Fillim... is this a date?"

He shook his head. "No, we said just as friends. He promised. He just wants to talk."

The Bosmer watched his face, really watched it. "Then how is it betrayal Fillim?"

What he wanted to remind him of, was the fact that they weren't really together anymore. But even with that, he understood how he felt. He still cared. He still had some hope. And then of course, there was their talk this morning.

It was time to go, he didn't want to keep him waiting. Standing, he took a deep breath and looked down at him. "How I feel is betrayal, Anoriath. The excitement I feel. I've never been asked to have dinner with anyone. It was always expected. And he was excited. He was excited when he asked me. I could see it in him."

Turning his gaze toward the sunset, he himself had been excited. He had been flattered. *Had been... who was he trying to fool! He was still excited! He was flattered!* Those feelings, made him feel like he was betraying them. But he still wanted the feelings, even as much as he didn't.

Anoriath stood and followed him to the doors. "Just relax Fillim, it's only dinner with a friend."

As soon as the Mer was out the doors, all he could think was, *It's just dinner... until it becomes something else.*

Elrindir leaned onto the counter, his golden locks falling around his face. "Fillim's got a date?"

He turned. "He said it's just as friends... dinner with Fjolrin."

Pushing off the counter, Elrindir walked around toward the table Jenassa was sitting at. They would dine with her tonight. He sat down. "Sounds like a date to me."

The Dunmer's deep, sultry voice, chimed in. "What I wouldn't give, to be a fly..." she chuckled. A wicked looking grin on her grey face.

Chapter End Notes

Lyrics to: If You Were Mine by: Anouk
Slap In The Face IV

Chapter Summary

Raising his eyes to Fillim. The Mer's mouth was hanging slack, his eyes wide.

"Fillim... when I looked into those green eyes of his..." raising up his hand, like he was touching something that only he could see. "When I touched his soft, golden skin, his ears... wrapping my hands into his hair. Hair, that felt just like silk..." lowering his hand, his vision seemed to clear.

"When I kissed his lips. When I tasted him. I felt like I was alive for the first time ever! I knew finally, what I had been needing and had lacked."

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Tell me what do I have to do?
Cause I know that I'm good for you.

************
The whole way down the stairs, he was consumed by a flood of mixed emotions. The walk not long enough. Not short enough.

Putting a hand to his mouth, he couldn't stop from smiling, feeling he must look like a fool. Knowing he had to try and reign it in, and knowing that it wouldn't make a bit of difference. Fjolrin would feel it all. He would be able to smell and taste the excitement, and every other cursed feeling that was running rampant through him.

He was terrified.

Taking a deep breath, he raised his hand and knocked.

The door opened up. Fjolrin stood to the side, behind the door raising a hand, inviting him into the room. Silently, he stood back behind him and watched as the Mer took it in.

His hands raised back up to his mouth. Almost as much to cover his smile, as to just admire the small house. It was so cozy. So warm and inviting. The wonderful aroma of pheasant stew, hit him full force. Two chairs had been sat close to the fire pit, facing each other, with a foot stool in the middle. So they could sit and talk while having their feet up.

A low table sat to one side, holding goblets and an intricately decorated clay jar. Two bowls were stacked with spoons inside. A loaf of bread had been sliced and lay on a plate. And Gods, he could smell the herbed goat cheese from where he stood. He absolutely loved it!

With his hands still up to his mouth, he turned and gasped.

His mouth dropped. His eyes couldn't believe what they were seeing. Fjolrin stood behind him, and all he could do was stare at him. Take him in.
He had cut his hair.

White blonde curls, framed the Nord's face, hanging down onto his neck. And his face was bare. Completely unaware, his hands dropped down to his sides, his mouth hanging open. He slowly shook his head, as he took in one of the most handsome men he had ever seen.

He couldn't believe it was the same person. He could actually see him for the first time. High cheekbones, full lips and a jawline that just begged to be touched... stroked. Slightly arched eyebrows, over those pale blue eyes. Eyes that looked like the sky on a clear Mid-Year's day.

In those few minutes, with what he had felt since he'd first met him, and how it had compounded every time he'd been around him. Then coming to a head that night in the kitchen, he knew he was in trouble.

It took a few minutes for him to pull his eyes away enough to even notice what he was wearing. Light blue tunic, over tan leggings. The blue of the shirt, making his eyes just stand out all the more. Finally, finding it in himself to close his mouth, he swallowed. Fjolrin slowly walked toward him.

Fillim's voice, so low. "You... you cut your hair..."

The Nord smiled big, spreading his arms out to show himself off. "Aye... I did."

Fillim stood there, lips slightly open, as he just shook his head. "I... I just can't believe it's you. You look so different."

Fjolrin approached, until he stood directly in front of the small Mer. Looking down at him, he tilted his head. His deep voice, soft. "Is that a good thing? Or a bad thing?"

His face instantly flushed, he could feel the warmth radiating off from it. Trying to get his breathing under control, he lowered his gaze away from the Nord's, looking down at their feet. He could barely find his voice. "It's good."

Whispering down to the Mer, he knew he was pushing the boundaries, he just couldn't help it. Everything that came out of his mouth was the truth. "You look amazing Fillim."

Gods, the color of his tunic, the way it showed off his eyes. The contrast against his golden olive skin. His deep red hair. All he could do was take him in. Take him in, and pray to the Gods, that he wasn't setting himself up for more anguish. He knew even getting involved with this Mer, it was a gamble at best.

Fillim looked down at their feet, licking his lips. "Thank you."

He was screwed. He knew the Nord could feel everything he felt. Even if he kept his promise to not touch him, to be a gentleman. Even if Fillim denied him with his lips. He would know. He would know that Fillim wanted him.

Finally getting his bearings and noticing that Fjolrin was barefooted, he kicked off his boots. Not looking back up at his face, for fear that he would give anymore away than he already was. He moved around him and set them by the door. Turning around, Fjolrin now stood by the cooking pot that hung over the fire and was busy stirring a flour mixture into the stew. "Come, have a seat. It'll be ready in a few minutes."

Covering it back up, he sat down, watching as Fillim took the seat across from him. Picking up a small knife, he took hold of the jar and set it in his lap, working the seal around the lid to loosen
the wax. His blue eyes flashed up to Fillim's and he let out a breath. "I was starting to wonder if you would stand me up?"

His face was absolutely on fire, his hands latched onto the arm rests of the chair. He was glued to him. Giving his head a brief shake, he bit at his lip. "No."

He looked away, thinking there was no use in trying to hide everything from him. The night would just be ungodly stressful if he did. So, taking a deep breath, he looked back at him. "I wouldn't do that. I'm sorry if I was late."

Fjolrin just sat there holding the jar, listening to him. The Mer gave a brief look into his lap, then back up to him. The blush on his face just making him even more beautiful. "To be completely honest, Fjolrin... I was nervous. But, I still am glad that you asked me."

Taking the knife to the jar once more, "That's some of what I wanted to talk to you about. What I did, and why..." letting out a deep breath, "It's complicated. But, I'd like us to eat first. Have some drink and relax. Then we'll talk, alright?"

Fillim nodded, watching him work at the jar. That would be fine with him. Even with wanting to know what it would all entail, he was starved, and he was starting to feel a little more at ease.

Finally cutting the lid free, he poured, what had to be the most aromatic liquid he had ever smelled, into their goblets. He couldn't help but close his eyes and take a breath in through his nose. It was literally making his mouth water.

Fjolrin watched him, smiling. "Sujamma. I see you've never had it?"

Fillim just shook his head, picking up his goblet. "No, I've heard of it. But I've never had a chance to." Jenassa at the Huntsman, had often spoke of it, but had never brought any in. From what she said, it was very hard to get in Skyrim, and very expensive when you could find it.

Fjolrin picked his up, watching Fillim as they both took a sip. Fillim holding it with both hands, swishing it lightly through his mouth, he swallowed. Looking back up, the heat in his ears just from the one swallow making him realize that he could definitely get used to this, and fast! It was excellent tasting and powerful. He liked it.

Fjolrin set his down and stood to dish up their stew. Handing Fillim his first and then getting his own. As soon as he sat, they dug in. He couldn't believe how good it was, actually rivaling his own.

The ingredients, the herbs, those that a Mer would use to cook with. Savoring each bite, he reached over taking a piece of the bread. As soon as he moved it, revealing a small pile of greens sitting on the platter. He stopped, looking closer at them. He couldn't believe it! Resting the bowl on his lap, he looked up at Fjolrin. He couldn't believe that he would go to such lengths to make him happy!

Lifting the greens with his fingers... "That's Sorrel, and Purslane. How did you find these? I've looked everywhere since I've been here! I can't find it anywhere."

Fjolrin just chuckled. "I'll tell you once we've eaten. Be a patient Mer and enjoy the food, will you?"

Fillim laughed. He couldn't believe how he was sporting with him! All it did was make him want to be all the more playful. Taking some of each herb, he lay them atop the bread that was already covered in the herbed goat cheese and took a bite. Gods! A taste of home!
Closing his eyes, letting the flavors marry on his palate. The goat cheese, taming the lemony bitterness of the Sorrel just enough. The fresh, almost clovery, slightly lemony flavor of the purslane, just bringing out the best of both!

Both were so good with any foul, and a blessing to fish. Even with beef and venison, their Elven herbs just couldn't be topped by any other!

Fjolrin reached over, a smile on his face as he watched him, taking a bit of his own and mixing them right into his bowl. Fillim watched him as the Nord mashed them with his spoon, getting the juices out and into the stew.

Setting down their empty bowls, Fjolrin patted him on the leg. "Here, put your feet up and relax with me."

Resting his feet on the footstool next to Fjolrin's, his goblet resting on his thigh. "I am now, more confused over you than ever, Fjolrin. You are a complete mystery to me."

He took a sip and Fjolrin stayed quiet, listening to him. "First, you condemn me as a spy, then you have Ria..." he sat forward. The heat rising up again into his face and ears. A mixture of his drink loosening his tongue, along with the subject. His temper rising. "Whom you were sleeping with at the time... to gather information on me! Then, you attack me... only to ask me to dinner."

Sitting back, he lifted the goblet, taking a long drink. Resting his gaze upon the Nord, the Nord that now held his interest above all others. And just that alone, was incredibly frustrating to him. "Only to serve me an Elven meal."

His eyes would betray him and he fought against it! "When I have missed my homeland so! You dare to serve me this! After you have acted like you hated me? When I thought you were nothing more than a Mer hater!"

Looking away, he was finished. He had nothing more to say, but he did want answers. Fjolrin was completely quiet through his entire rant, watching him.

Lifting the jar, to pour them both some more, "At first, I have to admit Fillim, I was suspicious of you. With everything that is happening here, for them to send you off with a Justiciar. It just didn't set right. It didn't."

Their jars filled, he sat back, watching the Mer as he drank it down. He could tell he liked it, and they may have to back off a little or he'd be carrying him home. Of course, he wouldn't mind that either. But...

"When the Thalmor no longer see a need for someone, they don't just give them a cozy send off. It's just not their way."

Fillim set the empty goblet down. Reclining in the chair, feet up... he was feeling good, feeling loose. Enough so that he could be even more free with his tongue. "I didn't wonder over it. I was too busy being distraught over everything that had just happened to me." He laughed.

Fjolrin finished his off and sat it down next to Fillim's. Letting out a deep breath, he folded his hands across his middle. "Yeah... I know. And I can only imagine what you've been through Fillim. So I won't make you relive it by talking about it. After a bit, I did come to the conclusion that you weren't."

Worrying his bottom lip, "What I was though, was torn over how I was starting to feel about you."
Now he knew he was going to finally get some answers, and that worried him. As much as he wanted to know, a part of him didn't. All that it meant was, he was going to have to deal with how he, himself was feeling. More complication.

"I am not a Mer hater, Fillim. I fixed you this meal, because not only did I know that it would appeal to you. But, this is how I prefer to eat. And I learned it from a Mer, that I was once very close to."

Fillim's eyes were glued to him. He looked down at his lap, then back up to him. "What I'm going to tell you, I've never talked to anyone about. Not even the Mer that I was involved with. But I feel the need to be open with you, and I'd like to try and do things the way I should've from the very start."

He stared down at his hands, "From the time I was younger than you, I had an interest in males. It actually took me a long time to even realize, that my admiration, when I would see a male that I thought was attractive. The urges I felt, when I was traveling or spending time with others, and we bathed or did anything that males all do when they are with each other. What it was, that I was actually feeling."

Reaching over, he poured the last of the sujamma into their goblets, taking his, just to have something in his hands, just to ease himself. "That, coupled with the fact that it took me years to be with a female. And when I was, it was just to relieve so much pent up need. The entire time, my mind would be... not on her. Not on the one that I was with. But, on whatever male that had caught my fancy last. Or perhaps the one that I really wanted, and was just too afraid to approach."

Taking a drink, he laid his head back, staring up at the ceiling as if seeing it all replayed there. "Several years ago, I was traveling alone through Skyrim. I came upon a mage. An Altmer. He was under attack and was fighting for his life. A small group of necromancers were trying to kill him, for whatever reason, I didn't know. I fought them and killed the remaining two, then I tended to his wounds."

Raising his head, he looked at Fillim. "It was getting dark, so I got him up onto my horse and we found a place to make camp for the night. In fact, it was what was left of a ruined tower. Good, dry shelter. I started a fire. He was wet and freezing, so I helped him out of his robes, and got out of my wet gear as well. Hung it all over some old wooden railing to dry by the fire. I knew that my natural heat would aid him. I knew the Mer wasn't made for the cold. And I pulled his bare body against mine into the bedroll, bundling the extra furs around us."

Letting out a deep breath, he took another drink. "He snuggled right into me, and it took everything I had, to do the right thing and not let my hands wander. It took me hours to fall asleep. All I could do, was think about how good he felt against me, and what I wanted to do with him... to him. How beautiful he was. I woke to him nuzzling my neck, and my ear. His arm around me, his hand stroking over my back, down to my backside. I woke to find him doing all the things that I myself, had longed to do to him and had been too afraid."

Raising his eyes to Fillim. The Mer's mouth was hanging slack, his eyes wide.

"Fillim, when I looked into those green eyes of his..." raising up his hand, like he was touching something that only he could see. "When I touched his soft, golden skin, his ears... wrapping my hands into his hair. Hair that felt just like silk..." lowering his hand, his vision seemed to clear.

"When I kissed his lips. When I tasted him, I felt like I was alive for the first time ever! I knew finally, what I had been needing and had lacked."
Swallowing, he looked back down into his lap. His face full of the emotion his memories carried. "We didn't speak... we just made love. I didn't even find out his name until the next day. He stayed with me. We traveled and lived together for the better part of half a year. We never talked about how things started between us... it just was. And I had never been so happy, ever! He taught me his ways. How to prepare Elven cuisine, how to grow the herbs that he loved. He guided me in restoration, honing my skills. And I fell in love with his ways, the same way that I fell in love with him."

Taking in the last of his drink, he set the goblet onto his leg, staring down into the emptiness. "One morning I woke and he was gone. Gone, along with all of his things. At first, I wanted to believe it was foul play. But in my heart, I knew. I just... he had left me nothing! Nothing to remember him by. I felt like I had woken to a slap in the face."

Letting out a bit of a laugh. "The only thing I had, were the seedlings of his herbs in a growing pot. That was it. I suffered over what to do. I loved him so. But I also knew that if he really felt for me, the way that I did for him, he wouldn't have left me. Not the way that he did. And that... that hurt me more than anything."

He looked up at Fillim, "I've been alone ever since. The only time I've been with someone, was when I was so sick of my own hand that I couldn't take it anymore. Found a couple of male whores in Cyrodil, and spent a few nights with them. But here... Fillim. Here, things are different. The men here... Nord and Mer alike, they are quiet about their needs and wants."

Staring into Fillim's eyes, "When I realized that you were with them. That you all were open about how you felt and what you wanted, I was not only afraid but I longed for what you had! I felt like I was starving and had just found sustenance. I didn't want to get between you. I didn't... but the more I was around you, the more I wanted you."

Lowering his feet to the floor, he leaned forward to clasp his hands together, his elbows on his knees. His head tilted as he looked at him, his face so full of desperation. He needed for him to understand so badly. "I could never see myself with a Nord. Not after loving him and learning his ways... a Mer's ways. I won't ever want want anyone other than a Mer, Fillim. And when... I got the blood, all I could think about was you. You and them... and how they were smothering you. How unhappy I could feel that you were. I also realized that it was them that you wanted, and not me. I was angry and I got drunk."

Running his hands through his hair, he stood up, walking around the fire. Then he turned to face him. "Then... oh then... I could smell what I had been wanting! Every need that had been brewing inside of me, had become increased a hundred times over! When I smelled you in the kitchen, I thought I would lose my mind! I wanted you so badly!"

Fjolrin turned away, facing the door, his hands on his hips. Fillim couldn't even move. He couldn't believe what he was hearing. "And you smelled like him. I knew that he had been with you. Inside of you, and I couldn't take it. I lost control!"

Slowly, he turned back around to face him. Regret, etched across his face. "I am so sorry, Fillim. So sorry, for what I did. That is not the man that I am... " he shook his head, "I would never take another by force. That's why when you healed me, I couldn't face you. The shame all but killing me, and knowing that you didn't want to be there. Knowing you wanted your freedom, and that I had probably just ruined any chance that I ever had of you even considering me. And I couldn't tell you. I couldn't admit it to you yesterday. I so wanted to... but, I was afraid of the outcome."

Fillim stood up, walking to him. He didn't know what to say. He was so overwhelmed. So flattered. Speechless.
He had always been forced, or told what would happen. Even with the twins, he hadn't had time to even think, before sex had entered into it. Then, the situation with Vilkas. And him, not having anyplace else to go. Still not emotionally healed from having to leave Tarenen. Still fighting his feelings for Anariil, and all that entailed.

Now, for one such as Fjolrin, to practically beg him. To plead with him for his favor. That, coupled with everything that he already was struggling with, he had to move carefully. Slowly. He had to really think about what he was doing.

Fjolrin looked down at him, his hands grasping onto his hips just for something to hold onto. He was struggling. "I didn't tell you this for sympathy. I told you, because I needed to beg your forgiveness. I'd get down onto my knees, if you would only give me a chance, Fillim. As slow as you need to go. I want to be your friend. But I won't lie... I want more. Whatever you need, I'll do it. You'll have freedom with me. I'll go hunting with you. I'll do whatever you want... just please, give me a chance."

Fillim reached over to him and took his hands away from his hips, holding them. The look on Fjolrin's face almost broke him. The Nord was so afraid.

Fjolrin swallowed, closing his eyes. Fearful of what was coming. Fearful of how it would hurt to have any hope he had taken away.

"I have no words... Fjolrin. I am... " he lowered his face to look at the floor between them, he could barely say how he felt. "I know that you can feel how I feel. I know you feel that my own interest in you is there. But right now, I am so conflicted. I'm just not ready to be anything more than friends. Not right now. It wouldn't be fair to any of us. Do you understand?"

He swallowed, nodding his head. Relieved that at least, he hadn't been completely shot down. If they were at least friends, then there was a possibility of something more down the road. "I understand, and I'll settle for friends for as long as you need, Fillim."

Feeling better, Fillim smiled. At least he knew where they both stood. Biting on his bottom lip, they stood there holding hands. He could feel the fire coming back up into his face. It took everything he had to look him in the eye and say it. "I would like to see you again... but, just as friends. Maybe tomorrow?"

A huge grin spread across Fjolrin's face! "How about dinner tomorrow night. You could help me cook, if you'd like."

Laughing, Fillim released his hands, looking down at the floor. "That sounds good... I'd like that."

Stepping away from him, he pulled the measure line from his pocket. "But for now, I need to measure you. Then I need to go. I've got an early morning."

Fjolrin nodded, going to the corner table, he pulled out a piece of parchment and a stick of charcoal.

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With the measurements done, he folded up the parchment and stuck it in his pocket. They stood at the door, facing each other. Both flushed, nervous and fidgeting, not knowing what to say. Fillim, looked down at his feet, his teeth dragging over his upper lip. His voice, coming out as a whisper. "I... I had a nice time. Thank you for dinner Fjolrin."

Letting out a deep breath, he wanted to touch him so bad. But, he'd keep his promise. He wouldn't
do anything without the Mer's consent. "Thank you for coming, and for hearing me out. Go on now, and get some rest. I'll be thinking about tomorrow."

Knowing one of them had to make a move, he stood back and opened the door. As soon as the door was fully open, Farkas's goodnight died in his throat. Both of them stood in the doorway, looking out onto the stone walkway... at Farkas. The three of them stood there, frozen... staring at each other.

Figuring it couldn't get any worse, Fillim finally walked out. Fjolrin stood in the doorway behind him, his arm leaning onto the framework. Farkas was quiet, watching him as he approached. Fillim's heart raced. "Farkas... I... we're... just friends! You have to know-"

Looking up at Fjolrin, then back to the Mer, he backed away. A disgusted look on his face, and underneath... the hurt, the betrayal... would be buried in his rage! He held up his hands, stopping the Mer. "Save it, Fillim! " lowering his voice, he glared at him, stopping Fillim dead in his tracks! "It don't matter anyways! I'm not your fuckin' keeper anymore!"

Fillim gasped! Recoiling, he stepped back like he'd been struck! Fjolrin stepped out into the street, grabbing onto the Mer's arms as he lunged after Farkas! Raising his voice, "Keeper! You!"

Holding him back, he watched as Farkas turned his back on them and walked away, his fists clenched at his sides. "Shhh, Fillim! Come on, we can't do this! Not out here!"

Fillim pulled free from his grasp, running up the steps to the Huntsman. Fjolrin ran after him.

***********

The doors burst open! Sitting in Jenassa's small alcove, they all watched wide eyed, as Fillim ran in with Fjolrin hot on his heels. They stared at each other silently, as the bedroom door slammed shut.

Fjolrin stood at the door, as Fillim stalked to the window... his hands, tangled into his hair! "Keeper! Keeper! How could he..."

Looking skyward, he cried out in frustration! Even with tears flowing down his face, Fjolrin could feel the anger and powerlessness that he felt. He sat down on the bed, holding his head in his hands, looking down at the floor. Everything in him wanted to scream out! To break something!

"Fillim... he said that out of anger. He's upset... jealous. That's not what he really feels."

Even with what he wanted, he wouldn't do anything to further the Mer's hurt. He knew things would have to run their course. The Mer would have to choose with a clear head, who he wanted in the end. Fillim looked up at him... standing up, he got up onto the bed and stood there, looking at him. "He said what he felt, Fjolrin! And if that's how he feels, then perhaps I should start saying how I feel! And... I want you to kiss me!"

It seemed like it took him a whole minute to close his mouth. He walked slowly toward the bed, talking low. "Fillim, now... you're upset. You're hurting and angry. Please, I want you to want me when you're ready. Not out of revenge. Not like this."

It wasn't only that. He knew he wouldn't be able to stand getting hurt, should the Mer decide to go back to them. He was already taking a big enough chance as it was.

Getting up and standing on the bed, was the only way they could be face to face. He grabbed hold of the Nord's tunic, pulling him closer. "I know you feel how I feel. You know what I want. I want you! You could feel it yesterday... tonight, the whole time I was there. Fjolrin, you could feel it
before you were one of them. I know you could."

Dragging his eyes all over the Mer's face... his breath, coming harder and harder. Just feeling the Mer's fingers, fisted up in his shirt... so close, his scent was driving him wild. "I could... I could feel it. But you weren't mine. I know that you want me... but... I also know that you're confus-

Fillim's mouth came down onto his, cutting off his words! Wrapping his arms around him, he pulled the Mer in... groaning into the kiss! Gods! His tongue, sliding over the Mer's... lips, so soft. His taste, like a drug. Putting one foot, up onto the bed, he tangled his hands into Fillim's braided hair and pulled him in till he was molded between his thighs. Strands hung down around his face as he pulled Fillim's head back. Looking at him... breathless... Fillim's lips parted, his eyes heavy. He could barely pull away far enough to speak.

"How is it, Mer. That I can have the strength to take down a Dragon. And yet, just being in your presence, makes me weak?"

Pulling against the Nord's hands, he brushed their lips together... whispering against him. "Don't leave... please..." his hands working their way, into all those blonde curls, he pushed against him... bringing their mouths back together.

Knocking at the door, made them part. Fillim took hold of his shirt once more, keeping him close. He spoke, but his eyes remained on Fjolrin. "I'll be out in a minute..."

Hearing footsteps as they walked away. He knew he couldn't stay, this wasn't just his room. Fjolrin held him, his hands softly moving over his back. "Fillim, you have no idea how I'd love that. But if I don't leave now, I won't be strong enough to leave you here. I'll carry you back to my home, and to my bed."

Fillim's mouth met his, moving away just briefly. "Then take me..."

Resting his forehead against the Mer's. "Gods... Fillim. Please don't make me do this. You're not ready and neither am I... please, lets take our time. I want to do this right. I beg you..."

A thundering roar split through the night sky outside. Their eyes both widened in unison. Fjolrin backed up, looking out through the window. It came again. The sound of it seeming to rattle the very foundations of the building around them.

All Fillim's hairs stood on end. He looked at him in fear, panic rising up in his chest! "What's happening? Fjolrin!"

They could hear it through the smoke slats, getting louder and louder. He was close to the city walls. Too close!

"He's calling me out."

Chapter End Notes

Lyrics ~ If You Were Mine by: Anouk
Farkas stepped forward... Fillim's eyes combed over him. His leggings were ripped up and the laces were torn, no cloth underneath. The ebony hair that ran down his stomach surrounding his manhood was completely visible and he was hard.

All he could do was gawk at him. The giant Nord's cock was so hard, that even through the leather, he could see a perfect outline of it coming off to the side. The bare tip of the head was just visible above the edge of his waistband.

**Chapter Notes**

Rough times ahead... don't give up on me.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

**********

Just one beat of your heart
And stranger than fantasy
I knew from the start
It had to be the place for me
Someone that I would die for
There's no way I could ever leave.

Is your love strong enough
Like a rock in the sea
Am I asking too much
Is your love strong enough?

**********

Taking Fillim by the arms, he looked into his eyes. "Stay here! Don't leave. Do you hear me!"

Fillim's mouth fell open as his hands dug into Fjolrin's tunic! "No! You can't fight him! You're not even completely healed yet!"

Fjolrin pried the Mer's hands off, holding onto them. "I'm not going out there Fillim. I'm going to Jorvaskr. This has gone far enough! He's going to expose them over a jealous tirade! Kodlak needs to know. If he doesn't already."

The roaring had stopped. He had to get there... now, he needed to know what was going on! What was going through Farkas' head! Especially after he'd said what he did. Deep down... he knew.

Walking toward the door, he wanted another kiss... he did. But what they had already shared... it
wasn't right. It was simply due to Fillim's anger. Even if the Mer was attracted to him, he wouldn't have done what he had if the circumstances were different. And he knew that. He knew that Fillim's heart was torn. "Get some rest... alright? Everything will work out."

Fjolrin walked out, Fillim on his heels. Anoriath and his brother, stood at the counter, their eyes wide, watching them... silent. Jenassa sat in her little alcove, taking it all in as Fillim followed him to the doors.

The doors closed in his face. He stood there... looking at them, his mind flooded with everything that had just happened. He looked down at the floor, swallowing. His hand came up to his mouth touching his lips. Raising a hand up to brace himself against the door, loose strands of hair falling into his face, his shoulders trembled as he let out a cry!

He felt like everything in him was dying. What he was doing... what he had just done.

Anoriath came to him, wrapping an arm around him. "Fillim come... please... lets have a drink and we'll talk about it."

In all honesty, he didn't know what to do for him. None of them knew what was happening. He just knew that whatever it was, Fillim was in even farther over his head now, than he was before. He could feel it.

That horrible roar split through the air! His grasp tightened on Fillim as they all froze, waiting. His brother's eyes met his. They knew what that sound belonged to.

Fillim tore from his arms and burst through the doors!

He had to talk to him! He had to calm him down and get him to stop this madness! If something happened to him or anyone else because of him, he didn't know what he would do.

Immediately halted by his brother's hand on the neck of his tunic, Anoriath turned to him red faced! Pointing at the doors, "You know what's out there! We can't-"

Elrindir just shook his head, now latching tightly onto his arm, making sure that he didn't follow. "And you know that he won't leave the city! You've got to let him work out his own troubles! As hard as it may be."

**********

Fillim ran toward the gates. There was only one guard standing watch. The other, was probably out front with the other two, worrying over making sure that the thing outside their walls, didn't get any closer.

The guard stepped in front of him, stopping him. "Halt! City's locked down, Elf! Problem outside the gates!"

Taking his arm, he swiped it across his face trying to dry his tears. Panic ran through him. Gods, if Farkas was hurt or killed... if they were found out!

Holding out his arms in pleading, "My... my horse, it's out there! I don't want anything to happen to it! Just let me go to the stables and check on it! Please! I'll come right back in, I promise!"

The guard just stood there for a moment, watching him, quiet. "Look, I paid a lot for her! You can understand that... can't you? Please..."
Standing aside, the guard pointed in his face. "Quick there and back! You get tore up over a horse, it's not on my head!"

The guard cracked the gate just enough for him to get out, speaking to the others huddled around. "Elfs going to the stables... let him pass."

Once he got out over the walkway and outside of the wall, he looked around into the night. The feeling that he had just done something real stupid, hit him full force. Slowly, he walked to the stables, not knowing what to do. He couldn't call out to him, and he didn't dare go too far lest he risk his life.

The horses had evidently calmed. The Khajiit caravan was still camped out front. Of course, their tent flaps were closed and warriors stood guard. But no more sounds had been heard. Which just made him wonder what Farkas might be doing. If he was back at Jorvaskr, or if he was actually fighting with Fjolrin over him. It seems if they were fighting, there would be noise. But there wasn't.

Thinking about that, just brought back what he'd said to him out in the street. 'Keeper...' Is that what he'd been? Is that what he was? His keeper?

That statement alone, was enough to jolt him from the pity fest that he'd been enveloped in. Springing forth, came an abundance of things he'd never felt before. Complete offense! Rage and resentment. Bitterness.

He stood there in the dark, pondering these new feelings. As long as he could remember, he'd only felt the longing he'd had for his father's love and acceptance. His sadness over the fact that he would probably never have that, and the helplessness at the fact, that even as he was aware of his situation, it didn't absolve him of that need. He would always need it.

Everything he'd felt for Anariil and Tarenen. The fact that he'd spent his entire life, with his mind just accepting the fact that he was a slave. Someone else's property. He'd never known anything else! And now, for that horrible word to come out his savior's mouth!

Taking in a deep breath, he walked to the far side of the stables. Putting a hand to the outer wall, he looked down at the ground, scuffing it with his foot.

"You're not too smart, comin' out here alone!"

Before he could scream, a hand clamped down hard over his mouth! He was pulled back against a huge body. The other arm of his assailant, coming around his shoulders, pinning his arms down!

Just from his scent and the sound of his voice, he could tell who it was. The panic that had risen in him slowly left. Farkas' hot breath, flooding into his ear as he whispered. "Sendin' you out to deal with me... that's a coward's way!"

Pushing away from him, Fillim turned, taking him in. The Nord stood there, only in leggings... bare chested and barefooted. His skin glistened in the moonlight, like it was wet. "He didn't send me out! He doesn't know I'm even out here!"

Farkas leaned back against the wall, crossing his arms over his chest. "Then you're even more a fool than I thought! You could've been killed Fillim! And no one would know!"

Fillim stood back, his fists clenched, yelling up at him in a whispered voice! "He knew it was you! He's gone to Jorvaskr to talk to Kodlak, Farkas!"
Not seeming to care, Farkas looked him up and down. "Nice outfit! You get it just for him!"

As soon as the Mer's hand came up, he caught it and held it! Fillim huffed out a breath, ripping away from his grasp. "No! I didn't! I just wanted some new clothes..."

Farkas didn't even speak, acting like Fillim hadn't said anything. Pushing away from the wall, he grabbed his arm, pulling him along! He opened the stable gates, pulling out his brother's horse, he climbed up and hoisted the Mer onto the back behind him. "You're comin' with me. I've got something to show you!"

Fillim held on as they rode, pushing his face into Farkas' back. He didn't want to look. He knew where they were going and he didn't want to see.

He knew why Farkas was doing this. He wanted him to see what they were doing for him... for them. And he couldn't handle it. He couldn't handle anymore!

As soon as they stopped, Farkas was off and pulling him down. His chest, tightened up... warm tears filling up his eyes, as Farkas pulled him through the front door. His voice, wavering. "Farkas... please, stop..."

Farkas let him loose, walking behind them to drop the door bar into place. Speaking to his back, Fillim just stood there, looking down at the stone floor. "Why should I stop! You need to see this! I want you to see what we've been doing for you!"

Walking around front of him, the Mer's eyes had closed. "Open up your eyes Fillim!"

He did... and almost wished he hadn't. Now he could see... really see. Torches were lit in the large room they stood in, and he could see him.

He couldn't even focus on the room. Farkas looked absolutely wild. The adrenaline in his system was still over the top. Every muscle in his body seemed bigger and more defined. His skin was glistening wet from sweat, and his eyes were a deep yellow. He still seemed almost out of breath, like a man that had just got done running.

Fillim just stood there with his mouth agape. He'd never feared Farkas, but right now... he wasn't sure exactly, what was really going on in the Nord's head.

Farkas stepped forward... Fillim's eyes combed over him. His leggings were ripped up, the laces were torn, no cloth underneath. The ebony hair that ran down his stomach surrounding his manhood was completely visible and he was hard.

All he could do was gawk at him. The giant Nord's cock was so hard, that even through the leather, he could see a perfect outline of it coming off to the side. The bare tip of the head was just visible above the edge of his waistband.

Farkas watched his eyes, feeling his fear, but also his arousal. He'd been able to smell it at the stables. He could smell Fjolrin on him. "What are you doing with him, Fillim?"

Fillim's eyes, snapped up to his. He couldn't speak, he didn't know what to say. Because honestly, he really didn't know himself, what he was doing.

He was being pulled in so many directions, and every time he started to feel some comfort, would just bring him more guilt. Guilt over what he'd left behind, and everything that had happened. A longing so deep inside, that he thought he would never understand it. A need that nothing, or no one would ever be able to fill.
All that, coupled with the love he held for this Nord. This one man. Who at times, he felt like this love could heal every hurt he had. Surround him with comfort, and a safety that he had never known.

Then, being with Vilkas, who felt more like a wise friend. A confidant that he had bedded, who also needed him. The fact that he'd been saved, only to be torn between the two of them, until he would feel like he would suffocate under his needs and his pain, confusion and guilt. Until he felt the need to run. The need to run away from it all!

He couldn't handle any more demands! The thought of having to give one more ounce, when he was already starving himself, was enough to send him spiraling downward! And he wanted to be done feeling that way! Was it so wrong, for him to need and want? Was it?

Farkas took another step forward, instantly jolting him back to what was taking place. The yellow in his eyes was fading. "Is that what you need? That kind of man!" Bringing his hands up to his head, shaking it in frustration.

"I just don't get it! I fuckin' saved you! I took you in and gave you another chance!" His voice kept getting louder, as he pointed in the direction of town. "My brother practically rapes you! And you defend him! You fucking defended him!"

For every step Fillim backed up, Farkas moved forward. Pointing into his own chest, his other hand fisted up! "You're closer to him than you are to me! You and him were keepin' shit from me!"

Running his hands through his hair, his voice shaking in all his pent up fury! "Then the fucking Dragonborn! He tries to rape you Fillim! And he would have! You know that, right!! He fucking would have!!"

He just kept moving forward, his teeth clenched up tight! Fillim could feel the energy radiating off from him... the anger. He leaned forward, his hands stretched out. "If Vilkas hadn't stopped him, he would have taken you! Right there on the kitchen floor! He would've claimed you and marked you, Fillim! And now... now you're fuckin' seein' him! You leave me for him!"

Within seconds, he rushed forward and had him! He had him! One large hand entwined into his hair. The other wrapped around his bottom, lifting him off the ground! Backing them both up, until they hit the only piece of furniture in the room. One small bed. Farkas came down on top of him! His whole body, in between his legs...

The hand in his hair tightened, holding his head in place as Farkas spoke against his mouth. His breath, coming faster and faster, growling out his words. "Is that what you want? Is that the kind of man you want? Cause... I can be that! I can take what I want too... if that's what you need!"

All he could do was gasp for breath. He'd never seen Farkas this way. Ever. He'd never been rough with him. If he had, Fillim knew they would've done this long ago. Because this was his weakness. His secret need.

His mouth opened, brows gathered up, watching the Nord through the slits of his eyelids. He was rock hard, straining against his breech.

Farkas' other hand, wedged in between them, ripping at the laces of his leggings. Pulling them away enough for his cock to completely fall free of them. As soon as the heavy, warm flesh fell against him, he whined out!

Farkas' mouth came down over his. The stubble from his beard scratching against his face. Tasting
just the slight twinge of blood, his strong flavor. Feeling the thick tongue as it fought against his own. Gods, but he'd missed him. He closed his eyes as Farkas pulled away, pulling off his boots and ripping at the fabric of his clothes, ripping them all away until they were gone and he was bare.

Bare.

Grabbing at the sack next to the bed, he dumped it. Fillim could hear the sound of bottles hitting the stone floor, hearing as Farkas found what he wanted. He couldn't open his eyes, he didn't have the strength to.

Farkas spit the cork out of his mouth. Instantly, he smelled the scent of healing oils. Feeling the drops as they hit his skin and hearing the bottle break as he tossed it away.

Stepping out of his leggings he lowered himself down over him. Grabbing the end of his braid, he pulled the leather free that held it in place. Running his oiled fingers through it to free his crimson locks. Taking both of his hands in his one, he stretched his slender arms up and over his head, holding him down.

Fillim cried out! "Gods! Yesss... " Tremors ruining his voice as he bucked his hips into Farkas. The head of his slender cock turning a dark purple as a pearly bead of his seed, spilled over to run down the shaft.

Farkas' other hand, holding his oiled length as he slapped it against Fillim's, watching the Mer wiggle and squirm beneath him. He growled out as he lined up to his deep olive, brown pucker. Lowering himself down over him, holding his hands in place. "This is what you want... isn't it! You want me to hold you down and fill you up... don't you!"

His hands in his, he watched the Mer as he pushed just enough for the head of his cock to open him up a tiny bit and then backed out. Fillim's mouth opened, sucking in air. His legs wrapped around Farkas' hips, as he pushed the head in and stopped. lowering his mouth down to Fillim's as the Mer cried out! The desperate, needful whine in his voice, driving him completely wild!

He could feel Fillim bearing down, trying to help his body adjust to the size of him. Breathing against his Mer he pushed inside, real slow. He was so fucking tight, so blissfully tight. Raising his other hand to Fillim's, he parted them, holding a hand in each of his.

His mouth, going to Fillim's neck, he bit down onto his flesh kneading it between his teeth, growling against him. Rocking his hips, his heavy sack slapping against the most beautiful ass he'd ever laid his eyes on, all spread out around him. The Mer's legs wrapped tighter around his hips, and Fillim cried out as he backed out and slammed back into him, their skin smacking loudly together with each thrust.

He'd waited so long for this. So fucking long, to be sheathed inside of him.

Moving his mouth down to the Mer's shoulder he held his hands down, listening to his ragged breath, panting as he was filled. Feeling the wetness of the Mer's seed as it was smeared onto them both, hitting against his stomach, he ground into him. "Fuuuck... Yesss!" He couldn't get deep enough!

Everything inside of him. The most deep, primal need overtook him and his senses went wild! The scent of his mate's skin! His sweat. His seed. The feel of him. Gods! He raised his head back, his eyes open, staring into nothing and seeing everything! He opened his mouth, his tongue tasting every smell. Saliva ran from his mouth and down over his chin, dripping onto the one below him.
The need. Stronger than the force of a climax. Stronger than the need to feed! He cried out as he lowered his mouth down to the flesh below him... and sunk his teeth in!

Fillim screamed out as he bit into his shoulder! Growling into the soft flesh, he held the hands tightly that now struggled against his! Fillim bucked his hips, pushing his face against Farkas' head, nuzzling into him. The muscles around his cock, clenched up, seed shot out from in between them, coating their stomachs as Fillim came!

He held onto him. His hands and the piece of shoulder that was still between his teeth, waiting for him to come down. Leaving his teeth inside of him, just long enough to make a good mark, he backed them out and licked the blood that flowed from the wound.

Finally Fillim's struggles ceased, his breath fluttering against a pointed ear as he whispered to him. "It's alright... you're alright." Knowing that his words of comfort were more for him than for Fillim.

Sitting back onto his knees he let go of him completely and slowly pulled out. Taking him in as he put his hand to his length and began a hard stroke. Just watching the Mer, his beautiful eyes closed, mouth still open in a silent cry of ecstasy, writhing around on the bed in the aftershocks of their mating. His dark skin, glistening white from his seed.

He groaned out as he pulled himself to climax, splattering across Fillim's chest and neck, into his deep red hair. Looking at the imprint of his teeth in his mate's shoulder, blood trickling down as it slowly came to a stop.

Laying down next to him, he pulled the little Mer into his body, feeling the most satisfying feeling as Fillim snuggled into him. Speaking into his hair, "You don't know how I've missed this Fillim. I've missed you so much."

He was trying so hard not to feel the overwhelming emotion that always accompanied their intimacy. The sadness that he had felt over the last days that they had been apart, and the responsibility of what he'd just done. What it would mean, not only to his brother. But what it would mean if Fillim still chose to leave him.

Fillim spoke against his chest, his eyes focused on the soft black hair that tickled his face. "You marked me..."

His throat tightened up and he held him tighter, wrapping a leg around his bottom. He wouldn't let him go. He couldn't. The tears that he'd held at bay, flooding his eyes. His large body rocking them both as he lost control. "Fillim... I love you!"

Fillim closed his eyes, listening to him as his heart clenched up. The reality of what'd just happened sinking in, and the fact that even though he'd left, showing him... no, forcing him to see that he needed time, that he needed the freedom to choose. None of it mattered! Farkas had just showed him, that what mattered to Farkas... even though he loved him and thought he was doing right... was Farkas. His wants and needs. Fillim leaving, had shown him nothing. It had been pointless.

Fillim focused on his voice, his words. Trying to understand. Trying to control the horrible feeling that was filling him.

Farkas' voice was raspy, speaking between the breaths he took to cry. "I'll let you... do... whatever you want. Just... please, don't leave me... don't go back to him!" Holding him tighter, his body rocking them as he sobbed. "Gods, please Fillim, you're gonna kill me if you leave!"
Fillim pushed out of his hold, propping up onto an elbow to see him. His shoulder aching so terribly that he was afraid to look, his own tears now started falling. Farkas' hand, stroked over his back. He could tell he was afraid to let him go. Even with the trespass that had taken place, he did love him, and he wanted to comfort him.

"Farkas... I love you too. Why can't you see that I just need some time to heal from everything. I went through so much before we even met. It's not about another man."

Raising his hand up, he lightly stroked the Nords face. The worry and pain in his expression was so great. There was no way to console him. Not without giving in. He didn't want to hurt him, but Farkas needed to understand that he was serious. And what he'd just done... what had just happened, proved that he did not. He didn't understand what Fillim needed at all. And if he couldn't after everything they had already been through, would he ever?

Farkas wrapped his arm around him, swallowing. "Fillim, I can give you time, but I can't handle not seeing you... not talking to you and feeling you."

He looked at the mark. This Mer, he was the one, the one he was supposed to be connected to. Deep down inside of him he could feel his wolf cry out! The pain of it all was so great! So overwhelming! He just wanted to scream!

If he left him now he would go crazy, and then, he would die. Die from loneliness. He would never be able to be with another. Ever.

Squeezing his eyes shut, his hair and the pillow beneath him, now wet from his tears. His arm, holding on tighter. All Fillim could do was lay there and watch him fall apart. Even with his own heart aching, he couldn't give him an answer. He just couldn't. He couldn't go back. He wouldn't. This whole thing, had been Farkas' way of pushing him into a corner. Ultimatums and guilt. Fillim watched him, his heart sinking more and more by the second.

"If you choose not to be with me, you may as well just take a dagger and put it through my heart! Right now!"

His body heaved as he cried out, clutching onto the Mer! "You're mine! You said you loved me! You said you'd marry me! You can't leave me now. Please, don't do this!"

Pounding started at the door. Multiple fists, not just one man. He knew who it was, he could smell them. His brother and Fjolrin.

Closing his eyes, he pulled Fillim close and he held him.

Chapter End Notes

Lyrics – Is Your Love Strong Enough - track from one of my favorite fantasy films! Old, but great! Ridley Scott rules! (I actually think it came out before I was even born! O-o )

song by: Bryan Ferry

I literally had to rewrite this from how I had originally planned it to go. Even if some may feel how it still went was out of character for Farkas... [the sex part], how I originally intended it, was way more so, and much more insulting to the Dragonborn. I
just couldn't do it. :c Same outcome though. Just so you know.

Also, going to be finding out more and more about Fillim's real feelings and issues in the next two chapters... along with Fjolrin's.

** I felt the need to say after this one, that just because Fillim's thinking that 'If Farkas had been more forceful, that they probably would've had intercourse sooner', does not mean that he wanted force without consent. A lot of his preferences have been forged into his mind from the only things that he's ever known and experienced.
Which, lets face it, he's pretty much been surrounded by males that have been kind of self-serving, even if their intentions were in the right place at times. And if we're speaking of Anariil, that's being way too generous.
Fillim's need for a little forceful sex, is in the most minor of definitions. I think we can see how each time he's been placed in a somewhat forced act with the twins, that he was also turned on and wanted them, but the aftermath of it was damaging and always ended up causing problems.
Chapter Summary

Dawn was just breaking. Roggar leaned against the wooden beam behind him, and crossed his arms. His bow sat leaning against the blocks, along with his quiver. He couldn't help but watch them. He knew the Jarl didn't want them inside the city, but never seemed to have any problem with them camping right out front. Sometimes he felt bad for them, but he guessed they'd earned the rep they had, so... who was he to say?

Mayhap if so many of them weren't sneaks and thieves, they'd be let into more places. After being out front of town for an entire week, they were finally packing up to leave. He watched as one of the male Khajiit stepped out onto the stone pathway, looking out at the road that led into town.

Pushing away from the beam, he stood and looked. Dust was flying up off the road in a large plume. Sounded like a carriage, but too many horses for that. Whoever it was, they were using a whip. He could hear it right from where he stood. Looking back down at the Khajiit, his ears were pinned back and he was now hurrying his people.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

***********

You take me to the edge
You push me too far
You watch me slip away
I'm holding on too hard

Tell me why!
Does everything that I love get taken away?
From me!
Why?

**

The pounding on the door increased.

Fjolrin and Vilkas were both yelling for them, sounding more and more panicked by the second. None of it mattered. Farkas would have held onto him forever trying to avoid it, hiding them both away from it all. Struggling to pull an arm free, he held the Nord's wet face and kissed his full lips.

Farkas opened his eyes, looking into the warm amber he'd missed so much. "We have to deal with this Farkas. They're not going to go away."

Swallowing, he looked down... away from those eyes. What he'd done... he'd had to do it! Everything in him told him when he did it, that it was the right thing. He knew Fillim loved him.
He knew they belonged together! He was just confused right now and Farkas could help him through it. Gods, that's what people that loved each other did. Right?

He would learn! He could! He'd give Fillim the space he required. He just couldn't live without him!

Just looking at him, he was silent... thinking about it. Trying to sort out what he would do and what was going to happen now. Fillim kissed him again, whispering to him as he stroked his beard. "I love you... but we have to let them in and deal with this... please."

Pulling away, Fillim leaned up onto his elbow and turned his face to yell toward the door. "Okay! Coming!!"

As soon as he did, the yelling outside quieted.

He needed to hurry, he didn't know how long they would wait. Getting up, he tried to gather what was left of his torn clothing and let out a sigh. They had been new clothes. Pulling on his ripped leggings, he tied what was left of the laces together so they wouldn't fall. The mess that had been his tunic, he used to wipe what remained of Farkas' seed from his chest. As it was, the fine red hair that covered him was stuck against his skin from where it had already started to dry. It was no use.

Farkas didn't even try to get dressed. He stood up and walked to the door, lifting the bar completely naked.

Fillim just sat back down on the bed. Easing himself against the wall, he put his feet up and wrapped his arms around his knees, watching him, trying to ready himself for what was coming. He knew why he went to the door in nothing. As if they wouldn't already.

The room absolutely reeked of sex. He himself, was barely dressed. What remained of his clothing, was in rags on the floor covered in the Nord's seed. Not to mention the fact that he bore a large, raw bite mark on his shoulder.

As soon as they walked in, it would be like a giant slap in the face. To both of them.

Right now, with everything that was roiling inside of him, he wanted to be sick. How could things get any worse?

Farkas unlocked the door and opened it, stepping back so they could enter. He knew why they were here too. They wanted to make sure that he hadn't gone off the deep end and hurt Fillim... or killed him. Raising his arm out towards the Mer. "See he's fine!"

Silence.

**********

Fillim's head dropped, his fingers fiddling with each other, wrapped around his knees. Vilkas could feel Fjolrin's pain. There was no anger, only pain. Pain and confusion.

For a moment all he could do was look at the Mer, and then he turned away and walked out. Vilkas could hear him swallow all the way from inside the house. He stood outside, hands on his hips, looking down at the ground.

He knew the man's pain, he wouldn't slight him for it. After all, he was wrapped up in his own.
He could also feel Fillim's. Just from seeing how the Mer was reacting, none of this had been done the right way, or at the right time. None of it!

He glared at his brother, his hands shaking as he tried to reign in the agony and the rage that fought to overwhelm him. "Put your fucking leggings on! Who are you proving anything to!"

Vilkas turned away from him, huffing out a breath! All he'd done was prove what a fool he was!

Instantly, he felt like he was his kid brother again. Fear and shame completely flooding through him. He'd acted on impulse. Selfish desperation, and now he would pay for it.

Vilkas walked over to Fillim. He could barely stand the stench coming off from him. It wasn't just from the sex. It was the mark.

Not only was the mark a visual sign, but physical as well. Every lycan in the vicinity would be able to smell him, and know that he was someone else's mate. No other would touch him. They wouldn't be able to and stand it. Whispering down to him. "Are you alright, Fillim?"

Just looking up into his face, and seeing how he looked at him... he couldn't take it!

Everything on Vilkas' face said it! He looked at him as if he were something dirty. He could also tell that Vilkas was fighting it. That how he was feeling pained him. His eyes traveled over to Farkas. The way he carried himself, shoulders hunched like a guilty dog with his tail between his legs.

Tears flooded his eyes as he nodded, looking back down. He couldn't stand the way he was looking at him. The expression he bore.

Vilkas literally turned his head to take a breath. Gods, this was killing him! Speaking to Fillim, as he looked at his brother. "Heal that, and then drink another potion when you get back to the Huntsman. Do you still have any?"

He glanced back, just long enough to see him nod.

Moving up into his brother's face, his own tears finally coming. "I'll say this to you, in front of all here!"

Raising his arm, he pointed his finger at Fillim as he spoke. "Do you know what you've done?!" He yelled!! "To him, Farkas! TO HIM!"

The room literally seemed to vibrate from his fury! "YOU'VE TAKEN EVERY CHOICE HE HAD AWAY!!"

His hands flew up to his head in frustration! "You couldn't wait! You just couldn't give him the time that he needed! Now all you've done, is taken all of our choices away!"

He turned to Fillim, pointing at his brother. The most panic stricken look. So much pain written on his face. "Do you realize what he's done? He didn't talk to you about it did he? He just did it, didn't he?!!"

He watched the Mer as he spoke. Watching. Feeling all the turmoil boiling up inside of him as it played out on his face. Fjolrin had come up behind him, listening and watching. Vilkas swallowed, wiping a hand across his wet face. "No one... Fillim, no other that has our curse can go near you now. None of us!! You're marked!"
Turning his head to his brother, his voice shaking. "You've marked him! Just one more male that's taken from him! That's all you are now!!"

Vilkas turned and walked out. Fjolrin looked down at him. "I'll go to the huntsman... get some things for you. Potion and clothes. I'll bring them back. Can't go into the city... not looking like that."

He turned and left.

Fillim nodded, looking down again, tears running down his cheeks. The weight on his chest so bad, he feared he would be crushed under it. Swallowing, he stared at his knees... the pain killing him. By morning, everyone in town would know that he was involved in an even bigger scandal than before. As it was, he couldn't walk through town, without others turning their heads and whispering.

He wouldn't be able to even show his face! He wanted to leave. Run. And that's exactly what he planned to do. He didn't want to leave Adrianne with everything, and give up his chance there. But what was there here for him? Nothing, but more pain and grief. Would it never end? He didn't think so.

Farkas closed the door behind him and walked back over to Fillim. Carefully, he sat down on the other end of the bed and just looked at him.

As soon as he started to speak, Fillim raised up a hand, stilling him. He wouldn't even look at him. He just stared into his hands, around his knees. His face, wet from tears. Pain emanated off from him. "I want to be left alone... please."

Fillim's words made him cringe. Those words... he may as well have been punched. He turned his face away, attempting to stifle the sob that tore free from his lips with his hand to no avail.

Fillim threw his arms up over his head, facing into his lap. He couldn't see him. Not like this! It would steal every ounce of his resolve, making him so weak that he wouldn't be able to get away. And that was the only answer now. For all of them.

Farkas walked out and closed the door. Out into the night. He couldn't feel anything, hear anything. Not the damp, cool night air, nor any of the night sounds. They had all been blocked out.

There was only pain.

He looked up at the moon's glow, his tears running down his neck. Sucking in a deep breath, he cried out! Never had he felt so weak... so out of control! His heart felt like it was dying. Everything in him had known... was sure that he had done right!

How could something that felt that way be wrong? The beast in him wanted to circle and pace. His mate, the only one he would ever love... ever want, was still inside. Everything in him wanted to turn around and go back in... but to what? He had to run. He had to get away. But to where?

This horrible, confusing indecision of not knowing what to do or where to turn. He needed to talk to Kodlak! He had to help him! He had to or he would die. He couldn't live this way. Not anymore.

His hands covered his face. Panting, he began a staggered walk. He would take the long way. He was in no hurry to get back to Jorvaskr. What was left for him there? A brother that couldn't bear to look at him. No Fillim. He had nothing left.
And that feeling alone, was enough to do him in.

************

Running his hands over the wound, he laid down and wept as the healing light flowed around his shoulder. The wound closed up, the pain was gone... but the mark was still perfectly clear. The perfect bite pattern of Farkas' teeth.

Hearing the door open, he sat up blinking his eyes and rubbing them. He'd almost fallen asleep.

Fjolrin came in, tossing a knapsack onto the bed. "Take that potion in there. I'm going to go out and fill a jug with some water. You can clean up and then we'll go."

Fillim didn't speak. He couldn't. As soon as Fjolrin left, he got up and opened the sack, pulling out the clean clothing and the potions. One for disease and another for healing.

He downed them, grimacing at the taste. Pausing as the door opened, Fjolrin set the basin down onto the floor next to the bed, along with a piece of cloth for him to use and turned around.

He turned... but he didn't leave.

Listening as the Mer cleaned himself up. He stared at the door. "Why did you go outside. I told you that I would handle it."

Throwing the rag back into the basin, he grabbed the clean breech. "I wanted to try and talk some sense into him... calm him down. I was hoping that he would see reason, and stop what he was doing. And... well... you saw what happened instead."

Completely dressed, he pulled on his boots, kicked away the ruined clothing and picked up the knapsack. Turning around to Fjolrin. "I'm ready."

He closed his eyes, as Fillim passed him to walk out the door.

The whole ride back was silent. Not a word passed between them, until they reached the gates.

"I know what you're planning."

Fillim turned to him, his eyes wide, his mouth open! "Please Fjolrin! Don't tell anyone!"

Taking a deep breath, he shook his head. "I wouldn't do that. Do you even know where you're headed to yet?"

Fillim just shook his head. "I don't know Fjolrin. But if I don't get out of here..."

"I know. I know. Just wait a minute." Walking into his house, he grabbed a couple bags of coins, a map and a key.

Fillim stood at the steps to the Huntsman, watching as he came out, he just shook his head and rolled his eyes, fighting to keep himself from bawling.

Fjolrin held the items out to him, "Look, I've got a place near Falkreath. Been built for sometime now. I'm rarely there. Here's the map, key and some coin. It has a forge and everything you need... it's stocked. It's across from a lake, you can even fish."

Fillim started panting, tears rolling down his cheeks. "I can't... Fjolrin."
Putting a hand up to the Mer's face, his thumb stroking the soft cheek. "No strings! You go there... take some time away. It's safe and secluded! Please, let me do this... you need it. Now... promise me."

Laying his hand on Fjolrin's. "Alright, I promise. I'll go at first light."

Leaning down into him, Fjolrin kissed his forehead gingerly and then backed away. "Don't go on foot. Tell the carriage driver I said, and he'll take you. Just give him a little extra."

Both of them turning away, Fillim paused. "Fjolrin, I am sorry. I just... I needed you to know."

Standing in front of his door, he let out a deep sigh. "I know... me too. We'll talk later... alright?"

Opening his door, he walked inside and kicked off his boots. Now everything in him wished he hadn't taken this on! He'd been blinded. Blinded by the need for more power. When what did it matter? Having this power, when all it did was consume!

Grabbing a bottle of mead, he sat down before the fire, kicked his feet up and stared at the bowl and goblet the Mer had used.

He could still smell his scent in the small room. In the chair across from him. Laying his head back, he looked up at the ceiling, letting the tears roll down his face and into his hair as he remembered. He hadn't cried since that day. That day when he'd woken up alone. Until now.

For days, he'd stayed right there. Afraid to leave, in case his Mer would decide to return. He would hunt and fish, only to return to an empty shack. The days rolled into weeks, and finally he knew he had to leave. He wasn't ever going to come back. And him staying there, not living, waiting for something that would never happen, was doing nothing but killing him. Killing him very slowly.

Gathering up the seedlings and seeds that he had. He folded them up into soft leather, tucking them into his satchel and packed his things. He was leaving. Leaving Skyrim.

The whole time he was packing, he thought and thought over where to go. There was nowhere in his homeland that he could go, where he wouldn't be risking the possibility of running into him. And he knew if he did, he'd fall apart. He'd lose it.

The safest bet was to leave for a time, gather himself and do some traveling. So, that's what he did. For over a whole year, he hadn't stepped foot into his homeland.

Then as soon as he did, he walked straight into an ambush. He hadn't paid any mind to the news he'd been hearing, rumors of an uprising. He'd planned to keep to himself as usual and go about his business. He had no reason to get mixed up in all the political nonsense that was brewing.

And that's exactly what he had been thinking as he was being led to the block.

Hell, all he'd wanted to do was find work somewhere and live. Try to pick up the pieces and move on. He had no idea who the men and women were, that he rode next to on the cart. He knew of Ulfric. Knew of his past. But he'd never met him.

He wasn't a Mer hater. But he wasn't a Thalmor sympathizer either. He believed in the Eight.

And that didn't really set him with Ulfric's reasoning for things.

Fjolrin believed in freedom. He felt that Skyrim, just like any other land, should be open to any that came to live there. That no male or female, regardless of race or religion, should be killed or
infringed upon simply for believing as they did, or because of the race that they were. As long as they, or their beliefs, did no harm to anyone else.

It was those very beliefs, that put him at odds, not only with the Thalmor... but with Ulfric as well. That's one of the reasons, that he had stayed away from Windhelm, ignoring the summons that Ulfric kept sending to him.

He had some thinking to do. Along with a ton of shit, that everyone seemed to need help with!

All the bullshit happening here, within the Companions and to Fillim. He took in a deep breath. Winterhold kept sending him letters. And he would send them back, telling them to contact the Empire over the asshole Thalmor that was there, trying to shove everyone around!

Well, they wouldn't do that! And why? Because the Arch Mage had decided to open up Sarthaal without permission, and didn't want to create anymore unwanted attention, than they were already getting from the irritated residents of Winterhold! Fjolrin's answer to them had been short and simple! *Then why in oblivion are you opening it?!

He'd also been avoiding Delphine. He felt the Greybeards had the best path for him. And that's what he planned to stick with.

Now it seemed he didn't have a choice, but to get involved with everything that was going on. Perhaps that was a good thing. Because now he had some power to fight for some of the wrongs that had been done and that were being done. The power to make reparations.

Perhaps he could change the course of things.

***********

Fillim laid down in his clothes. Anoriath lay across from him, watching him. "I'm leaving tomorrow..."

As soon as the Mer went to set up, he shook his head. A single tear rolled over the bridge of his nose, as he turned over to face him. "I'm going to go stay at Fjolrin's place, just for awhile. I need to get away."

As soon as his voice cracked, he knew it was time to be quiet. He was a wreck, and going over everything now would just add to it.

He had no answers, and right now, he knew he was completely reacting to the way he felt. His emotions... his needs, and what he lacked, were moving him. Driving him to make every decision he was making. But even as he was aware of this, it was also something that he couldn't help. He was powerless to fight it.

Closing his weary eyes... he fell asleep.

***********

Dawn was just breaking. Roggar leaned against the wooden beam behind him, and crossed his arms. His bow sat leaning against the blocks, along with his quiver. He couldn't help but watch them. He knew the Jarl didn't want them inside the city, but never seemed to have any problem with them camping right out front. Sometimes he felt bad for them, but he guessed they'd earned the rep they had, so... who was he to say?

Mayhap if so many of them weren't sneak and thieves, they'd be let into more places. After being
out front of town for an entire week, they were finally packing up to leave. He watched as one of
the male Khajiit stepped out onto the stone pathway, looking out at the road that led into town.

Pushing away from the beam, he stood and looked. Dust was flying up off the road in a large
plume. Sounded like a carriage, but too many horses for that. Whoever it was, they were using a
whip. He could hear it right from where he stood. Looking back down at the Khajiit, his ears were
pinned back and he was now hurrying his people.

Grabbing his spyglass, he opened it, taking a good look. Swallowing as he counted. One carriage.
One carriage, plus four single horses... carrying Elven soldiers. Moving the glass back to the
carriage. *Fuck!*

Running down the wall, he signaled for Hefadm! Grabbing his friend by the shoulder, he spoke
low. "Go get Irileth now! Thalmor coming up to the city! Tell her, four soldiers on horseback and
two robes in a carriage! Quick! And tell Heimskr to shut it!"

He looked back up at his tower. His bow was still up there, and now there was no time to go get it.
Laying the palm of his hand on the hilt of his sword, he stood in the middle of the entrance. They
weren't going to get by him. Not until the Jarl gave the okay!

Beads of sweat ran down his scalp from under his helmet, as he watched them approach. His
stomach was settled firmly up in this throat. They were all fucked.

**********

Winding up his whip and attaching it to the clasp at his side, Dhaunare stepped down from the
carriage. He could tell, just from the way the few that were outside acted, that they were afraid. He
also knew the reason why.

Turning to Fiiralmo, "Go talk to the Khajiit. We are going to need extra tents and services. Offer
them as much as you need to."

Watching as his comrade walked over to the cats, he motioned for their escort to remain on their
horses. This was going to be interesting. Walking up to the guard, he could hear Fiiralmo over to
the side of him. 'Are you the leader of this caravan?'

Stopping in front of the guard, he could literally see the Nord's skin crawl as he trembled. A wide
smile stretched across his golden face as he looked down at him. "I am Justiciar Dhaunare."
Waiving his arm, gesturing at his escort. "We are here to retrieve a criminal."

Roggar swallowed, even in the chilly morning air, he had broken into a raging sweat! His eyes
moving over to the stables. Everyone had gone inside and were now peeking out through their
windows. Looking back up at the Thalmor, his green eyes were narrowed at him. He had to say
something. "No criminals in Whiterun... guess you'll have to look elsewhere."

Putting a hand to his stomach, Dhaunare chuckled. Normally insolence of any kind, would have
infuriated him. But this... this was quite amusing. Feigning a tear, he wiped his eye and cleared his
throat. "Well, what a relief! I feel much safer already."

Roggar swallowed.

Instantly, the smile vanished! "Now, let me ask once again!" Laying a hand on the handle of his
coiled whip. "This time, you will listen! And give me the answer that I desire!"
Lyrics ~ Tell Me Why
by: Three Days Grace

Fjolrin will become more and more an intricate part of things. Not just strictly Dragonborn stuff either, but him. Don't want to offend anyone with his political feelings, or the fact that he was born Imperial, but this is the way he is. Sorry if some don't agree. Again, the Dragonborn quests will still not be the center in this story, and neither will the civil war, as I wanted a story where that wasn't the focus. This mainly centers on Mer, the Dominion and Fillim's relationship with the Companions.
Chapter Summary

All reason was gone. As soon as he saw who was after him... who was coming, his eyes grew until they consumed his face! Screaming hysterically as the whip circled around his legs, bringing him to a sudden halt! He went down!

Clawing at the ground, fruitlessly grabbing onto handfuls of earth, as the the Dominion soldier got down from his horse and approached him. Completely oblivious to the incomprehensible, hysterical blather that poured from his own lips. The pitch in his voice increasing until it was almost painful to their sensitive ears.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

**

My name it means nothing
My fortune is less
My future is shrouded in dark wilderness
Sunshine is far away, clouds linger on
Everything I possessed, now they are gone.

Oh where can I go to and what can I do?
Nothing can please me, only thoughts are of you.

**

Running past the alter, if he could've felt relieved he would have. Heimskr wasn't out there yet, thank the Gods! At least they didn't have to worry over him screaming about Talos, while the damned Thalmor were out front of the gates. Vaulting the steps, he crashed through the doors and up to the throne.

Falling to his knees from lack of breath, the Jarl was now on his feet and swiftly approaching him. Proventus and Irileth stood over him. Ripping off his helmet, he looked up, "My Lord!! Thalmor... Thalmor at the gates!!"

Proventus gasped! His hands, coming up to cover his mouth.

"Damn it!" Balgruuf pulled her aside, lowering his voice. "Find out what they want! But do not let them in! They have no bloody reason to come into this city!!"

He stood before his throne with his arms crossed, watching her as she rushed out with two more of their guard.

Hrongar walked to his side, speaking low. "How long can we keep them out brother?"

**
Dhaunare cleared his throat again, his hand tightening around the handle of his whip. Fiiralmo and the Khajiit had stopped talking and were now watching them. "We are looking for a mixed breed Mer. Deep crimson, red hair with amber eye coloring. His given name is Fillim. Of course, he may be using an alias"

Roggar raised a hand, cutting him off. "The Jarl's housecarl is on her way out. She will assist you!"

Receiving the Thalmor's glare, he let out a breath of relief as the Altmer turned and walked over to the Khajiit and his comrade. Thankful the Mer couldn't see his face under the helmet, he strained to listen.

The largest and most heavily armored Khajiit male, stood with Fiiralmo. "Where is your caravan headed next?"

"Solitude... are you in need of Khajiit's assistance?"

Jo'Rakha knew already what they wanted. The Thalmor above all other Mer, loved the finest of comforts. But they did not want to wait on themselves for it. They wanted warm tents and beds while they traveled in this inhospitable land. They wanted good Khajiiti food and servants to serve them. It would not come cheap!

Fiiralmo nodded, "Yes, we will pay well to have your caravan travel with us. We will need two large tents." Giving a quick glance over at their supplies. "I see with the number of skins you have, that won't be a problem... and of course, food and assistance."

Handing the Khajiit a small chest. "Two thousand now, and another two, once we have reached Solitude. There, you can set up at the city's gates and we will part ways."

He looked to his elder, who nodded. Four thousand gold would help them in many ways, for a very long time. He turned back to them, feeling like he had just sold his soul. "Agreed..."

**

Fjolrin stepped out of his house and gazed out upon the main entrance walkway. He'd been up for awhile, thinking, and he wanted to see Fillim off. At least walk with him to the carriage to make sure he didn't have any trouble over it.

Running his hands through his hair, he looked over at the War Maiden's. His heart ached. He had been looking forward to seeing him there, knowing he was here and safe. Even if he himself, couldn't be here all the time, at least he would've known that Fillim was.

Standing at the base of his steps, people were now gathering in the walkway, watching and muttering to each other as Irileth approached with two very nervous looking guard at her side. The closer they got, and the larger the crowd got, the more tension he felt.

He stood there as the Dunmer approached him. His eyes widening as she walked right up into his face and leaned into his ear... she whispered. "I may be in need of your assistance... we have Thalmor at our gates."

Just hearing that word, his head flew back, striking the frame of his door. His heart froze, he swallowed. He didn't even dare to look in the direction of the Huntsman for fear that she would catch on. Irileth was a damned quick one! And the feeling that was swiftly spreading through him, was sending chills down his spine and stirring up his guts. Everything in him wanted those feelings to be wrong. "Aye."
Giving a quick nod, he took in a deep breath and followed her down to the gates, praying that Fillim didn't choose now to take his leave.

As soon as he saw her, Roggar let out a heavy breath of relief! Relief so strong that he felt the urge to run to her and hug her. But also knew this was definitely not the time, nor the place to do that. Even on the best of circumstances, doing something like that would be apt to earn him a slap. But he knew if they got through this alright, he'd be glad to take it! Finally his eyes moved to take in who it was that walked along side of her. The Dovahkiin! Even better!

Dhaunare stood in front of the guard with his arms crossed. He watched as the Dunmer approached with a large Nord, dressed in casual attire. He was aware of who Balgruuf's housecarl was. He knew they had fought in the war together. What he wasn't sure of, was why she would bring a commoner with her, and he wasn't even wearing armor.

The Khajiit were pulling their carts up behind the Thalmor's carriage, now their caravan all but awaiting the signal to leave. Fiiralmo now stood next to Dhaunare, who was getting more and more irritated by the second.

Roggar moved aside, letting Irileth step forward. Even in the face of the Thalmor, her expression was that of a stone mask. Her deep red eyes, boring into the Thalmor's green ones. One of her hands resting upon the hilt of her sword, her rich, deep voice filled with bitterness. "Jarl Balgruuf has asked me to assist you. What is it that brings you to us?"

Dhaunare smiled. "We are simply here to take back what belongs to us." Folding his arms behind his back, the leather of his robes stretching over the muscle in his arms. He looked down on her, and if the human were just a bit taller, he would almost be eye to eye with him.

Elegantly waiving a hand in the guard's direction. "As I have told your guard, we seek a mixed breed Mer. Deep crimson hair... eyes of amber..."

Irileth's eyes quickly flashed to Fjolrin, then back to Dhaunare. "What makes you think such a Mer would be here?"

Just as Fjolrin swallowed deep, Dhaunare's eyes settled on him, narrowing as he watched him... studying him! Speaking to Irileth, his eyes never moved from the Nord's. "We have reports of him being seen here."

His bright green eyes moved slowly back to hers. "Your Jarl knows as well as you do Irileth, that we have the right to enter any city in Skyrim. The only reason that I now stand outside of these gates, is out of courtesy for your Jarl. However, if you do not send out that Mer. I will go into your city, and I will conduct a house to house search."

Moving up closer to her, his words ground out through his clenched teeth. "Now, SEND HIM OUT!"

Fjolrin crossed his arms. "What exactly is he wanted for?"

Fiiralmo stepped closer. Both of them now eyed Fjolrin. "That is none of your concern!"

Irileth nodded to them, turning to Roggar. "Go and fetch him. Try not to make a scene."

Fjolrin's mouth fell open! "What!! But... you can't! You can't just- "

Irileth glared at him, "There is nothing we can do Fjolrin! This is between Fillim and the Thalmor! I will not see Whiterun put at risk over one person! I cannot!"
Dhaunare's smile widened, "See... finally we have cooperation. I'm sure that your Jarl Balgruuf would agree."

**

His mind raced! Complete panic surged through him! Everything in him wanted to run to the Huntsman. He didn't know what to do. Looking back toward the gates, he wanted to scream! Scream for him to run! But then Whiterun would pay... and they would pay dearly. There would be nothing he could do about it either.

Turning to her again, he yelled out for Roggar to stop! "Then... then, let me go in and get him! Please!"

Waiving her hand for the guard to continue on, she shook her head at him. "What difference will it make? He will still be taken. I'm sorry."

She let out a deep breath, looking down at the ground. There was nothing she would rather do than hide him herself. But they couldn't risk the Jarl and everyone else. They just couldn't! If they saw that statue, they would be posted here permanently. Heimskr would be arrested and tortured... then killed. Gods help them all.

She looked up to Fjolrin, placing a hand on his arm. "I am truly, very sorry."

Licking his lips he nodded, turning away. He wouldn't have had the will power to lead him to them. He couldn't have done it, and she knew it! She knew!

Dhaunare watched him, taking in how he reacted. Now he knew who he was! He knew that name and who it belonged to! He actually cared for the slave.

How fitting.

**

Fillim slung the knapsack over his shoulder and headed toward the doors. They had already said their goodbyes, now there was nothing left to do, but this. The letter he'd written to Adrianne, was folded neatly in Anoriath's hands... he wouldn't be taking the pay he was due. He felt bad enough that he was leaving her. Anoriath had told him that he would explain it to her. She would understand.

Letting the door close behind him... he started down the steps and looked at the gates as they opened. Completely freezing and then recoiling, as the guard pointed in his direction and yelled! "Fillim! Halt!"

He stopped! His heart hammering in his chest as the guard bolted into a sprint towards him!

Dropping the pack... he ran! Vaulting over the bit of hill that separated the Inn from the walkway, he took off! The guard yelled from behind him! "STOP THAT ELF! SOMEONE STOP HIM!"

He ran! With everything in him, he ran. The spectators in the walkway, all jumping out of his way as he flew past them. Hands flew up to mouths... gasps and shocked cries rang out!

Sparks flared up in his palms... dodging the guard coming down the steps in the marketplace, he ran through the waterway, behind Heimskr's house. He didn't want to hurt anyone... but he knew, whatever was happening... it wasn't good. And he wouldn't stop!
He knew he couldn't go into Jorvaskr... whatever it was, he couldn't involve them.

Hearing the yelling... Eorlund stopped working and looked out over Jorvaskr. The red-headed Mer, was jumping the steps... three of their guard after him... stumbling over each other, trying to get into the circle walk that surrounded the Gildergreen.

Leaning over... he watched, as Fillim ran into the underforge. The guard sprinting toward the steps...

Raising two fingers to his mouth, he let out a shrill whistle, yelling down to the guard and pointing at the other side of the building. He yelled to them, "He ran inside the mead hall!"

Muttering to himself and smiling. 'Idiots... couldn't find their own backsides with both hands.' Whatever the Mer was wanted for... he'd give him a head start.

Fillim jumped out the back opening. He had to make it to Fjolrin's house... he just had to! Even if he had to move through the woods...

**

As soon as the yelling inside the city gates started, Dhaunare motioned for the soldiers on horseback! Fiiralmo looked up at the high walls that surrounded the city, then back to him. Nodding as if they understood each other, without even a word being spoken. "I want two of you on this side, and two on the other! Circle the city... he's running!"

One of the soldiers stretched out an arm, pointing! "There he is! That's him! Running towards the forest!"

Dhaunare's upper lip actually curled up, showing his teeth! Motioning for two of them to go, "I need him unharmed! Paralyze him if you need to!" He turned to look at them, crossing his arms. "It seems that we will have our missing property back momentarily..."

Fjolrin's hands flew up to his forehead! He turned away from them, trying to hide his panic, his anger... utter helplessness! It definitely wasn't lost to them, especially Dhaunare. Fiiralmo walked a few steps to the side, watching the soldiers as they ran down the fleeing Mer.

The soldier on the horse closest to him, unfurled his whip... and with an effortless movement of his arm, brought the end of the whip around Fillim's legs, pinning them together! Fiiralmo turned to Dhaunare, "They have him."

Glancing in that direction, he could hear the Mer screaming from where he stood. He was being tossed up onto the horse in front of the soldier that had wrangled him. The Altmer's arms wrapped around him, holding onto him firmly as they rode.

**

All reason was gone.

As soon as he saw who was after him, who was coming, his eyes grew until they seemed to consume his entire face! Screaming hysterically as the whip circled around his legs, bringing him to a sudden halt! He went down!

Clawing at the ground, fruitlessly grabbing onto handfuls of earth, as the the Dominion soldier got down from his horse and approached him. Completely oblivious to the incomprehensible, hysterical blather that poured from his own lips. The pitch in his voice increasing, until it was
almost painful to their sensitive ears.

Panting, he struggled against the Mer as he got him onto the horse and held him. They rode right up to the front of the city, Irileth... Fjolrin... as soon as he saw him he wretched, vomit splattering down across the back of the horse's neck.

The soldier cursing him, pulled him off as he dismounted, roughly throwing him to the ground and spat on him!

Fjolrin lunged forward! His fists clenched up, "STOP IT! You have him! Is that necessary!"

As soon as Dhaunare moved forward, Irileth grabbed Fjolrin's arm, bracing her feet into the ground, she held him back!

Fiiralmo led the angry soldier and his horse away, advising him to clean it up so they could depart.

Fillim struggled to his knees. His arms wrapped around himself, he rocked back and forth sobbing. His hair had been completely pulled free of it's tie and now hung loose around his face, sticking to his wet skin as he slowly shook his head. A string of spittle ran from his lower lip.

As soon as Dhaunare approached Fillim, Fjolrin stepped forward, ripping free from Irileth's hold! "He's a free Mer! He was exiled! You have no right to do what you do!"

Swiftly moving into the Nord's face, Dhaunare's teeth bared! "I have every right!" Pulling a rolled piece of parchment out from an inner pocket in his robes, he opened it and shoved it at him. "Read this Nord! If you are able! And tell me that I have no right to take him!"

Fjolrin took it, glancing over at Fillim. He swallowed, dread settling in around his heart as he read it. "Contract... for temporary services to the Thalmor Justiciar Wizard Ancano. For an unknown duration of time, while his duties are carried out here in Skyrim." There was no need to finish.

Dropping his hand down, he stared at Fillim, complete helplessness flooding through him. Dhaunare ripped the document from his hand, rolling it back up and tucking it away. Fillim's eyes locked with Fjolrin's. He got to his feet, running towards him. "No! No! Ancano let me leave! You have to believe me! Please!"

His voice spiraling higher and higher. "He told me to come here! He told me!"

Dhaunare grabbed his arms, stopping him. Fillim screamed into his face! "ITS NOT TRUE! IT'S NOT TRUE!! YOU LIE!"

Pain flared through the side of his head as he was struck! His hands flew up to his face as he gasped for breath! Fjolrin grabbed hold of Dhaunare's shoulders, and instantly, they were surrounded by soldiers! Blue lightning flowed from the Justiciar's hands.

Nose to nose, Dhaunare spoke low, his green eyes boring into Fjolrin's blue ones. "Think! Dovahkiin. Think about what you do and say at this very moment!"

Fjolrin stood his ground, his hand, digging into the shoulders of the Altmer he held. His eyes moving between the other Justiciar, that now had Fillim and was binding him, back to the one that was in his face, back to Fillim.

Fiiralmo looked down into his eyes, as he buckled a leather collar around his neck. Two more, around each wrist, finally locking them together. A steel ring, hung off from each. Lacing two long pieces of leather through a ring that was centered on the collar, he tied it to the ones that held his
wrists together and smiled. Whispering to him. "See... this is what we do to dogs that run." Taking a leather lead, he clapsed it to the ring on his neck and held it. "This will be your leash from now on."

Pulling on his lead, he chuckled as Fillim fell forward, barely regaining his footing. "Come! Doggie..."

The Khajiit all turned their heads away. They wouldn't look upon this. So much shame filled their hearts. Shame and remorse, for they had seen this so many times. Too many. Whatever they had in store for this young Mer, it wasn't good.

Dhaunare laughed in his face, watching the muscles in Fjolrin's jaw lock up! Watching the rage and emotion that consumed him. "Will you turn your loyalties now Legate! Will you now run to Windhelm and serve the rebel King? To satisfy your need for vengeance! Turn your coat, just like a worthless Nord does!!"

Absolute silence. There was no noise. Numerous guard had come out to watch, along with the stable hands and farmers, all stood around them, watching and listening... waiting.

Fjolrin gradually loosening his hold on the Justiciar's robes. He lowered his hands. "My loyalties will remain where they always have been."

Glancing at Fillim, he lowered his voice. "Will you speak with me? In private?" Waiving his hand at all their onlookers. "Away from all these people?"

The lightning leaving his hands, he turned to Fiiralmo. "Stay there with him." Receiving his nod in return, he followed the Nord over to the corner of the wall.

All looked on, watching their exchange as Fjolrin whispered to the Thalmor. Watching as the hooded figure's hands went to his hips. Then, as he met the Dragonborn's gaze head on. A look of almost disbelief on his Elven face, swiftly changing to a horrid sort of glee.

Fjolrin finished speaking, and Dhaunare leaned back, his gloved hand coming up to his mouth. Covering his wicked grin. "Oh! Oh!... Dovahkiin, I am surprised at you! But... interested, nonetheless... I will think it over."

Fjolrin glared at him! "Still, it does not pertain to him! You can offer me everything, and he will still be taken."

Leaning in closer to the Nord's face, he tilted his head almost questioningly. "So much... just for a worthless piece of tail. You see, he doesn't belong to me. If he did, I would slaughter him. Right here, for you all to witness. As it is, I am simply retrieving him. And as far as you are concerned, he may as well no longer exist."

Fjolrin looked down for a second, licking his lips as the Thalmor kept his close stance. He whispered, "At least have the decency to let me tell him goodbye. I implore you... please."

"Fine. I will give you the moment that you request, but it will be brief!"

Nodding to Fiiralmo, he dropped the lead into Fillim's hands. Dhaunare took hold of his collar as he passed him, forcing him to pause. "You have one minute to say your goodbye! Do not make me regret my act of charity!"

Letting him loose, Fillim ran to the corner and into Fjolrin's open arms. Raising his bound hands, he laced his fingers into the Nord's chest, holding on for dear life. His small body quivered and
shook as he wept. Fjolrin took his face into his hands, looking into his warm eyes, he pressed their lips together.

Just for that moment, they may as well have been the only two on Nirn. He swallowed, attempting to hold onto his own tears, but there was no stopping what consumed him. They spilled over and flowed down his cheeks as he looked into the Mer's eyes. "I believe you Fillim... I do."

Gods! The look on Fillim's face as he looked up at him, a grimace of pure agony and fear. A silent plea. For if the words 'Help me.' were to fall from those lips, he would kill them all, right then and there.

And for it, they would face a war like none other.

No. He would do this the right way. His way.

His hands turned the Mer's head, moving his mouth, he pressed his lips into Fillim's ear. So soft... so quiet... he whispered. "I'll be coming for you."

Fillim immediately calmed as Fjolrin spoke the words. Slowly, he pulled back from him, staring down into those eyes. "Do you believe me" Fillim nodded.

Kissing his lips, his giant hands holding his head, he spoke to him loud enough for all to hear. "Do as they say. Just do as they say... alright? "

Dhaunare approached them, taking the lead from Fillim's hands, he led him away.

Forcing himself to pull his gaze away from Fjolrin's. He straightened his shoulders, and looked straight ahead. He wouldn't scream. He wouldn't cry. He would do as they said.

He believed him.

Chapter End Notes

Lyrics ~ Solitude
by: Black Sabbath

Kind of ironic, the name of this song and where they are headed. But it fits. Anyone that has ever heard it, the music actually really fits Skyrim somewhat and the times. It's old Sabbath, but still to me doesn't sound like your typical Sabbath. It really fits this chapter and how Fjolrin and Fillim both feel, but esp Fjolrin and how Fillim is becoming so much to him. Also how Fillim has awoken things in Fjolrin's past that have been left unresolved.

I also think this may have been a little out of character for Eorlund, but with Fillim being with the Companions and all, I'm giving him the benefit of the doubt.
The Past Unburied

Chapter Summary

Elrindir walked to his brother's side, dressed in the same manner... all in black. He knew they grieved.

"We mourn for what has happened to him, and what he will endure. We mourn for this city! And what has happened to the people within it's walls. And we mourn for ourselves... and what we have lost. We will not open today! Nor will we sell! We will pray and meditate... in the hopes that you will be guided, and that Fillim will have comfort and we will have peace."

Chapter Notes

The lyrics I chose have a ton to do with Fjolrin's past, and will be used again when it all comes to light.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Been afraid, always afraid
Of the things he's feeling
He could just be gone,
He would just sail on
He'll just sail on

In remembrance, I relive
How can I blame you
When it's me I can't forgive

**

Fjolrin watched as they got him up into the cart. Seating him on the floor of it, on top of some skins. His lead was hooked to a steel ring that had been embedded into the wood. Curling himself up, his arms wrapped around his knees, hugging them, he stared into the seat across from him.

He knew why they sat him on the floor of the carriage. They didn't want him injured if they were shot at or attacked.

He watched as the Thalmor positioned themselves so that their prisoner was completely surrounded by their entourage.

Two of the soldiers actually gave up their horses and took their place to drive the carriage, while the Justiciar's mounted their horses. They would be riding behind the carriage to keep watch on Fillim, and surveying their surroundings as they traveled. In the middle, and behind them was the Khajiit caravan. And behind them, were the two remaining soldiers on horseback.
In front... in the middle... and in the rear. All this for one runaway slave. He knew this would have never happened. Not ever! They would have never spent this kind of time and resources, just to retrieve one slave. There was way more to this than anyone knew. Fillim was more than just a slave. He had to be, for all this to be happening. This was the type of formation they would've used to protect someone of importance.

He stood there, watching as they rode away into the distance. He may not know why, but he did know one thing. He knew who was coming for Fillim.

Moving past Irileth, he lowered down into the guard's face, causing the man to jump. "Where did the Khajiit say they were headed! Tell me now!"

Roggar stuttered. "So... Solitude, they were traveling to Solitude. Then the Thalmor said they would be parting from them. Nothing else was said. I swear it!"

Fjolrin straightened up, staring out at the road, he could barely hear the sounds of the horses hooves in the distance now. Damn it! He knew where they were headed. He also knew what that meant, and who he would have to eventually go see. But she would have to wait, this would be done his own way. Fuck the invitation!

He turned around, facing Irileth. She could see just by that look he held, that it wasn't going to end here. "Whatever you are planning, Fjolrin, I don't want to know about it! I will say this though, after this incident here, it had better not include Whiterun. And if he is retrieved, the Jarl will more than likely *not* be welcoming him back inside the city."

Even as she said it she felt bad. Balgruuf was going to want to know all of the details. The whole city was now involved. They had unknowingly taken in a runaway Thalmor slave, and because of that their entire city had been put at risk. The Jarl, as good of a man as he was, wouldn't be apt to welcome him back inside so easily.

"I understand."

Without another word, he stepped around her and began his walk back toward the gates.

Roggar took off his helmet, wiping the sweat from his face. Irileth had turned, and was now following Fjolrin. As soon as she was gone, he looked at the two other guard that stood by him. One, his brother, and the other, a very close and dear friend. Lowering his voice, "Did you see him kiss that Elf?"

The eldest of them leaned into him, "Don't matter who he's kissin! Dovahkiin's a bloody hero! He's gonna be savin' all our asses! So you'd better shut it and show some respect!"

Raising up his hands. "I don't mean nothin' by it... just sayin."

Their friend stalked away, going back to his post. Just watching him he could tell he'd pissed him off. Roggar's brother lowered his voice. "Whole town knows, along with everyone that stood here watchin. Fillim was with the Companions first. Who do ya think the twins were buildin' that house for?"

Shaking his head, "I swear, Roggar, you're the only one that don't know! Just keep shut over it, alright?"

Walking back up to his post, he took in a deep breath. Irileth better be sending some relief, and quick! He needed a drink!
They walked through the gates together. It seemed that the entire city was gathered between the Huntsman and the Warmaiden's. Barely able to hear over the noise, he paused, looking at Anoriath as Irileth began to speak. "There is nothing to see! There is no danger! Please, everyone, go back to your business!"

Jon Battle-Born stood by Adrianne, arms crossed, staring at him. The chatter got louder and louder until someone from the back yelled. "They took him, didn't they? They took Fillim!"

Gasps went through the crowd! Everyone was looking at him. He licked his lips, hands going to his hips. He didn't have time for this! He had to leave. Olfrid cut through the crowd, raising his voice! "Good Riddance, I say! If they took him, there was a reason! They're gone and we're safe! He shouldn't have been allowed in to begin with!"

People were muttering amongst themselves. Anoriath's hands went up to his mouth! His tan face, turning red! Elrindir took hold of his shoulder. Olfrid literally turned to the crowd, standing in front of Fjolrin and Irileth. Fjolrin backed up, looking at him in complete shock.

The Nord raised his hands, yelling to the crowd. "I say, the Jarl needs to be more selective of who enters this city! In fact..." his eyes zeroed in on Eorlund's wife. "In fact! I think there are people here right now, that should be handed over!"

Fjolrin's hands clenched up into fists. His jaw locked, his eyes, travelling from the Bosmers, to Adrianne and her husband, back to Irileth!

"ENOUGH!!"

Balgruuf's strong voice, bellowed from the back of the crowd! Everyone went quiet as he parted through them, coming up to face Olfrid, his guard surrounding him. "You dare to start a riot! In my city! Who are you to choose, who lives or dies?! Who has freedom and who doesn't?! No one!"

Balgruuf turned his back to Olfrid. Turning to the crowd. "And I mean, NO ONE! Is going to be handed over to those bastards! We will not sacrifice our beliefs! Our freedom! But neither will we sacrifice anymore lives!"

Turning back toward Olfrid, he glanced at Irileth. "Get everyone back to their homes and businesses."

Looking into Olfrid's eyes, he lowered his voice. "I'll see you in Dragon's Reach!"

Olfrid's face went a deep red, as he stepped around the Jarl, motioning for his son to follow.

Balgruuf turned to Fjolrin. "I will ask you one question. Did you, or any of the Companions, know that he was wanted?"

"I swear to you that I did not. He himself, didn't even know, and I'll swear to that as well."

Hands on his hips, for a moment Balgruuf just stared at him, thinking over his words. "We will speak more on it when you return."

All he could do was breathe a sigh of relief. In no way, did he ever think that his respect for that man could get any stronger than it already was. No, he was wrong. He watched as Irileth walked a foot behind him. Her hand on the hilt of her sword. Her head, held high.

He knew she felt the same, and she was proud to be the one fighting for him. She would die for
him, if needs be. He also knew that Balgruuf was aware that he had no intention of letting the situation lie. And he was right.

Within seconds, he was surrounded by the Bosmers, Adrianne and her husband. And approaching them, was Vilkas and his brother.

He internally groaned, waiting until the twins were among the rest of them, he spoke. He couldn't even deal with Farkas right now. And he could tell just from looking at him, that he was on the verge of hysterics. Both men were fighting to keep it together. Bracing his hands on his hips, he looked skyward. "If you all don't already know... Fillim was taken... arrested. The Thalmor left with him just a bit ago."

He swallowed, looking down. "I can't tell any of you, anything more than that. I'm sorry."

Adrianne burst into tears, Ulfberth holding her shoulders. The Bosmers, both gaping at him, Vilkas stepped forward, "You're... you're not going after hi-"

Holding up his hands. "I can't get Whiterun involved, Vilkas! Just- " Reaching out, he took Adrianne's hand with one of his... the other, going to Anoriath's. Just briefly, before letting go, he spoke low to all of them. "All of you... pray for me. Pray for Fillim. Please."

With that, he walked through them and went into his house. They all stood in the middle of the walkway, watching as his door closed.

He didn't care who they prayed to. He just knew he needed all the help he could get.

**

Grabbing up a bottle of mead, he chugged it. Everything in him wanted scream out. Go on a rampage and destroy everything in his path! He wanted to sink down onto his knees and weep.

But in his heart, he knew that doing any of that would mean defeat. Failure. And that wasn't going to happen! There was no way that he would give up! Not ever!

He was going to kill, every single one of them... with his bare hands!

Setting the bottle down, he walked into the alchemy room and grabbed a knapsack. Opening the chest on the book shelf, he began filling it with potions, as his mind flew to all the things he may need. Closing and locking the chest, he rifled through the book shelf, grabbing up the scrolls he wanted.

His satchel sat on the table, already filled with the herbs he needed. Resting them both by the cabinet, he walked to the stairs. A quiet knock sounded on the door right before it opened. Lydia stepped inside and stood, looking at him expectantly. "Do you need my help, Thane?"

From the very beginning, he had told her to stay at Dragon's Reach. It wasn't just the fact that he'd never been one to keep company with a female. He valued his privacy. The thought of someone he didn't know, being there with him was unnerving. He had assured her and the Jarl, that there was no disrespect meant. But he would call for her when he needed her.

"I can't bring you with me, but you could pack another sack for me. Food and water, maybe some wine. Perhaps you could check in on the house for me while I'm gone? You can have the mead, just stay out of the Sujamma."

He knew that wouldn't be a problem. He knew she detested anything that was Elven. She tried to
act indifferent to Mer, but the first time she'd accompanied him and they'd fought together... he knew better.

Clearing out the bandits at the abandoned mine nearby, they'd had to take on a Bosmer. He always hated the fact that there were so few of the woodland people here. And yet, a good portion of the ones that were, had turned to crime to survive. She had yelled out, 'Skyrim belongs to the Nords!' before she killed him.

He hadn't said anything right then. After all, they had a job to do. But after the place had been checked, he had stopped her. Telling her, if she ever planned to accompany him again, she'd better stow that kind of talk. It didn't set well with him. And he wouldn't be put into that category by any that saw them together!

In fact, that had been the last time he'd used her help. He hadn't really needed it to begin with, he'd simply wanted to get to know her.

She nodded. "Of course... my Thane." Walking over, she began filling another knapsack with food and supplies from the cabinet by the cooking pot. Fjolrin climbed the steps to the top floor. Going to the chest, he pulled out an empty duffle, laying it on the bed. He packed an extra set of clothing, extra boots... skins and furs.

Digging through all of the things he knew that he wouldn't need and pushing them aside to get at the bottom, he closed his eyes and took a deep breath. Lifting out the bundle wrapped up in parchment, carefully preserved, he laid it on the bed. Standing, he bent over and started to unwrap it.

Just looking at them made his heart ache. He had been such a fool.

He'd kept them hidden. Buried, along with everything else, for so long. But now it was time. He could wait no longer. He needed to face the past, and quit trying to hide it. Quit trying to hide who he really was! Pulling out the robes, he lay them on the bed and got changed. Looking into the mirror, he put on the necklace and the ring.

Hearing a gasp from behind him, he turned. Lydia stood there, her hands over her mouth.

"What's the matter Lydia?"

Slowly lowering her hands down. "You're... you're a magic user?"

He nodded, silently turning back to the mirror, looking at his reflection running a hand over the cloth. He hadn't worn it in so long, it felt almost foreign to his touch. His eyes combing over the original stitching, old and soft. Then, the new... where his master had added to the robes, adjusting them to his larger size. Remembering the old hands that had painstakingly done the work.

"But you... you were wearing armor when you came here... using weapons. I don't understand-"

Turning to her, he pulled up the hood, "For a long, long time, I tried to be something that I wasn't. No more." Pulling the soft leather over his mouth and nose, he grabbed the duffle off from the bed and walked past her.

He no longer needed physical weapons. No longer needed to carry the weight of armor. For the first time in years... in what seemed a lifetime... he truly felt free.

Going down the stairs, he could already feel the power flowing into his body from his master's old robes. Smiling... he lifted the satchel, draping it around himself.
Lydia rushed down the stairs grabbing his bedroll, and the two knapsacks before he could pick them up. She looked up at him. "I'm sorry I reacted that way... I just... I wasn't expecting it. I meant no disrespect, Dovahkiin."

He nodded and headed towards the door. He had one more stop to make before he went to the stables.

Turning to her, "Take my things, would you... and get my horse ready. I'll be out in a minute."

**

He walked into the Huntsman, raising a hand, he lowered the face portion of his cowl. Anoriath bolted up from his seat, running to him... all dressed in black.

Fjolrin gestured to his attire. "What is this? He's not dead, Anoriath. You may believe me when I tell you that I will get to him in time."

Elrindir walked to his brother's side, dressed the same. He knew they grieved. "We mourn for what has happened to him, and what he will endure. We mourn for this city! And what has happened to the people within it's walls. And we mourn for ourselves... and what we have lost. We will not open today! Nor will we sell! We will pray and meditate... in the hopes that you will be guided, and that Fillim will have comfort and we will have peace."

Putting his hands to the Bosmer's shoulders, "Thank you. I know that Balgruuf will keep the city in check, just like he did this morning. But I also know, that doesn't change the fact that what happened, still happened. I share your pain."

It was ridiculous that it had happened to begin with.

"I need to ask for a set of Fillim's clothing, and some boots. He will likely need them when I get to him. I feel the need to be prepared."

Anoriath nodded and walked to the room he had shared with Fillim. He had kept his bed perfect, cleaned his clothes, placing them all into the wardrobe they shared. He had also picked up the knapsack that Fillim had thrown aside to make his escape. He grabbed it up as well. He hadn't opened it. He hadn't had the heart to. Even with Fillim gone, he felt the need to preserve the Mer's privacy.

He brought it out to Fjolrin, handing it to him. "This is what he had this morning, when he was prepared to leave. Hopefully it has what you require inside."

He opened it up, taking a quick look, then closed it and buckled the flap, nodding. "This will do..."

The shattering sound of glass, forced their attention to the end of the room. Jenassa stood in the doorway to her sleeping quarters. Her mug lay at her feet in pieces, her mouth agape. She stared at Fjolrin.

Slowly regaining her composure, she bent over and began to gather up the broken shards. With them in hand, she slowly walked over to them, her eyes remaining on him, combing them over what he wore.

Elrindir took the glass from her and threw it away. Speaking to Anoriath, her eyes remained on the Nord. "I heard you speaking... and wondered if you'd decided to open after all, but I see I was mistaken."
Fjolrin nodded to her and the Bosmers, and turned to leave. Her deep voice, sounding behind him as he walked out the doors. "May Azura guide your steps..."

Quickly, they surrounded her. "What is it? Jenassa?"

She stood there, looking at the doors. "Those robes... I know them... who they used to belong to. For just a moment, I thought..."

Chapter End Notes

Everyone will find out more about Fjolrin's past in time, there's a lot to it. You may think you've missed something, or perhaps that I have. What you're finding out about now has nothing to do with the Mer he was with. ;) Just wait.

I just love a man with depth. When he says that he was trying for so long to be something that he wasn't, there was a ton to that statement. Also, how he knows who is coming. Remember chapter 26 Upheaval... what he says to Vilkas. I will shed light on that in a bit as well.

Lyrics ~ The Unforgiven III
by: Metallica
A Dog That Runs II

Chapter Summary

Of course, he knew Anariil well. And he had never been one to take being slighted easily. As soon as the summons had reached the Embassy, Dhaunare had requested the job.

As soon as he saw the name on it, who it was that needed to be brought in... he knew the nature of Anariil's relationship with him. He knew that it was no ordinary slave that had run away.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

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He knew even with the hours that he'd lost, he would still be able to get ahead of them. With it just being him traveling alone he would be just that much faster. The Thalmor would want to stop early enough to dine, and to have their newly hired helpers wait on them.

Digging his heels into the horse, he rode faster. He would get to Solitude first. He would watch them leave their Khajiit behind, and then he would follow them to the Embassy.

With the way this was going down, Anariil would never collect him at Solitude. He would want privacy to carry out his plan, whatever that was. But he wouldn't think about that right now. He couldn't.

Whatever it was, he knew it would happen at the Embassy, where they could hide what they did. What they didn't want the Imperials at Solitude to see.

And he would be there, he would be waiting... and he would get him back!

***

Fillim's eyes stared into the seat across from him, thinking about the trials he had faced at Jorvaskr and with Fjolrin. Thinking about how they now paled in comparison to what possibly lay before him. That didn't mean that they didn't matter. It didn't mean that if he was still there or if he lived through this and ever had a chance to go back, that he would be ready to face them or that he would even be able to.

He couldn't help but think over why this was happening? Why would Anariil tell him that he was exiled, then to have documents drawn up, that he was to remain a slave to Ancano. When Ancano had acted completely ignorant of the entire situation!

The only thing that he could think, was to get him there safely... legally. Give him time to think that he had a chance for happiness... freedom.

Then to pull the only thread of hope he had back in.
His heart felt like it had broken into a million pieces. He swallowed, bringing up his bound hands over his head he silently wept into his arms, hiding his face from the Thalmor that rode behind him.

When he was forced away, he'd still loved him. He loved him! He would've stayed, he had begged him to... and he wouldn't have him! Why? why would he do this? Did he loathe him that much? Or... did he want him back?

He couldn't even think of that! He had pained so much over the year that he was with Tarenen... over what he was doing! Over how much he actually loved Anariil and the fact that he would never be able to get what he needed from him. How, even when they were together he pined for him! Not his physical attentions, because he had them always... it was his heart that he needed.

If he could've just heard that from him... just once. It would have spared the three of them from all of this! He had worshiped him! Longed for him and adored him! Anariil would look at him so longingly, then only to stay his tongue.

His love for Tarenen had sprung from friendship. From the basic things that everyone needed to thrive. They could be free around each other... laugh and be playful.

What Tarenen had offered... real true friendship and love, had drawn him in like a drunkard to a bottle. Even with the threat of discovery that loomed over them every time they were together, he couldn't stay away from it. He had needed it so badly.

But the price he had paid to have it. The fact that he betrayed both of them, every day and every night. By the end of that last year he'd felt like he was dead inside.

Even if he and Tarenen could have left together and gotten away, he would have still suffered over his feelings for his father. He would have never been able to tell Tarenen for fear of losing the only real love he'd ever known. His own guilt would've continued to eat at him, eating him alive from the inside. Tarenen deserved better. So did Anariil... and so did he.

He never wanted to hurt Anariil. He'd truly wanted to right the wrong. But just with what Anariil was doing now, he didn't think that was likely to happen. He knew one thing... now that he had tasted freedom, he would never be able to live as a slave again. Ever.

All of it worried him. And he had to wait for how long he didn't even know to see him.

He still loved him... he still wanted him. But he wanted freedom more.

How could he truly love someone and be terrified of them all at once?

***

Dhaunare watched as Fillim lowered his arms and took in a deep breath, shaking his head. It was easy to see what he was doing. Attempting to dispel negative thoughts and worries. He had reason to worry. Even they, themselves, did not know the true reason why Anariil wanted him back.

Did he plan to keep him? Did he plan to take him back, just to sell him? Perhaps whore him out?

Fillim was far too valuable to destroy.

What he did know... he definitely wasn't coming all the way here just to give him back to Ancano.

Of course, he knew Anariil well and he had never been one to take being slighted easily. As soon
as the summons had reached the Embassy Dhaunare had requested the job.

As soon as he saw the name on it, who it was that needed to be brought in he knew the nature of Anariil's relationship with him. He knew that it was no ordinary slave that had run away.

What he couldn't understand was, if Anariil had such a sweet, sweet thing like Fillim, why on all of Nirn would he be letting him spend time with Ancano? Why would he be handing him over to him? Everyone in the order knew of Ancano's tastes, and his temper.

He truly was a sadistic Mer!

Dhaunare had studied with him, fought with him, and had spent time around him at numerous social gatherings and functions. Many of them, being of a very personal and private nature. Attending these types of gatherings, allowed them all to unwind and de-stress.

But it also would give all who attended, an insight into the likes and dislikes of those they knew and attended them with. You would get to see what every other male truly and deeply preferred. What they normally kept hidden from view.

They tended to be very eye opening experiences.

Mer such as Fillim, because of their beauty were very valuable! Not only were they were in high demand, but they were rare. Usually being sold and obtained through the black market... extremely illegal means. Strict laws now governed the owning of slaves, so anyone that had one for sexual use had gone to great lengths to get them. They were kept protected, and if they were smart... hidden.

Males and females both. But especially the males of this breeding, would be sold for ridiculously high amounts or kept as whores... sexual slaves. They were smaller and much more feminine in appearance than even their own Altmer females. They were absolutely beautiful.

Ancano had once himself had a Mer such as Fillim. Except much younger.

It was said that Ancano had captured his during a raid in Valenwood. He had been born to a female Bosmer that had either been raped or used as a mistress during a raid, or while their troops were encamped there. In the past, before their laws had changed, that was not an uncommon thing. The Bosmer males and females that were extremely striking in appearance, had sometimes been captured and kept in Thalmor camps for sexual use and servitude. More often than not, when they were ready to depart, the females and any males that they had taken would be set free.

Any offspring that arose from these situations would be the Bosmer's problems, not theirs. The Bosmer people had no problem allowing their mixed breeds to live among them and blend into their society. Almost a kind of refuge. Especially since any that were born in the Isles that weren't sold, were usually taken there and adopted out.

The Bosmer were a forgiving people, whereas his were not.

The young male that Ancano had was breathtaking. Even more attractive than Fillim, which was quite a feat. And very young. Only around twelve or thirteen at the time of his capture. Ancano hadn't let any near him! He had been very possessive of him, but still would show him off at any parties he threw. Dressing him in the finest clothes, even to the point of making him up. Not gaudily, but enough makeup to accent the natural beauty the young Mer already had.

He flaunted him purposely. He knew there were tons of males in the order that would have died for a night with him. He also was never more gentle than he had been with the young Mer. Which
truly shocked everyone, literally to the point of teasing him. Saying that he had gone soft. Of course only his oldest and dearest of friends would dare do so, but from them he would tolerate it. Making everyone wonder all the more.

They acted like they genuinely cared for each other. The young male would fawn over Ancano as well, even to the point of clinging to him. For a long time, there were rumors that he was in love with him. And even though Ancano would deny this, he would never share him.

This went on for four years or so. Until Ancano went away on duty and came home to find him gone, without a trace. He searched and searched, had hired Mer on the look out for him. He even made trips to Cyrodiil and Valenwood, only to come up empty.

Ancano's commander and dear friend Ondolemar, had told him once when they were both well into their cups. 'It was probably one of our own...'

Ancano's face had looked like it had been struck! He had sat up in his chair, slamming his fist down onto the table they sat at! Spitting out his words! 'Who would dare to do such a thing?! If I ever find who has taken him!'

Ondolemar just watched him... silently. Then, after thinking about what he would say, he sat forward, poured them some more drink and said. 'What is more unsettling to you? The fact that he is gone? That someone else has him? Or the fact that the one that took him, is more than likely someone that you waggled him in front of one too many times!'

Ancano had sat there absolutely livid. Staring at him with his mouth agape. Ondolemar sat back, holding onto his goblet with both hands, leveling his green gaze onto his oldest friend. 'It is also a possibility that whoever took him, did so just to free him. So that you would not have him!'

Ancano bolted up from the table, swatting his goblet, wine flying everywhere! 'How could you say that to me?! How dare you!'

He had leaned down onto the table, staring into Ondolemar's face! 'You know something, Ondolemar! You have to!'

Ondolemar didn't move a muscle. He sat there staring at him, holding his wine. 'You, my old friend, made two very grave mistakes. First, you allowed yourself to fall in love with one of your possessions. Second, you dangled the most prized treasure you had in front of a pack of ravenous wolves! Giving them all an eyeful... a good smell... but never a taste!'

Ondolemar sat forward, glaring back at him! 'Then you left home. You went away! Giving the burglar a chance to break in and steal your most precious, most coveted jewel!'

The guard that had told Dhaunare this, had said that Ancano actually grabbed Ondolemar up by the shirt front! That he had run up to them to protect Ondolemar, only to have his master wave him off. Ondolemar had been nose to nose with him! Telling him. 'Do not seek pity from me! Learn your painful lesson! That you may never make it again!'

Though they still remain friends, Ancano has become even more bitter. Even more deadly than he was before. One of the two's close friends had been with Dhaunare at a spa gathering, soaking in the baths. They had all been pretty well lit. Smoking and drinking.

The old Mer had leaned into him, whispering, "Ondolemar had asked several times for some time with Ancano's plaything, and each time he had refused him. Ondolemar probably had figured being that they were such close and trusted friends that Ancano would give in. After all, he knew that he
would be gentle with him. But no! He refused him!"

The old Mer got even closer, looking around to make sure no one else could hear. "Ondolemar had stormed out of a party one night, muttering that Ancano needed to be taught a lesson!"

Leaning back against the smooth stones, Dhaunare's mouth had fallen open. The old Mer picked up his goblet. "It was just a week later that Ancano's duty papers were received and he had to leave. Who do you think writes up those papers? Who do you think can make requests that certain Mer go to certain places, and for how long?"

He drank his wine, nodding and winking at him. "Ondolemar didn't have duty... he didn't leave the Isles. Ancano's servants never reported a theft... a robbery or break in."

Grinning at Dhaunare, he elbowed him. "Guess who's the only Mer that Ancano has ever trusted with the keys to his Estate?"

He remembered leaning into his elder, gasping, his eyes wide in disbelief! "You actually think that Ondolemar took him and- "

He had simply shrugged. "I don't know. But to this day, that Mer has never been seen, and Ondolemar was the only one that was ever heard voicing a threat."

Dhaunare had thought long and hard over that whole situation. The conversation between Ondolemar and Ancano, what Ondolemar had said, then what the elder told him in the baths. It made him really believe that Ondolemar was the one.

No one else, no matter how much they wanted that half breed, would've dared to take him! Their commander was a wise one. He had balls, but he also was decent. Dhaunare truly believed that if he took him, he had more than likely set him free. Somewhere where Ancano would never find him.

He smiled to himself. *Of course, that didn't mean that he didn't get a taste before he let him loose. Just another jab into his selfish friend's ribs.*

Looking at Fillim, his mind ran over all of it, trying to figure it out.

No... if he had *him*, he would be kept under lock and key. He would be kept hidden. And Fillim would *want* to be where he was. He would *want* to be with him.

***

The whole time they rode, Dhaunaure's eyes seemed to be on him. Every time he glanced at them, he was watching him. Finally, he buried his face into this arms and fell asleep, waking only as the carriage came to a stop. Bringing up his bound hands, he rubbed his eyes with his fingers, looking around.

He waited in the back of the carriage, while the soldiers relieved themselves first. After a bit, one of them... not the same one, whose horse he had vomited on... climbed into the back of the carriage. Unlocking him, he took the lead and walked Fillim out into the woods.

The forest around them still green, with just bits of yellow and orange starting to show in the leaves. At least they were going somewhere where it wasn't bitter cold. He *did* remember, that even as far north as Solitude was, it was almost as warm as Whiterun... making him thankful. What he wanted to do was ask questions, but just looking at the soldier, he could tell that wasn't a wise idea.
Stopping by a small stream, the Altmer turned to him... looking down at him, he spoke firmly. "You may relieve yourself... I will wait with you."

Trying several times to unlace his breeches... he let out a sigh, closing his eyes in frustration. His hands... the way that they were bound, wouldn't allow him to do anything! Hence the reason that he was bound this way. He didn't want to ask anything of him, but if he didn't go soon, he was going to wet himself.

Opening his eyes, he swallowed and looked up at the irritated soldier. The Mer had continued to glare down at him, watching him while he struggled in vain. He could only imagine, the last thing this soldier wanted to do was help a prisoner take a piss.

Before he could open his mouth to ask... Dhaunare's voice, sounded as he approached them from behind. Dread, crept up into him as he listened... trying to act calm. Raising his hand to take the lead, he looked at the soldier, "I will watch over him. Go and tend to the horses... we will depart soon."

Without pause, he handed over Fillim's lead, bending in a slight bow he quietly walked away, leaving them alone.

He swallowed... looking down at the ground, as Dhaunare came around to face him. Flinching, as he dropped the lead, letting it dangle from the ring and began to remove his gloves one finger at a time, tucking them into his robe. "Here... let me help you."

Staring at him in shock, Fillim raised his bound hands, watching as the Altmer's long, bare fingers, moved his tunic aside and went to his laces to undo them. Of course, he would've preferred that the Justiciar remove his binds, allowing him to do it himself. But at least now he would piss his pants.

He also couldn't believe that he was helping him just to be nice... but, he was being nice.

Fighting to remain calm, completely against his will, his breathing increased as he watched him. He wasn't rushing or pulling... every movement, was done with the slowest care. Staring into Dhaunare's chest with his breeches open, without pause... the Thalmor reached inside and moved the cloth. Fillim gasped, shivering as long, cold fingers took hold of his flesh and pulled it out.

He could feel Dhaunare's eyes on him... he could see the curve in his mouth.

He removed his hands just long enough to move behind him, pulling him into his body. One hand, going back to his cock to hold him... the other, going to his hair, as he pulled the stray strands away from his face. Whispering from behind him... goose flesh erupting all over his body, as he felt warm breath flutter through his hair. "Take your time... I know it can be unnerving with someone watching."

It wasn't even that... over the years with Anariil, he had gotten quite used to relieving himself in front of someone. Anariil had a kink... a lot of them.

He swallowed, shivering... "Its... it's not that... you- your hand is cold."

Dhaunare chuckled... his voice, low and wanton... "Well... I could remedy that, but then we would be here much, much longer than I had planned."

Again, he felt like the fly, and this Mer behind him... he was the spider. Gods! he had to concentrate.

Fillim closed his eyes, concentrating until the flow came. Trying to focus only on what he was
doing, and not what had happened... not what was going to happen. Not what the Thalmor behind him was doing.

Running his free hand through the crimson locks, he leaned into him just a little... smelling his hair. As soon as the flow of urine had stopped, he purred into his ear. "Are you done?"

Fillim nodded... barely a whisper. "Yes..."

Gently shaking him off, he lowered the hand from his hair and took hold of the edge of his cloth. The hand that held him, ever so gently tucked him back inside, lingering just enough for his fingers to run through the soft hair that surrounded him.

Fillim's breath came out in quiet pants as Dhaunare's arms held him closer to his body. The fingers ran over his length, down to his sac... rubbing over them, back up and through the hair around him once more, before finally pulling out. "There... now they are warm."

Fillim's mouth hung open, as Dhaunare's chin pressed against his shoulder, his hands slowly lacing him back up, pausing here and there to stroke over his growing length. Squeezing his eyes shut, his whole body felt traitor to him! How could he respond to such a monster! Why was he toying with him! Why?

When he was finally laced back up and his tunic was lowered into it's normal place, Dhaunare took his shoulders and turned him. His golden face relaxed, his brilliant green eyes heavy with need. Taking the lead with one hand, casually moving it to Fillim's shoulder... the other, going back into his hair. Taking a lock of it, he brought it up to Fillim's chin... gently, raising his face.

Dhaunare lowered his mouth, just skimming over his prisoner's lips... he whispered against them. "You don't remember me... do you?"

Chapter End Notes

File this all away for later...

Also, remember chptr 22 The Faithful... you may want to reread. It def sheds some insight into how Ancano feels... his bitterness.
"You have yet to see my back then."

Fiiralmo's eyes met his... very quietly, "We know of the marks on your back... it was included in the summons."

His amber eyes narrowed... his voice, becoming almost venomous. "Again I say!... who in their right mind! Anariil is insane! To have not only marked you in such a crude fashion, but to have released you to that... beast of a Mer!"

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Fillim's eyes widened, locking onto his. His mouth fell open...

A call out from one of the soldiers, halted everything.

Pulling away, Dhaunare looked down into his face as his hand dropped the piece of hair that it had held. Raising his hand up, signalling that he'd been heard. Their eyes remained on each other, as he took his gloves from within his robes and pulled them on. "We will speak more later, when we make camp for the night."

Fillim nodded... closing his gaping mouth, he swallowed. Walking back, his mind raced over his memories... over what had happened that night, and what hadn't. He had never forgotten it... he never would.

His eyes continuously glanced at him from the side. He couldn't believe this was the same Mer! But... it was. Even though with his hood in place, he couldn't see his long silver hair... it was him! He had made the same exact gesture, holding Fillim's hair as he'd raised his face up to kiss him.

And they had been stopped at exactly the same moment. His lips had been barely caressing over his as his father had walked into the kitchen, stopping anything from happening. Stopping it before it could go any further.

Glancing at him again, he had always wondered what would've happened. Now it seemed he may actually find out.

Dhaunare watched him, taking in his expression and the emotion that was playing out on his face. Now that he remembered who he was, it was going to be an interesting evening. He had just the right spot picked for their first camp sight. Absolutely perfect.

Leading them back, he walked him to the carriage and got into the back with him as the others began taking their places. Speaking low to him as he once more connected the lead to the ring in the wood. "We only have a few more hours of travel left before we make camp."

Fillim couldn't help but look up at him... watch him. 'Was he reassuring him? Or was he trying to make him nervous?" His mind literally spun!
With every second, every gesture the Thalmor made, he became more and more confused. Shocked to the point of being afraid. More afraid than he already was.

Looking up at him in pure disbelief, as Dhaunare took his own water skin and held it to Fillim's lips. "Here... drink."

His green eyes watching Fillim's, as his mouth wrapped around the opening and he swallowed. Pulling it away he capped it, handing it to Fiiralmo, who stood at the back of the carriage and took an extra fur, wrapping it around him where he sat.

He spoke low and just to him... but not low enough, that the soldiers seated in the driver's seat couldn't hear. Definitely not low enough that the Khajiit with their ears couldn't hear. Tucking the fur around him, "It will start getting colder the farther north we head."

Unbelievable! He couldn't stay his tongue, he had to know! "Why...."

Dhaunare tilted his head, giving him a stern look that instantly closed his mouth. His gloved hand swiftly came up to hold his jaw. Not painfully, but enough so that he couldn't move. "Hold your tongue. You will be joining Fiiralmo and myself in our tent this eve. We will speak then."

He looked at him in utter amazement, as he climbed out of the carriage and got onto his horse. His mind finally becoming fully aware that they hadn't been entirely alone during this display, his eyes combed over everyone present.

The Khajiit that rode behind the two Thalmor with their own carriage and horses. Just from the way they looked at him, he knew they had all seen! Their faces holding concerned looks, either meeting his eyes with sympathy or turning their heads completely away.

His head turning to the soldiers whose backs were to him, but had definitely heard what was said, sat as rigid as stone. Giving a flick with the reigns, the horses started moving.

His eyes went back to them, directly behind him. Both the Thalmor, sitting astride their mounts, watched him. Watched him look around in realization and caring not that everyone knew where he would be spending his night. His nights.

Fiiralmo smiled wide. Taking his teeth, the Justiciar caught the side of his bottom lip and turned his head away, chuckling to himself. Just seeing how amused the Altmer was, Fillim's frown became more severe! They were enjoying his humiliation!

His eyes meeting Dhaunare's, they stared at each other. The look on the Thalmor's face, telling him all he needed to know.

Forcing his gaze away, he lay his head against the seat and closed his eyes. This was a distraction. That's all it was. He should've been thankful, but he couldn't be. Not with wondering what else he would have to face? He couldn't help but feel the dread that kept wanting to creep into his stomach, around his heart.

Bringing the fur up and around his face, he fell asleep.

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His head struck against the wooden seat as they stopped. Opening his bleary eyes he looked around. There was still quite a bit of sunlight left in the sky. At least two hours left before dusk. The soldier turned from his seat and unhooked him, tossing his lead away. "Get out and go to him! Do not try to run or you will be punished!"
"That will not be necessary!"

Fillim's head turned, looking in shock at the one that had spoken. Fiiralmo stood at the back of the carriage glaring at the soldier, who raising his fist to his chest, bowed and turned with the most irritated and chastised look on his face.

Fillim crawled toward the opening, handing Fiiralmo his lead and taking the hand that was offered to him, he stepped down and stood before him. Raising his hands up to the collar, Fiiralmo unhooked the lead and tossed it into the carriage. Looking down into his face, he spoke to him as he began to undo his bindings. "As fetching as we both think you are in these, we feel they are no longer necessary."

Feeling the heat creep up into his face, he stayed quiet as the male stared into his eyes, dropping the collar onto the back of the carriage. Fiiralmo continued to meet his gaze... he'd evidently done this so often that he didn't even need to see what he was doing. One hand free... Fillim's face burned hotter and hotter, he wanted to look away... tear his eyes away from the green ones that bore down into his.

Fiiralmo's voice, soft and low. "I trust that you will not try to run..."

Taking both of Fillim's free hands in his, he gently rubbed his prisoner's wrists, lowering his face closer to his. "Regardless of how damning you feel your fate is with us, I can guarantee you Fillim... there are much worse that could befall a Mer such as yourself in these wilds."

Looking up into his face, Fillim swallowed. "I won't try to run."

If anything, he wanted to get what was coming over with. It's all he could think about.

Dhaunare was nowhere to be seen.

Fillim looked around for him. The soldiers and Khajiit were raising the tents in a big circle. Three large ones and two small. A fire was being started in the center of it all, with stones and logs to sit upon when their meal was prepared. There were eight in the Khajiit caravan, five males and three females.

The females were already preparing several pots of food, along with pheasant breasts staked onto the spit. Just watching it and smelling the smells that were already wafting on the light breeze, his stomach began to growl.

Fiiralmo could hear it and chuckled, bending over to pick up a duffle. "Come... we will bathe, then eat."

Turning his head away from all the activity, Fillim gave him a shocked look. Gently but firmly, he took Fillim's arm and led him away from all the bustle. "You've been through much today. You are in need... I assure you."

Fillim knew what he meant. The Justiciar was just too lofty to say it. He had pretty much been lassoed. He had clawed and drug himself through the dirt in attempt to get away. He had vomited... wept. His face had run with snot and tears. Taking a deep breath... yes, he was right. He did need to bathe.

But that fact did nothing to ease his nervousness. Nor did it erase the fact, now that he thought of it all, that Dhaunare had wrapped his body around all of his filth and would have kissed him, had they not been interrupted.
His mind went over it again and again, as they walked out into the woods. The sound of running water brought him from his thoughts, and the sound of footsteps behind them. He turned, seeing a soldier walking several paces behind them. The Mer didn't even notice him, his eyes were busy combing over their surroundings, making sure that they were safe.

The sound of the water getting closer and closer, he almost gasped as they came upon a small waterfall that emptied into a river. If not for the temperature difference and slight variance in color shades, he would've sworn that they were in the Isles. He stood there taking it in and remembering. Tightness coming up into his chest, as sadness threatened to overtake him.

Fiiralmo stood next to him, setting down the duffle. "It is beautiful... isn't it."

Fillim looked at the soldier, who was about ten paces from the shore and facing towards the woods, his hand laying on the hilt of his sword. Now realizing that the way they had come in, was the only way in. The rock face that the falls came from, was the beginnings of a mountain range. And right where they were standing, was the shoreline of a small pond that the falls dumped into and led into a river. The rock face here was almost shaped into a bowl-like cusp.

He nodded as he looked around in wonderment at it all, Fiiralmo began to undress himself. Neatly folding his robes over a branch, he kicked off his boots. Fillim watched him. Now that he could really see him without the robes concealing everything, he had long white blonde hair tied at his neck, that was now being freed as he pulled out the tie. Perfect fine features and musculature, the lightest golden skin.

He wanted to take in a breath as he admired his appearance, but knew he would be heard and thus kept still. Watching in awe as the Altmer bared his body to him as though it were nothing. Their males were so very fine... with that thought, his mind flew to Farkas, Vilkas and Fjolrin. As were many of the Nords, just in different ways.

Fiiralmo knew he was being watched... it mattered little. "It reminds you of our home, does it not?"

Lying his shirt and leggings over the same branch, he dropped his breech and stood before him naked. Fillim fought to keep his widening eyes upward, swallowing and nodding as the tall male walked towards him. His long hair, flowing down around his bare shoulders. "That is exactly why Dhaunare chose this spot."

He just stood there in shock, as the Thalmor started to unlace his tunic. "It reminds us of the Isles... but also offers protection."

He raised up a hand, gesturing to it. "A whole mountain range begins here. Which will offer us protection along one whole side as we make camp. Not only from the elements, but from enemies as well. We won't need as many guards posted tonight."

Of course he also knew that had been just another reason they had asked the Khajiit along. The more there were in a caravan, the more warriors and the more heavily guarded, the less likely they would fall prey to enemy attack. Stormcloak and bandit alike. They would all be able to travel more comfortably. Fiiralmo telling him that the Khajiit had been preparing to go to their same destination anyway, and now they were simply all the more safe and richer for it. He did not feel any sadness for them.

Fillim listened to him and raised his hands so the tunic could be lifted off from him. As soon as he was free of it, it was dropped... left in the dirt as Fiiralmo gawked at the bite mark on his shoulder. Reaching up, he gently felt of it with his fingertips. Fillim jumped, startled as healing light erupted from Fiiralmo's hand, running over the mark.
He looked down at it, frowning at it... watching as the pink faded. The definition was less deep, but the offending mark still remained! Fiiralmo glared at it! Huffing out an irritated breath, his eyes went to Fillim's. "Who in their right mind would mark such a Mer as you! It is an absolute travesty to mar such beauty!" Remaining quiet, Fillim watched him as he tisked with his teeth his disapproval once more.

"You have yet to see my back then."

Fiiralmo's eyes met his... very quietly, "We know of the marks on your back... for it was included in the summons."

His amber eyes narrowed, his voice becoming almost venomous. "Again I say! who in their right mind! Anariil is insane! To have not only marked you in such a crude fashion, but to have released you to that... that beast of a Mer!"

Immediately he clamped his mouth shut, gazing up into the sky in frustration! 'Oh Au-riel...'

So quiet, it was almost a whisper. "What do you mean... a crude fashion? Why do you-"

The Altmer's hands went down to his leggings, unlacing them as he spoke, cutting him off. "Fillim... the marks on your back, just as the mark on your shoulder, are marks of ownership. They tell everyone that you are owned... you belong to someone else!"

Just hearing that made him cringe. The fact that not only Anariil, but now Farkas as well, had claimed ownership of him! Frowning down at the ground, he was so angry at him! Both of them!!

And everything had all happened so suddenly, he hadn't had time to deal with any of it! He had still been reeling from his evening with Fjolrin, then how fast things had happened with Farkas! He no sooner thought he could get away from it all for awhile and he'd been arrested!

This Mer who was undressing him, right this very second...

Looking up into Fiiralmo's eyes, as he slid the leather down over his hips. "I feel confidant enough to speak for every other Altmer male when I say this Fillim. Mer such as yourself are highly sought after! I will let Dhaunare explain the rest of that to you... for I can see that neither your father, nor Anariil, felt that it was necessary to educate you. But I can say that had you been mine, I would have never scarred you up the way that he has!"

Fillim's mouth dropped open... his Father? Now he was even more lost! Not only did this Mer act as if he held some sort of value, which was completely beyond his thinking... but he made mention of his father!

Leaning farther down into his face, he smiled devilishly, "If you were mine, I would have had you tattooed and only my counterpart would have seen your beauty... none else!"

Fiiralmo watched him closely as he undid his breech. Thinking to himself, 'Had he been his, he would have been lavished with finery. Treated like the little prince he was, and he would have never released him! Fillim would have wanted to stay with him! He knew Dhaunare felt the same. He had ever since he had first seen Fillim! And he had told Fiiralmo of him. How he had dreamt of him...'

Coming back to the present, he could see Fillim's apparent concern over the clothing that lay in the dirt... "We have brought clothing for you, so you need not worry over it. The only thing you will be keeping are your boots."
Pulling his breech from him, he looked into the Mer's worried eyes. "You need also not worry over me attempting to take you Fillim. I am only here to assist and guard you." He smiled, 'Until later of course... and then no force would be required.'

Fillim just shook his head... at that point he could have cared less over the clothes. He knew they weren't going to let him walk out of there naked. He also pretty much figured that they would want sex. Hence not only the way Fiiralmo was fawning over him, but just the fact that Dhaunare was, who he was... and had already expressed extreme interest of his own! It was what he had just said, that was eating at him!

"You... you know, of my Father?"

Fiiralmo stood back from him, looking down at the duffle. "No more questions for now Fillim, we will speak after we dine."

"But! But! Please... you have to tell me!"

Fiiralmo leaned into his face, whispering to him. "Later... I promise."

Reaching down, he pulled a crudely cut bar of goats milk soap from the duffle, along with a shaving razor and set them down. They walked into the most shallow end of the pond, and as soon as his feet hit the water, he sucked in a sharp breath and froze! "Gods! It's freezing!"

Fiiralmo laughed... watching as Fillim's entire body, broke out in goose flesh. "This is where the comparison ends! Isn't it."

Pulling him in until they were waist deep, he chuckled, watching as the smaller Mer stood there... arms wrapped around himself, shaking. His lips turning darker shade. Without warning Fiiralmo dunked under, pulling him along! Springing up from the water, he screamed out! His hands clutched around his arms, his body shaking! His breaths finally starting to calm, he looked as though he'd been struck.

Fiiralmo stood there like it was nothing. His golden skin dripping with water, his hands running over his wet hair, pulling the water from it. His smile telling Fillim just how much he enjoyed his discomfort. "Poor little Mer..." he crooned... breaking into laughter once more. "This is to be your torture whilst you travel with us."

Fillim's frown and his pushed out lip, only increasing the Altmer's amusement! Fiiralmo walked to the shore, picking up the razor and soap, breaking off two long reeds and carried it all out to him.

Handing him the reeds, "Hold these while I shave you... your beard only impedes your beauty. While it may appeal to the Nords, it does not to us! Your mixed blood may have given you more body and facial hair Fillim, but it has also made it very fine. Making it extremely hard to groom into any type of moustache or goatee."

Leaning down into his face, he lightly kissed Fillim's forehead. "Mmmm... so pretty..." Leaning back, he completely ignored the astonished look on Fillim's face and handed him the razor, so he could work the soap into a good lather. Fillim could instantly smell the scent of Lavender. Looking down, he could now see the little bits of the plant embedded into the bar of soap. Fiiralmo raised it to his head and rubbed the soap over his scalp, massaging with his free hand. "What are the reeds for?"

"Lean back so I may rinse your hair out..."
Laying Fillim back into the water... running his hands through his hair until all traces of soap were
gone. He stood him back up. When they returned, he would comb his hair out with rich oils...
making it shiny, silky soft and tangle free.

Lathering up the quivering Mer's face, "They are to clean your teeth with. This is what many of the
Mer that live here use. If you break it open, it has a fluid inside that foams up if you scrub it over
your teeth... it has a fresh clover taste to it."

He smiled, watching Fillim as he looked over the reeds with interest. "They also last a long time.
You break just one tiny piece of the end off to use and the end you've broken from will dry,
keeping the remainder of the reed good for the next days use and so on."

Taking Fillim by the chin, he tilted his head and opened the razor. Talking as he shaved him, "We
also don't take the reed out by the root. We break it off, ensuring that it will continue to grow...
Skyrim seems to be full of them."

*********

Fillim had been absolutely shocked, when Fiiralmo pulled out his replacement clothing. Not only a
new breech, but the warmest of woolen socks. Fine doeskin leggings and a burgundy silk shirt, that
fit him almost perfectly. Buttoning up the neck and down the wrists, a fine quilted coat to go over
it.

After packing things back into the duffle, along with his Thalmor robes... as he was wearing light
formal/casuals. They would relax in the evenings. Now that they had help, there would be no need
to wear their robes all night long, it was a welcome relief. He pulled on black leather boots and
listened as Fillim spoke.

"Anariil will be furious if he sees me in these..." Fillim looked down at them, running his hands
over them. Anariil had bought him gifts, but they had only been for his eyes. Whenever they
weren't alone, he was dressed as a slave. Decently, but very cheaply.

The Thalmor stood and combed his fingers through Fillim's hair, watching as he admired his
clothing. 'Anariil was a fool! Right along with the Mer's father!' And even as he almost cringed for
thinking that, he still felt it! Just the fact that he was acting like he'd never worn fine clothing!
Absolutely preposterous!

He couldn't say everything he wanted to... not yet. He'd already said more than what he had
promised Dhaunare he would. They had to be careful, lest things not go according to plan.

"Do not worry over it Fillim. Please enjoy what we give you as we travel. We have another three to
four days, before we arrive in Solitude, then another day just to reach the Embassy. Anariil's ship
isn't even due to arrive for another good six or seven days yet. You will have at the very least, a
one or two day stay at the Embassy while you wait for him."

Just seeing the fear on his face, irritated him. Even though he knew that Dhaunare would speak
with him, he fought to contain his anger. Hearing footsteps, they both looked up. Dhaunare stood,
speaking with the soldier for a moment before turning to them. Raising a hand for them to
approach, "Fillim, our soldier will take you to camp and tell you which tent is ours."

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They stood together, watching as they walked away. Fiiralmo speaking low enough so only
Dhaunare heard. "He has a lycan's mate mark on his left shoulder, but other than that and
Anariil's... no other scars."

Dhaunare let out a breath, crossing his arms... listening. "The lycan, if it is whom we believe it to be, we *know* won't get involved. Not in political issues. My concern is the scar tissue on his back. The cuts are very fine... not too deep, but it will take the best artist..."
Fillim waited for him to take a bite first, then lifting his spoon, he dug in. "I cannot believe that you remember me from five years ago."

Dhaunare just shook his head, his long silver hair flung over to one side, so that he may eat unhindered. He chuckled, "Fillim... I have never forgotten. The very next day your Father met with me and had me stationed here!"

**********

Nodding his head, he completely agreed. Taking pains to keep his voice low as they watched them depart. "We both know who that will be of course..."

The Bosmer they used at Thalmor Command was one of the best he had ever seen. Born and raised in Valenwood, he had joined them almost fifty years prior, and even with his age, he did the best work. Outside of Valenwood anyway. He was now even in use at the Training Center as well.

When he wasn't working for the Dominion, he did personal work on the side for those that requested it. He wasn't cheap by any means, but definitely worth it!

Taking in a deep breath, Dhaunare shook his head. "It is still too soon to even think of that. We need to find out as much from him as possible tonight. And even with that, we cannot act until we find out Anariil's plan for him."

Looking down at the ground, his jaw clenched up! The coming week, the waiting would be some of the hardest days spent. They both knew they could in no way, be connected with Anariil's presence there. They were to retrieve and deliver only! Then, depending on what their Commander wanted of them, they would have to stay at the Embassy so they were seen, or make an appearance somewhere else, while the events unfolded.

No one would want to be anywhere near him.

Looking back up into the woods, he would be enjoying his time with him while he had it. They both would.

Patience...

Waiting until Fillim and their guard were out of sight, they very slowly began to walk. Dhaunare glanced to the side at him... "I see you had no trouble in bathing him. Of course, after belonging to Anariil he is more than likely used to being exposed."

Abruptly stopping... Dhaunare turned toward him, confessing his weakness! "You have no idea what it was like for me to see him bare, after waiting these many years..."

Laughing, "It was very hard at first, to not give myself away... but after you began to speak with him about things, I was more interested in his reactions."
He smiled, raising a hand to his counterpart's arm. "You also did well in restraining yourself Fiiralmo... I applaud you!"

He smiled as his face flushed. "The water's temperature had more to do with that, than my powers of control... I assure you! He is just as beautiful as you described and... adorable." Just the use of that word almost made him cringe! He simply couldn't help it. Seeing him cold and wet... pouting. He still seemed so innocent, so very young.

His face flushing even further as Dhaunare paused and looked at him, his eyebrows raised up in surprise. Fiiralmo looked down at the ground... coming to a stop, his voice almost a whisper. "I fear I could very easily get attached to him Dhaunare, and that revelation alone is somewhat disturbing to me."

Dhaunare remained silent, watching him... listening to his admissions. He had yet to voice many of his own since they'd taken possession of him. That would come after an evening spent with the young one. He would have his own fears, laughing internally... more of them than he already had.

"I do apologize for revealing too much..." Fiiralmo looked up at him, his face sincere. "I just... from what you told me I was angered. I could tell he had never worn anything of value! They kept him ignorant!!"

Dhaunare stopped, bringing up a hand to his partner's arm, halting him. "You must remember! Both Anariil and Fillim's father, were on separate paths. Each one keeping Fillim ignorant for their own purposes! I think we both know Anariil's... he would want Fillim to think that he had no chance of a better existence elsewhere or with anyone else! Hence the reason that he was never seen by anyone that visited his home. He knew that if Fillim was seen, not only would he have to fear the same thing happening to him, that had happened to Ancano... but he had to keep who his father was a secret!"

Fiiralmo nodded, "His father's of course, were selfish motives as well. I sincerely doubt that Fillim is even aware of the truth."

Setting off once more... almost at the clearing. "What we will find out tonight and as we travel, is the connection between the two. Everyone knows of their friendship! What I want to know, is how Anariil came to have possession of his son!"

**********

Finally approaching camp, Fillim instead of being in the tent, was helping the Khajiit with their meals. For a moment, they just stood and watched him. Standing over the spit... chatting with the females, he seemed to be thoroughly enjoying himself.

Dhaunare headed into the tent, "I will change as you gather him."

He walked into the tent. It was perfect. Extra furs and skins lined the floor. Three cots... which after seeing the piles of extra furs that they had set aside, they wouldn't even be used. They more than likely would spread out all of those and sleep on them together. He smiled... body heat was always the most comfortable in this cold land, and he knew that Fillim needed closeness... comfort, more than anything right now.

There was a small stand that held two bottles of wine and several goblets, and of course their own personal belongings. Pulling on a pair of casual leggings, a shirt and leather boots... he lay his robes on the cot that was closest and sat down.
He would pour their wine and wait.

Fiiralmo, with his hands clasped behind his back, walked quietly up to the spit to stand next to him. Fillim was talking to the youngest of the Khajiit females... giggling and laughing, while he rolled the herbs he held between his palms and tossed them into the bubbling pot. Seeming completely oblivious to the Thalmor's presence he lowered his face down to it, smelling the aroma that wafted up into the air. 'Gods... how he missed this...'

As soon as she saw him, the Khajiit's ears tilted... the smile leaving her face. Immediately she excused herself and headed toward the cat's main tent. Straightening his back, he looked after her puzzled and then turned.

As soon as he saw him, a blush came over his face. Not even sure why, but at least now he knew why she had left and went over by her people. Fiiralmo stood next to him, a smirk on his face. "I see that you are well versed in the culinary arts..."

Staring down into the pot, the heat in his face rising. "Yes, I love to cook... it soothes me." Looking back up at the Altmer. "Especially when I have the means to cook with Elven ingredients, which hasn't been too often since I've been here."

Moving away from the pot, he knew why he was here... he wanted him to go into their tent. "It's almost ready, would you like to speak with me now?"

Fiiralmo's head tilted, "Of course." Raising his hand, he moved aside... letting Fillim go in ahead of him.

The Khajiit that were watching, looked at each other in question. The whole situation had become more and more puzzling to them by the hour. When they had been at Whiterun and the Mer had been taken. *That* seemed more the Thalmor's style. Their intimidating demeanor, especially in front of the Nord audience they had.

The things that had been said to the Dragonborn, taunting him to see if he would change his loyalty to the Empire, right down to them being hired to aid them in their travel.

Now they weren't so sure *what* was taking place. They knew the type of interest the Thalmor would have in the young prisoner they held. They had seen that before as well. The habits of Mer were often very different from their own. It wasn't necessarily seen as bad... just different. They felt a sympathy for the prisoner, as they did not want him to suffer. But the longer they traveled... the more odd things had become.

Their treatment of him was definitely not that of a prisoner. Of course, they were decent to their Khajiit. They were being paid. They would provide a service and keep to themselves. Even in the Isles, most of their servants were treated decently. Most if not all, had their own homes and were paid quite well. It was no different than having any other job. They were provided for, and had the protection the Dominion offered.

Of course, even with the pay and protection, a bad employer could make you wish you had another choice.

But... it was the prisoner.

They had all seen how Thalmor treated their enemies, and their prisoners. This was nothing of the kind.

All of them sat in their tent, waiting for the meal to be finished... surrounding their elder. They
would serve them in a moment... until then, they would watch. Daring not even to whisper amongst themselves over it, lest they be heard. The Mer's ears, were almost like their own in hearing.

No... it would not be spoken over until they reached Solitude and the Thalmor left them.

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As soon as he walked into the tent, he was almost blown back by the atmosphere that surrounded him... the feel of it. The entire tent was lined with soft furs. A massive pile of them lay at the center of the tent with large pillows piled around them. He knew where they would be sleeping.

Dhaunare was seated, sipping on wine. His shirt undone almost down to his waist, showing off his toned chest. His long, silver hair was down, toppling over his shoulders. Fillim stopped and stared at him.

Once again, feeling as he had that night in his father's kitchen. When this very Mer had trapped him up against the counter... wanting from him something he had not been free to give. Something that more than likely, would have been gently taken... had his father not walked in when he did.

Dhaunare stood and walked to him, gently tugging at the quilted coat they'd provided for him, he pulled him close. Fillim's lips parted as he looked up into that face... those green eyes. The Altmer's voice, a soft warm whisper against his lips... "Do you remember me Fillim?"

Fillim's arms came around him... holding onto him, as only he could have imagined he would have when he was younger... smaller.

Gods! how he had longed to have this little Mer under him! How he had longed to see the warm, amber glow of those eyes... looking up into his. Hear his voice as he whimpered out. Just being this close to him now, he was so hard he could feel his seed as it leaked from him, dampening the front of his breech.

Fillim's soft voice, fluttered across his lips. "Yes... " his breathing increased... his hands clutched onto Dhaunare's back. "Would you have me now?"

The hand at his back was instantly in his hair, holding his head. Dhaunare's lips crashed down onto his... moaning greedily as their tongues met.

Dhaunare held him as if he were some long lost love that he had just found again. His attentions were almost overwhelming, but even as much as he questioned it... he would embrace it. If this was the only comfort that he could have while he endured this worry... this trip to meet his doom... then he would. He would embrace anything that he could get.

Dhaunare broke away from the kiss, struggling for breath as he held him tight! Moving his lips to Fillim's ear, he kissed... darts his tongue out to taste. "I have dreamt for so long of you... of this! Fillim, you have no idea how badly I have wanted you since that night."

He also knew they needed to eat. They were all starving, and it was going to be a long night. Even with all the nights they still had to talk, he felt they should. He just wasn't ready to let him go... he couldn't. He swallowed. "Come... let us sit and drink... eat. And then may both of us get what we need from each other."

Releasing him just enough so that they could move to the furs. Both, kicking off their boots and nudging them off to the side, they stepped onto the furs and sat down.

Fiiralmo had stood to the side, watching their embrace. He wasn't jealous, for he wanted the young
Mer just as badly. But it was Dhaunare who had suffered for this and he would have his time.

Silently, he walked out to retrieve one of the pots that was ready. Setting it onto the small table, he left again, only to come back in with a tray holding bowls, spoons, bread and cheese. Fastening the tent's flap while they talked, he would serve them. They didn't want the Khajiit to enter and see their displays of affection. There were to be no disturbances!

Sitting so close that their legs and bottoms touched, Dhaunare's hand constantly roamed over his back, caressing his hair. Fiiralmo set down the tray in front of them. A bowl of pheasant stew for each, along with sliced bread with herbed goat cheese. Bringing over their filled goblets, he set them down and then moved over to the chair. He would sit at the small table and watch them... listen to them, as they reminisced.

Fillim waited for him to take a bite first, then lifting his spoon, he dug in. "I cannot believe that you remember me from five years ago."

Dhaunare just shook his head, his long silver hair had been flung over to one side, so that he may eat unhindered. He chuckled, "Fillim... I have never forgotten. The very next day, your Father met with me and had me stationed here!"

Fillim's spoon dropped into his bowl as he gawked at him. "You... you know that he is my father!"

Dhaunare set his empty bowl aside and brushed off his hands. "At first, after he sent you to bed, he was going to let it slide. I apologized for my act of indiscretion and left to join the party." He picked up his goblet, taking a drink. "I was more than a little irritated over the fact that we had been caught... stopped. So I walked out and took a carriage back to the barracks."

Turning to face him fully, "Fillim... that whole night, I thought of you... of what I wanted to do. What I would have done had he not interrupted us. I thought over how he acted! And then... I thought about how you looked, and even with all the wine I'd had to drink... I made the connection."

Laying his bowl onto the tray, Fillim grabbed his wine and drank. Shaking his head, "He never told me! He never once spoke to me about you... or about catching us! He had always told me that I looked just like my mother. I am surprised that you-"

Dhaunare looked up at Fiiralmo, then back to Fillim. "Young Mer... I can guarantee you! That the only things you inherited from your mother are your coloring and those perfect little fangs! And of course your size..."

Gesturing up to his partner, "Indeed, Fiiralmo can testify... you are the spitting image of your father! An exact duplicate!"

Fillim swallowed, looking up to Fiiralmo, who simply nodded to him... smiling. Settling his eyes back on Dhaunare. "Fillim, every Thalmor... every Altmer that knows your father, and I can guarantee you! that there are many, even here that sees you... will know who's son you are! That is how much you look like him!"

Taking another drink, Fillim looked at him. "He made you come here, because of me?"

Fiiralmo settled down on the furs with the wine, pouring them all some more. Listening as Dhaunare recalled it all again. "Your Father had noticed that I immediately left the party, and he wondered... he worried. The very next day, he sent one of his private messengers to retrieve me at the barracks. I knew then exactly what it was over. I went in to see him... he had me sit, and he
actually spoke your name. Hence how I recognized it when the summons arrived! I had memorized it, so that I would never forget."

Taking a drink, "I don't think that was intentional on his part, but it did not matter. He was already resolute in his decision. He said... 'I truly hope that you enjoyed yourself at my home last night! It will be the last of our gatherings that you will ever attend!' And then he told me."

Dhaunare glared into his cup! "He didn't even ask me if I knew who you were! He had already assumed! And that was enough! He told me that I would be sent to Skyrim! That I needed to make arrangements for my personal belongings in the Isles... because he never intended on letting me step foot back into my homeland!"

Fillim gaped at him... "But... you would not have told! You did not hurt me!"

Taking another drink, he shook his head. "It did not matter what I had done or hadn't done! I had seen you! And that was enough... he told me, that even here... in this wretched, horrible place. That if he found that I had breathed a word of your heritage! He would have my tongue cut from my head! That I would be chained and tortured... until I died!"
5 Years In The Waiting

Chapter Summary

One hit, was all it would take. He wanted him relaxed, not so out of it, that he was unaware of what was taking place. He wanted to interact with him... he wanted him responsive.

Within just moments, Fillim became loose... more at ease. Nuzzling into his neck, he whispered against his captor's golden skin. "That night, when you had me cornered... I was pure.' Lightly kissing the skin, made damp from his breath. "What would you have done? I have always wondered."

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"You must hate me then..." Fillim's brow was knitting up as he looked at him. His face, full of sympathy instead of fear. "Simply for seeing me... you have been taken away from your homeland for five years... forever?"

Sharing a glance with his partner Dhaunare leaned in closer to him, his hand running down Fillim's arm in a soothing manner. "No... I do not hate you Fillim..."

Fiiralmo got to his feet and removed the tray, this was his cue. They had known, the young Mer would have questions. They knew that he would be confused, as to the abrupt change in his treatment. They also knew, they would need something to lighten the mood. Pleasure would come first... then after, they could speak seriously. There would be no way around it. He would have many questions... just as they themselves did.

Unfortunately... they were not yet in a position to give him all of the answers they knew he would want. All of the answers, that he so deserved.

Much of that, was waiting on how things would transpire, once Anariil arrived. No one... not even the Ambassador, was looking forward to that! In fact, everyone was holding their breath... waiting.

Grabbing a knapsack from the corner, he walked over to the small table in the tent and began rifling through it, as he listened to them.

Dhaunare eased into him, wrapping him up so that he was almost in the larger Mer's lap. Fillim's head, laying against his neck... he stroked his long hair. "How can you not? look what has happened to you... I don't understand?"

Dhaunare's voice... as soft as a whisper. "Do not worry over it... " His eyes moving back up to his mate, watching him prepare the pipe. Fiiralmo quietly moved to the furs and sat down across from them, handing the pipe to him.

"Have you ever smoked before Fillim?"

Holding the pipe up to his lips, snapping his fingers to produce the smallest flame. He lit it, sucking the sweet smoke into his lungs. Fillim watched them, nodding his head. "Yes..."
Ever so gently, Dhaunare put the pipe to his lips, allowing him to take some in before passing it back to Fiiralmo.

Exhaling, he whispered to him. "I am not doing this so that I may have you... for I would have had you, regardless." softly, he rubbed his back... "I am doing this, so you will relax and enjoy your time with us while we have it."

One hit, was all it would take. He wanted him relaxed, not so out of it that he was unaware of what was taking place. He wanted to interact with him... he wanted him responsive.

Within just moments, Fillim became loose... more at ease. Nuzzling into his neck... he whispered against his captor's golden skin. "That night, when you had me cornered... I was pure." Lightly kissing the skin, made damp from his breath. "What would you have done? I have always wondered."

Dhaunare swallowed... closing his eyes... his erection already straining against the soft cloth of his breeches. Just hearing him speak those words, an involuntary moan escaped his lips. His hand moved into Fillim's hair. Ever so gently, he pulled his head back... purring against his lips. "Let me show you..."

Taking Fillim's mouth with his own, tasting him... feeling the vibrations of his moans against lips. Holding his head, feeling along his body with his other. He was barely aware of his partner undressing in front of them, as he began to undo Fillim's clothes. Fiiralmo knelt down in front of Fillim, as Dhaunare broke away from the kiss, aiding him.

Fillim's eyes, were mere slits... watching them remove his clothes... theirs. He was so hard, he could already feel the stickiness of his seed on his skin. As soon as he was bare, Dhaunare literally let out a gasp. His hand moving down to Fillim's cock, as Fiiralmo lay the young Mer down onto the furs.

Just in seeing his lips parted... his expression, already one of ecstasy. Fiiralmo wanted nothing more, than to slide his cock between them and paint those beautiful lips with his seed. Gods! but he was breathtaking! He would not though... he would let his partner take the lead.

Fillim stretched out, as Fiiralmo joined Dhaunare in between his thighs. He closed his eyes, thankful for the drug that now ran through him. Thankful, that he could forget what he had left and what he was approaching, at the hands of these two Mer. For it would do no good to dwell on either, he had no control over any of it.

Opening his eyes back up, he smiled, allowing the haze in his mind to take over, watching the two Altmer as they fawned over him.

Dhaunare took him in, one hand holding his slender length as he gently rubbed his face over it. Cradling his balls, with the other. Hunggrily, he stared at what his hands held. He felt as though he had never seen such a perfect little cock. Flawlessly cut... just the right length and so very slim. The skin of his shaft, a dark golden olive... just slightly darker than the rest of him. And the head, was turning the most beautiful shade. He could only imagine what it would be like, to take it in as he came. Drops of pearlescent fluid, filled the small slit. Moving his mouth down to it and darting out his tongue... he tasted it.

As soon as his tongue touched him, Fillim's head went back into the furs, sucking in air through his teeth in attempt to keep quiet. Dhaunare's mouth enveloped him as he lowered down, his mouth coming to a stop in a kiss, at the soft hair that surrounded him. Arching his back, hands digging into the furs. Dhaunare moaned as he came back up, sucking everything in and swallowing. He
wanted to remember the taste of him forever! Raising up just enough to lay a tender kiss upon the head, he slid back down.

He could feel Fiiralmo, as he settled right next to his mate... one hand holding his leg back as he kissed and licked the soft skin of his inner thigh, all the way to where Dhaunare's hand held his balls.

One finger playfully stroking over his dark little hole, as his mouth sucked on the sensitive flesh. Lifting back just enough to see his handiwork, he licked it and moved on to another spot. If Anariil did decide he wanted him, he would be thoroughly marked. They would have numerous nights with him before he was left at the Embassy, and they would have him every one of those nights. If he had his way, he would leave his name on this Mer's abdomen all the way across in dark purple marks, showing his love.

Showing Anariil what a fool he was to let loose of such an unbelievable treasure! So that he would see who had loved him... who had been inside of him. But he truly doubted that was Anariil's reason for coming. They all did. He wouldn't see the Mer bare again, and they would never see Fillim put through such agony because of them.

Moving his head, Dhaunare had decided to share now that he had tasted him first. Fillim's hand clamped down over his mouth, as two tongues simultaneously worked their way up and down his shaft. One on one side... one on the other.

Dhaunare momentarily backed away, bringing Fillim's left leg back to his chest and held it there, exposing his ass. Fiiralmo moved to the side, continuing his torturous licking over the sweet little cock that was now in his sole possession.

Fiiralmo let loose with a soft chuckle, as his partner literally ran his nose and mouth slowly across Fillim's puckered hole.

Dhaunare breathed in... taking in his scent. Feeling the tender, soft flesh against his lips, his tongue snaked out... just barely touching against it... a hand on each cheek, long fingers, placed perfectly at his hole... pulling. He pushed his tongue inside, moaning against him as the bittersweet flavor hit his taste buds.

One hand covering his mouth, the other holding his leg back, he cried out under his palm as the tongue invaded him. Fiiralmo's hand, now attempting to hold him still as his body writhed under their ministrations.

Handing Dhaunare the bottle of healing oils, he backed away. Tonight, his partner would be the only one to enter him. He would finally have what he had waited so long for. Fiiralmo's gift, would be to watch... as he took his pleasure from his partner.

Drizzling just a tiny bit of the oils over his finger, he slid it over his little hole... feeling that delectable pucker as it quivered in anticipation. Looking away just long enough to see Fillim's face, his hand now wrapped around Fiiralmo's cock. Dhaunare watched his partner... on his knees with his head flung back, mouth opened in a silent cry as Fillim's talented hand worked him.

Sliding a finger inside he watched Fillim's face, listening to the intake of his breath... every second would be ingrained into his mind for later use, when he was without him. His voice coming out in a slow drawl, a mixture of the wonderful drug combined with his arousal. "You are so tight... have you even been taken by a Nord yet, Fillim?"

Looking away from the one he was pleasing, his hand continued on. Running up to the darkening.
golden head, gathering his sweet fluid and using it to run his hand back down, gliding over the soft skin. Fillim's voice, coming out so soft. "Only a few times...."

A sly smile came to Dhaunare's lips, as he worked his finger in and out... readying him. His other hand was now oiled and running over his own length, his eyes heavy with lust. He pulled his finger out and climbed up over him, pausing to kiss along the soft, dark skin... working his way up Fillim's abdomen... his chest. Darting his tongue out to taste him... moving up to one dark nipple, sucking it into his mouth. Fillim arched up into him! Moving up into his neck.. his mouth. Kissing him lightly, speaking softly against him, as he looked down at the exquisite Mer.

"What I want to do... is taste and feel, every little inch of your beautiful body."

Closing his eyes, moving his mouth down to Fillim's sensitive ear... running his tongue lightly across it. Fillim's whine, like music to his own. His words came out in a breathy whisper... "I should have been your first... I would have loved you..."

Moving back up to look at Fillim's face, he could swear he saw a slight trace of pain through his pleasure. He would speak no more... not until they finished and lay together, exhausted from their lovemaking.

Fillim released the cock he held, wrapping his arms around Dhaunare's shoulders. Gazing into each other's eyes, he wiggled his ass... feeling the long slender length of his Altmer lover, glide along his bottom.

Not moving his hands from their place, his partner took hold of his head for him, and lining him up with that sweet hole, that he had longed for... Dhaunare slowly pushed in.

The small body under him arched until their chests met. He watched as Fillim's eyes closed, his mouth falling open... drawing in breath. He didn't want to take his eyes off him, but the pleasure... the emotion that accompanied being inside of him, just having him was overwhelming.

The emotion, was the thing that would do him in. Squeezing his eyes tighter, Dhaunare tried to push it away... and stopped. Holding still, as he felt his own lover's mouth move in between his cheeks. Just the sensation... Au-riel!

Fillim clenched his bottom up, tightening around his cock! He opened his eyes, breathing out, "Gods!" His voice choked, "As if you are not tight enough little one! You threaten to damage me..."

Fillim opened his eyes, taking his bottom lip with his teeth. He looked at him sneakily. Dhaunare moved back to his ear, whispering as he kissed him. "Are you showing off for me Fillim? Have you missed the feel of an Altmer inside of you?"

Pulling out until just the head was inside, Fiiralmo's tongue was moving in time with him. He pushed back in, burying himself to the hilt... his balls resting on Fillim's ass. A quiet cry escaping him, as Dhaunare ground into him! "Have you missed the feel of a Mer, so deep inside of you?"

Fillim tightened his hold around him. His face pleading, as he looked up at him... his body rocking in time with his thrusts. His voice squeaking out, "Yesss... " His fingers digging into the golden back that he held.

Slowing just enough, as the feel of oil hit him. Then the familiar feel of his mate's cock, as Fiiralmo knelt behind him and opened him up... pushing inside of him.

Fillim watched as Dhaunare threw his head back, his long silver hair, falling over his shoulders and
down his back. His breaths coming in short gasps, as Fiiralmo thrust against him. He could hear the slap of skin behind him. Dhaunare grabbed Fillim's legs, wrapping them around his forearms... attempting to speed up! Dhaunare's body began to shake... none of them would last. Looking down at Fillim... he couldn't even speak... Gods!

Moving together as one... his stomach rubbing against Fillim's weeping cock with every thrust. He stopped and ground into him! Not even backing away to pull out, just grinding against him! Fiiralmo pushing into his ass, until all he could feel was cock against that wonderful fucking spot, and the feel of his tight sac pushing against his ass!

Their faces together... eyes closed, he completely stilled... feeling Fillim's cry against his mouth, just as he felt his seed spill between them. He was buried... it was too much! The scent of him! The feel of him! To be completely full up inside of him!

Pulsing... they breathed against each other. Fiiralmo pulled out... both of them hearing the slap of his hand against his own flesh, as he worked himself to climax.

Grabbing hold of his lover's ass, his body locked up! Shooting over Dhaunare's golden back.

Staying inside of him, as Fiiralmo walked across the tent to fetch some water and a cloth to clean them all up with. Fillim's legs were wrapped around him... his arms holding onto him, as if he were his one and only. Dhaunare's arms rested alongside of his head... his fingers playing in his hair. He had grown soft within him, and he could feel his seed, that had spilled out around them.

And still he would not move away. He wasn't ready to part from his body... he had to feel all that he could, for just a few more minutes.

Softly brushing their lips together... Fillim's warm eyes locked with his... he looked so innocent. In all of his days, he knew he would never forget this look. This time with him.

Now... he was more determined then ever...
Nothing Weighs More Than A Secret

Chapter Summary

His Commander told him once, that 'Nothing weighs on you more than a Secret'.

And although Ondolemar was his superior, they were also very close friends. They had an incredible amount of trust in one another. He had confided much to Dhaunare, and to his mate. Telling them things that very few Mer knew. And what were friends for, if you were not able to share in each other's pain?

One of the things that had weighed on Ondolemar the most over the years, was the fact that he was next in command under Anariil during his last tour in Valenwood.

Chapter Notes

Okay, I feel the need to forewarn here. Some of this chapter and more that's coming up may infuriate some of you. But I figure it like this, if you've been able to stick with this story thus far through all the horrible injustices that have taken place, without hitting the back button and saying, 'Screw this!!' Then you're probably in it for the long haul and it will only add to your experience rather than ruining it for you.

So here goes...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

There are some secrets which do not permit themselves to be told...

~ Edgar Allan Poe

Looking down at him, he just couldn't get over the sight. Fillim's dark skin, not so dark that he couldn't notice the flush that stained his cheeks, and was now running down his neck. Gods... how it covered his chest almost entirely.

Dhaunare knew all too well, how fast the dawn would come. Closing his eyes, all it took was a slight shift of his hips, and his softened flesh fell from it's leaking sheath. Fiiralmo had already washed up, and while he had lay resting atop Fillim, had cleaned up his back where he'd spent his seed.

It was time to move, they needed to get comfortable for the night and have some wine while they talked. Come tomorrow they would have to remain silent while they traveled, lest the ears that surrounded them hear what they spoke of. That was something that they could not risk.

Fillim watched Dhaunare as they cleaned up. When just minutes ago, he had been speaking words of love and endearment, now... he was silent. Dead quiet, as he assisted him with his bathing and
dressing for bed, and his eyes seemed to get farther and farther away by the second. Not quite able to place the look that now ruled the Altmer's face, Fillim remained silent and waited. He knew Dhaunare would speak when he was ready.

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He knew the drug that still remained in his veins, was assisting in the feeling that time had slowed. It had a tendency to do that. Making him feel that everything was moving in slow motion, even the sounds he heard. But that wasn't true. It was an illusion. An illusion the drug gave him and everyone that smoked it. It was opium's way of relaxing you.

Most of the time though, and it was not only he and Fiiralmo, but many in the order indulged in the smoke that the Khajiit used. It was a lot less addictive, and had many of the same desired affects that the opium held without such loss of control. That particular drug, had come from plants that grew wild in parts of Black Marsh, along with the jungle regions of Elsweyr. And it was from there, that it had been brought to the other regions of Tamriel by travelers, and the indigenous peoples that left their homelands and relocated.

Dhaunare found it laughable, that many of the Nords thought the Bosmer had brought the drug into their land. And while some of them that resided there had taken up the habit, it was in no way a natural pastime for them, unless they were so far from their native way of living that they no longer cared.

The Bosmer that were born and raised in Valenwood, would never take from a plant, let alone burn part of it. They wouldn't even go so far as to cut the fungus from their sacred trees, to use as poison. They would however scrape off a residue that built up on the mushrooms, to make an incredibly nasty one from. He'd also heard of them using seeds and certain types of foliage that had already dropped onto the ground, during a plant's natural shedding cycle for medicinal purposes. But to take from a living plant or tree... never!

During his tour in Valenwood, he had seen what the Bosmer used as a drug. And it was something that would never be found anywhere else. It was the dung from several of their indigenous species. They would dry it and smoke it. Evidently the naturally occurring chemicals in the animal's bodies, reacted to several types of berries and plant life they would ingest, making their dung into an incredibly potent drug when smoked or inhaled.

Their healers and elders would put it in lamps, and during time of ritual they would swing them about while chanting. Even going so far as to hang them in a sick Mer's home or sleeping area, while healing was being done. Many of the Mer would dry it and smoke it in pipes, using it no differently than that of the Khajiit and Argonian that he'd often used.

He'd had only one opportunity to smoke that, and he would never forget the experience. But all in all, none compared to what they had made from their flowers that grew in the Isles.

Opium made you forget your troubles. You couldn't care even if you wanted to. And you didn't want to.

All of Nyrn could literally burn down while you were high, and it wouldn't matter. You wouldn't have the strength or desire to even move. If anything, and if he was high enough, he'd simply lay there and laugh while it happened. Complete euphoria.

That was exactly why he had put a lot of thought into whether or not they should even smoke this, and not the other while they had him. The problem with the weed the Argonians and Khajiit used, was the fact that it was also used much like the Bosmer's dung... for spiritual awakening. It wasn't
as potent as the dung, as it didn't make you hallucinate. But even though it made you more in tune with the otherworldly, it could also make you hyper-aware. Putting you in a such a state that you would notice things that you normally were oblivious to, connect you to them, allowing you to even commune with various entities... thus fully opening your third eye.

That wasn't what Fillim needed. Not right now, when he was already apprehensive and in fear of seeing Anariil again, and the possible outcome of that. Hurting over the past, and now being forced away from his newfound home. No. What Fillim needed, was the high that only Opium could give. Something that would take away his fears... take away his pain, if only for just awhile. A respite.

The key was just giving enough, so that they could still function and have enough control to act appropriately if an emergency took place. One hit each, was all it had taken. He'd been able to relax with them, and forget.

Now, after their brief moment of blissful release, he would be forced to recall some things for them. It was necessary, there was no way around it. The information he needed, wasn't just to satisfy his own personal sense of curiosity either. It was detrimental. He wished that he could have Fillim focus solely on what they had to offer him. A future... true freedom. Much more than that.

Deep down, Dhaunare wanted that for him. But the fear in his heart told him that in the end, if Fillim still lived and had his freedom and was aware of the truth, he may not want anything to do with Fiiralmo or himself. That after all of this, there was a chance that neither of them would ever see him again. And could he blame him if that was what he chose? No.

Feeling their eyes upon him, rousing him from his thoughts he sat back down, now dressed for evening and took the goblet that Fiiralmo offered him. Still, as he sat next to them and could feel his lover's concern over his quiet grow, he wondered just how much he should disclose.

Their Commander had already warned them not to say too much, for he planned to meet with Fillim himself prior to Anariil's arrival, and intended to go over certain matters with him then. Matters that would change everything, whether Anariil was stopped right now or not.

As soon as the summons to bring him in had reached Skyrim and Dhaunare had stepped forward to request the job, Ondolemar had met with him, stating that he would have assigned him to it regardless...

Ondolemar knew that with the way things in the Dominion were being handled now, Anariil coming to Skyrim when they were at peace, would not be let go. It would not be overlooked, regardless of who his friends were. Regardless of what strings were pulled.

The problem was, they could not be the ones to stop him. They could not be implicated. They literally had to wait and see what Anariil planned to do with him. Of course, what was going to come about from this, would go over much nicer if Fillim lived.

And at this point, Ondolemar didn't care whether or not Anariil knew that they had given Fillim the truth. Things would be blown wide open after this anyway... Anariil had to know that. Ondolemar, and every other Mer that was stationed there had heard that he was coming. They all felt that he evidently didn't care how this looked! That he didn't care about the obvious ramifications of his actions!

If he did, he wouldn't be doing what he was doing.

Ondolemar had told him, that this was exactly the type of thing that happened when a Mer became so powerful, that they felt they were beyond consequence. And that would quickly become a
It was one thing for a powerful Mer like Fillim's father for example, to keep his transgressions hidden.

It didn't mean that the Dominion didn't care about those transgressions, nor that he wouldn't face consequences if they were brought to light.

It was absolute truth that there was no society, no matter how righteous they made themselves out to be, that didn't have wrongs being committed in secret. Especially by the ones in charge. To even think so was ludicrous! The Dominion was made up of numerous powerful Mer and Khajiit, Bosmer and Altmer alike. And of course many of these Mer had their own secrets... didn't they all?

In their society, there was not one single Mer that was completely above their laws. Not one single Mer that could escape it. Eventually all would be known. And what Anariil now did, would have a chain reaction that would effect many. Of course... what he had done all those years ago, had effected many as well.

His Commander told him once, that ‘Nothing weighs on you more than a Secret’. And although Ondolemar was his superior, they were also very close friends. They had an incredible amount of trust in one another. He had confided much to Dhaunare, and to his mate. Telling them things that very few Mer knew. And what were friends for, if you were not able to share in each other's pain?

One of the things that had weighed on Ondolemar the most over the years, was the fact that he was next in command under Anariil during his last tour in Valenwood.

Anariil had taken a select few from their encampment one evening, to accompany him on what he said was a raid. Stating that it absolutely had to be done at night, and that he only wanted those adept in stealth to be with him. He had evidently spotted a female Bosmer on his last journey there, and had promised himself to have possession of her before his tours ended. Telling them that she was going to be a birthday gift to a very old and dear friend of his.

With his age and his own promotion coming up, he would no longer be making these types of trips. He was to remain in the Isles after this. The only trips he'd be making outside of their homeland, would be to Cyrodiil on occasion. He had trusted the secrecy of what his intentions were, to his next in command and two other Mer. Each of those Mer had a lot to lose that Anariil knew he could use as leverage should they decide to run their lips about what was being done.

The rest in their group were common foot soldiers that lived at the barracks. But the ones that he took with him were all robes. Wizards and Battlemages, with power and royalty behind their names... status! Every single one of them were in position to gain from this tour. At the time, Ondolemar was up for promotion and even though he had completely disagreed with what his superior did, he had remained silent.

To even give a glimpse of disdain over what they were about to do, would be sending up a red flag that would make Anariil question their loyalty. Each Mer involved knew the gravity of their actions that night, and the ramifications they could face if any of it came out. The Bosmer were just as much a part of the Dominion as were the Altmer. Equal positions held, with equal authority coming from Royals, Elders and Chieftains from each side.

The raids that the Dominion conducted in Elswyre and Valenwood, were simply to find and bring to justice, those that had rebelled against Dominion authority. That and nothing more!

It was also common knowledge that the majority of the Mer that the Dominion sought out, were living secretly as renegades in the wilds of their native regions, and not in the cities and settlements. They had absolutely no business going where they were going.
Since the formation of the third Aldmeri Dominion, strict laws governing slavery had been put in place. The Bosmeri people, being just as much a part of the Dominion, wanted the guarantee that the subjugation and exploitation their people often suffered would come to an end. Not just theirs, but the other races as well. And the Altmer, wanting no friction between themselves and their Bosmer cousins, agreed. They as Mer, would rise above the mistakes of their past and begin anew together.

Laws signed by the Dominion's entire judicial sect were voted on and put into place. The only time that any slave was to be owned, regardless of race, was if that particular Mer, Nord, Khajiit, etc, had been found guilty of a crime. Depending on the crime and the sentence given, the criminal may be given the opportunity to spend it in servitude. The length of that servitude depending, of course, on the severity of the crime.

Rebellion against the Dominion was a crime. And even though slaves were released after these laws were made, and many of them given the option of staying on and receiving pay, as any employee would. There were many that didn't want to pay for labor, that at one time had been free, thus turning to the black market. Even though their raids to the regions that still held renegades could still supply some of this demand. They then had to go before the court system and agree to legal terms if that's what the ones being charged chose.

After the fear of being caught wore off and the demand grew, activity on the black market increased. Of course more often than not it was criminals that dealt in trafficking, that did the capturing and selling, not the Dominion. The fear of repercussion, losing everything you had, was simply not worth bringing a slave back.

But sexual slavery on the other hand, that was something that would never die out, regardless of law. And there was always someone willing to pay handsomely for just the right Mer.

And by just the right Mer, that meant someone very, very young. Someone beautiful and pure...untouched. Someone that was trainable.

Of course, it took an unusually twisted individual to seek out and capture such a Mer. Even those that would willingly give all they had to spend an hour or two with such a slave, didn't have it in them to take someone's freedom for that purpose, or even own one themselves. It was simply a novelty, or the indulgence of a kink. Once that craving had been sated, they usually moved on from it.

Some were never sated though, like his Commander's friend, Ancano.

Even Dhaunare had admitted to Ondolemar, after finally confiding in him about seeing Fillim, hence his permanent duty being moved to Skyrim, that he would've given anything to take the young Mer to his bed that night. But even as much as he wanted him, he would rather that Fillim chose to be at his side and in his bed, than to take him by means of force. The thought of that, was something he found he may not be able to live with.

The look that had been on his Commander's face at hearing of the fact that Telindil had a mixed breed son, had been one of complete astonishment! As soon as he told him that said adolescent was being used as a servant, his expression had changed swiftly to a mix of anger and concern.

Knowing that Dhaunare had trusted him enough to tell him something of that magnitude, that could very well end his life if he decided to turn him in, Ondolemar had in turn confided in him. Telling him of who he believed that child's mother was, and the part that he had played in capturing her.
In Ondolemar's quarters in Markarth, Dhaunare had sat silent. His goblet clutched in his sweating hands as he listened, finding out who she was.

The fact that they had snuck into Marbruk, to an estate that was clearly that of a royal, climbing up a trellis and through a window to a bedchamber. How Anariil had placed a drug dosed cloth over the mouth of the sleeping young female. Bound, gagged and blindfolded, they had left with her.

The grief on his superior's face was all too real, as he told him of how affected the three of them had been and how hard it was to keep it hidden from Anariil as soon as they saw where they were going and who they were taking.

Dhaunare had remembered sitting there, frozen to his chair as he heard every horrible detail. The fire's light dancing across Ondolemar's face, just enough to shield him from the worst of it, for he knew that his Commander wept. This would not be the first time, nor would it be the last.

After the painstaking process of getting her back, all the lies that had been told, the coin that had exchanged hands and all the promises made. Ondolemar had wearily gone back to his family's estate, feeling as though he were dead inside. What did his status, his promotion, nor any of it mean, after what they had done!?

It took only a few weeks for the news of her disappearance to reach the Isles. The daughter of a Bosmer Chieftain had disappeared. She was Royal, aged only 17 years and betrothed to the son of another royal family residing in Falinesti, a city in their neighboring region of Malabal Tor.

Completely numb, Ondolemar had listened to every bit of news that came their way. Holding his breath through all the meetings that had been held over it. How the Chieftain, a well known and powerful official of the Dominion, had been beside himself over the disappearance of his beloved daughter. How his wife and son were inconsolable.

Daily life became unbearable. Both of the Mer that had been a party to it along with himself, volunteered for duty in Skyrim. It was too hard being in their homeland, knowing not only what they'd partaken in, but who had her. The fact that Telindil himself sat in on these meetings, pretending to console the grief stricken Bosmer. The whole time, having her in his home under lock and key. A Bosmer who's entire lineage had been faithful to their cause! A Bosmer whom Telindil had known and dealt with for many, many years.

The more he thought over it, the more it sickened him.

After that, even more Bosmer were returned to their homeland. Many in secret. For the Bosmer Chieftain had convinced his Dominion counterparts, that bounties should be posted for anyone caught with an illegal slave, and or servant! Rewards would be given to any that could give information as to the whereabouts of his daughter, especially to any that may have information concerning the details of her disappearance!

Dhaunare's next thought made his head turn to their captive guest. And that was, How did Anariil get possession of him?

That was something that not even his Commander knew, and one of the main reasons he was to be questioned, and why Ondolemar wanted to meet with him so badly while he could. They only had a small window of opportunity before he arrived to discuss things without interruption.

When he had finally broken down and told Ondolemar the true reason behind his sudden transfer there, he had assured him that Fillim, was in fact, Telindil's son. Even though Telindil had never admitted that to him, the only actual information he'd actually attained was Fillim's name. The half-
breed looked just like him! And not knowing his exact age, he could only give him a guesstimate, but that given his size and obvious development, he was definitely in his adolescent years.

His Commander had instantly made the connection. The timing matched. The date that she was taken and the estimated age of the young Mer that Dhaunare had seen, the reaction from Telindil! He knew he was correct!

He had also been the one to receive Ancano's travel papers when he'd arrived at the port in Solitude. Ancano had stood at his desk, watching as Ondolemar's eyebrows raised up in question. 'You have been given possession of a mixed-breed servant?' Knowing the shocked expression on his face was completely visible and obvious to his friend, 'Where is this servant? Why is he not here with you?'

Ancano's response had been, that he had already sent him to get settled at Winterhold... he would be waiting for him there. It was at that point that Elenwen had cut in, glaring at the Wizard, she chastised him for acting on his own! Stating that the College was already furious over the fact that a Thalmor Wizard was being assigned there, but now to believe that they would allow said Thalmor's servant there as well? Preposterous!! And who had given him permission to bring a servant!? Who did he think he was!?

Ondolemar had sat back, his stomach roiling upon reading the remainder of his travel documents. The fact that it gave Fillim's name, and the fact of who actually owned him.

His mind had gone in circles, the voices of the Ambassador and the Wizard fading into the background, as he tried to encompass what was taking place and why Anariil had possession of him. Not only that, but why in Oblivion had he been handed over to Ancano, when if what Dhaunare had told him was true, anyone that saw him would notice the resemblance he had to his father and make the connection!

He wanted to see him! He absolutely had to see what he looked like! For he was one of only two other Mer in Skyrim that actually knew what Fillim's mother looked like. He needed to speak with him, find out if she was still in Telindil's possession. With Telindil knowing of her importance, he would never believe that he would have sold her or turned her loose! Not when she could return to her father, telling him who'd had possession of her, and how it came to pass!! He would never be that foolish!

Fillim's hand lay gently on his arm. "Dhaunare... are you well?"

He swallowed, nodding his head he raised his goblet to take another drink, pausing. He looked at Fillim, part of him wanting to know so badly and yet afraid to know. "Fillim... how did Anariil come to have possession of you? Can you tell me please?"

Fillim looked down into his lap, the hand he'd laid onto Dhaunare in concern had been removed and was now clasped together with his other. "On my sixteenth birthday, my father... he uh... he sold me to him. To work off the debt I owed to him."

Seeing the stain that spread over the young Mer's face, he could tell Fillim was embarrassed. It was more than that, he was hurt. Dhaunare's eyes met his partner's, just from seeing the look on his face, he could tell their feelings were shared. As well as their apprehension at hearing more, they were both disgusted!

His brows gathered. He was baffled. "What debt could you possibly have owed to him, that you could not work it off on his own premise?"
Fillim gulped his wine, reaching for the bottle to refill it, no longer worrying over propriety. They watched him, waiting with dreaded anticipation as he licked his lips and swallowed, staring down into his goblet. "To work off my schooling. Not only did Anariil school me in magic at his request. But my fa... Telindil, he paid to have me tutored for several years prior."

Rubbing his fingers over his forehead, trying to alleviate the twinges of the headache that was forming, his mind ran over it. *Why on earth would Telindil worry over having him schooled, if he was just going to sell him? What in Oblivion was the point!?*

Clearing his throat, Fiiralmo spoke for him, the next question and one of the most important as well. "Fillim, didn't he care about how your Mother would feel over him doing this? What was her stance on it? Did he not care ab-"

The confused look on Fillim's face stopped him dead. Tears sprang up in the now inebriated young Mer's eyes. "My mother?"

Fillim shook his head, a single tear spilled over, rolling down his cheek. "My Mother is dead."

Chapter End Notes

Also, I realize that I may be way off on the whole slavery law thing, but so far I haven't found anything in all the lore that goes over that during current 4th Era Skyrim time. SO I'm going with my plot.

Thanks for reading.
Raising his hand to Fillim's chin, Dhaunare lifted his face, forcing him to meet his green eyes. "They blame us for their ruthless ways and vicious acts. They blame us for their wars. But in all actuality Fillim, it is in their very nature. A Nord loves none else, the way he does the blooding of his blade! And he will find a way to fight, even if none is provided for him. And he will revel in it till his dying breath. They would rather die with a blade in their hands, than with their loved ones in their arms. And if you stay with him... or them, this will be proven to you."

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Immediately, Dhaunare stood and walked to the other side of the tent! Facing away from them, speaking as low as possible in attempt to conceal the concern in his voice! "When did this happen? How? By who's hand, Fillim?"

He listened to Fillim's words, his hand coming to cover his mouth. He couldn't face him and not show the sheer panic that threatened to overwhelm him! How could this get any worse?

She'd died so very young! And without any of those she'd cared for and missed to be near her! Her Father and the rest of her family not even knowing that she had died, or that she had bore a child... that there was actually something of her that remained other than just memories!

Not only would Ondolemar be devastated by this news, but the ramifications now, would be all the more severe.

He swallowed, listening to his partner console Fillim, who was not only upset, but questioning his actions. Asking Fiiralmo why he'd gotten up, and what was wrong? What were they keeping from him?

Even if Fillim was saved, the outcome of this could be horrific, but if he died... and now with his mother dead and no way for real recompense to be made? Dhaunare thought about it and, yes, it could get worse. Much worse! He didn't care what happened to Anariill or to Telindil. But he did care about his Superior and what happened to him. He cared very much, and now he truly did fear for him.

Learning this, he didn't know what to say that wouldn't divulge more than what he'd promised his Commander he would. And how could they give this Mer hope? When they were delivering him right into the very jaws of his destroyer. What could they possibly say to him... tell him, that would give him peace?

Taking in a breath, he walked back over and sat down, settling in around Fillim. The male he'd pledged himself to on one side of him, trying to maintain some semblance of normalcy in light of the situation and the revelation of what'd they'd just learned. And the young one that they both wanted on the other side.

He'd made his decision and although it wouldn't be easy, Fillim wanted answers. And yes, he
deserved them. But the only way that he could keep his word to Ondolemar and yet keep this young Mer from absolute panic, was to simply tell him that there was hope, that not all was lost.

Of course if it were him in this position, he would never be satisfied with that. But it wasn't, and he had obligations! Fillim knowing everything right now would not help him. It would only serve to fuel any anger and resentment that he may harbor toward those that had taken from him!

He also knew that right now, they themselves appeared to be amongst that very same category. When in all actuality, that couldn't be farther from the truth! Even though they were acting on orders to retrieve him, they were also acting on orders from their Commander, whose intentions, even as they were being carried out for his own reasons, were indeed noble.

He would let Ondolemar speak to him and give him the so needed, so deserved truth that had been withheld from him! Perhaps then, what Fillim learned would give him the strength to face Anariil in a new light. Perhaps it would awaken something in him.

Dhaunare cleared his throat, and putting a hand to Fillim's cheek, he stroked it softly. "Fillim... what I'm going to ask of you now, may be hard for you to do. But I implore you, please have trust in me."

The young Mer's mouth dropped open, a look of pure defiance showing in his amber eyes! "What? But!"

Taking in a frustrated breath, he looked down, completely unable to meet the demands that shown in Fillim's eyes... his face. He was already so overwhelmed with his own feelings! His wants, desires, and now to take on Fillim's as well!

Swallowing, he spoke, but did not look him in the face. "Fillim... I will admit that when I first saw you those years ago, at that time, I would have taken you without a seconds thought to the consequences. In fact, I didn't feel that there really would have been any, until I saw Telindil's reaction upon entering and seeing us."

Remaining quiet, Fillim watched him closely as he spoke, his chest tightening up as Dhaunare finally met his eyes. The emotion in the Altmer's face compounding his own. "I would never have forced you, but I wanted you! And I would have had you!"

Dhaunare stared into his eyes! "I would have taken you to an empty room, a solitary place in that mansion of his... I would have locked the door, and I would have had you! All night long!"

Fiiralmo handing him his wine, he took a drink and set the goblet down. He just had to get this out! Wrapping an arm around Fillim, his long fingers stroking nonchalantly over his back, "After seeing you and touching you that first time, I knew that I would never be able to get enough of you! And if I'd had you that night, it would've been all that much worse! Fillim, I wanted to have you near me, to be mine only! In fact, later that evening as I lay in bed thinking over it all, my mind was devising ways to steal you away from him. Even after I made the connection regarding the resemblance between the two of you... I thought about it."

He pulled him closer, oblivious to the shocked look on Fillim's face, he continued. "I would never had made you a slave! I told you earlier, that I would have loved you. I would have showered you with gifts and finery befitting a Mer such as yourself..."

Moving his eyes away from Fillim's, he settled them onto his full lips. "I would have made you understand your worth... the power inherent, of the blood that flows within your veins!"
Pulling him even closer, he was oblivious to his mate's look of apprehension, right along with Fillim's look of confusion. "But never would I have harmed you! And you would have desired to be at my side... you would have loved me."

Leaning his forehead against Fillim's, he could barely stand what he was feeling! "I didn't understand then who you really are, but once I learned of it, my desires for you only intensified!"

Bringing his hand up to wrap in Fillim's long hair, he held his head gently. "I know you do not understand of what I speak! But Fillim, you will once we reach the Embassy. And I promise you, once you know, you will be a changed Mer! And then perhaps you will understand the depths of my concern for you! My want for you."

Releasing him Dhaunare sat up, moving away just a little and looking upon his stricken mate. He reached a hand over, holding his momentarily... reassuring him that he was still his and that he need not fear. Fiiralmo nodded, the corners of his mouth tilting upward, letting him know that he understood. Sipping on his wine for a moment, Fillim sat still and listened, trying to make sense of it all.

"What we did at Whiterun, we had to do. It was expected."

Lifting his goblet taking in a drink, the back of his index finger running across his lips to catch a runaway drop. "I apologize... but, there was no other way to handle it. We had to act according to the warrant. The knowledge we hold and what you will soon learn cannot be made public. At least not yet."

Finally Fillim took a drink, draining half of the goblet he set it down and wrapped his arms around his knees, looking between them.

"I also know just from the Dovahkiin's actions toward you and how affected he was at your arrest... your parting show of affection, that you have feelings for one another. Though I do not understand the scope of your relationship."

Noting Fillim's drawn breath, he tilted his head, long silver hair tumbling over his shoulder. "Your reaction also confirms my thoughts, but you need not worry, Fillim. I do not see him as the real enemy. I cannot force you to feel for me what I have grown to feel for you. For what I now know has had great affect on what I originally felt. And, I am also aware of the numerous matters and circumstances that weigh upon you at this time. I do not care to add to them, but I feel I must speak my mind, as I may not have another opportunity to do so."

Dhaunare licked his lips, settling his gaze into his now empty goblet. "I will say this, Fillim, no matter the outcome of this situation, you have no business being paired with a Nord, nor any of the human races!"

Fiiralmo's eyes jumped over to Fillim, trying to gauge the expression he now bore. Completely surprised that Dhaunare would declare himself so fully.

Grabbing the wine, Dhaunare poured his, then filled his mate's along with Fillim's. Even if he couldn't be frank with him about his lineage and all the circumstances surrounding how it all came about, he at least could be about his own feelings. Hopefully this way, when it was all said and done, if Fillim still lived then perhaps there would be a chance for them.

Lifting the filled goblet, he once again stared into the dark abyss that was his drink. It was so very hard to speak of all these things and still look upon him. Once it was out, then he could perhaps breathe a sigh of sweet relief.
"I know it will be of your choice, Fillim, but you shouldn't be with him, you should be with one of your own. I understand why he wants you... I do. I understand the human's draw to a Mer. But once the lust and novelty wears off, what else is there?"

The defensive look on Fillim's face, telling him that he was done being quiet! Dhaunare forced away the smile that threatened to take over his resolve, listening as Fillim defended his Nord.

"It's not just lust! He cares for me, Dhaunare! It's real!" Fillim sputtered, raising his goblet to take a drink, his face had flooded with color. Whether it was admission of said feelings or anger... he wasn't sure which, but he thought it was probably both.

Watching him intently now, "I don't think that mark on your shoulder came from him... please, tell me if I am wrong!"

Fillim stared down into his wine! Heat flowing off from his face! Another admission!

He and his partner were well aware that he had spent time with the Companions. Word amongst the guard and townsfolk traveled at an amazing speed throughout the holds. Even before the summons came in for the warrant to be issued, they had caught word of another Mer being brought into the fold. And how many of the Nords thought it strange, wrong, that Mer were even allowed within their ranks. They had heard the gossip, that two of the prominent members had chosen a male... and not just any male, but a Mer!

This time, the gossip was fluttering throughout their own ranks... their own people, not just the Nords. A Mer with a Nord... and not just any Nord, but a Companion! How could one of their own sink so low!

When he read the summons and realized that it literally said what hold Fillim was in, he already knew who the Mer in question was that everyone was gossiping about. For what Mer would a Nord such as a Companion be so taken with, that he would risk the criticism of his people! Fillim. So it wasn't just their own people that were drawn to the result of their two blended races.

"Just as I suspected! Where is the Nord that made that mark? Is that real love as well?! Let me tell you, Fillim, the famed mercenaries that all but wiped out our ancestral brethren, have been under close watch for many years now! We are well aware of many of their secrets! Just as we were made aware of the Dovahkiin joining with them! There isn't a single Nord in this land that is beyond boasting. Especially when it comes to those they hold most dear! Their precious Talos and their Mer killers!"

Dhaunare watched as he squirmed at each question! His beautiful face pinching up! "They all want you, don't they, Fillim? But can any of them actually give you what you need? Or are they acting under their own selfish wants and not considering what is best for you at all?"

Fiiralmo could see the path in which his mate was headed, squeezing Dhaunare's hand, he spoke. "Fillim, do you realize that you still are not even done growing yet? You will probably continue to gain height and fill out until your mid to late twenties." Fillim's pouting face turned towards him, his hurt feelings showing even through his obstinance.

"How much time have you actually spent around Nords? Have you seen how they age? And not just an old Nord, I understand that there are plenty of those around, but what happens to them."

Setting down his goblet, Dhaunare turned to him. "The question is not meant to be taken as vanity nor shallowness of mind. We all age and change along with it. But the Dovahkiin is what, in his thirties? Because of who he is, he will be forced by circumstance and this ridiculous uprising, to
travel all over Skyrim and possibly further. Fighting who knows how many battles. He will be
gone, Fillim. And you, if you are paired with him, will be alone! T'would be no different were it
one of those Mercenaries! They are not as powerful as he. Even with the curse they carry, they do
not have the Dragon blood and thus may not survive as long. But they will be gone as well,
fighting! And you will be alone, sometimes weeks or months at a time."

Fillim's fingers fidgeted around the rim of his goblet. He listened to every word, staring into his
wine, seeing the scene that played out before him as they spoke.

"You, who are still but a babe when consideration is taken into the lifespan of our kind, will be
beholden to a man. A true mortal in every sense of the word. A man that will eventually come
home to you after fighting his endless battles, an old and crippled up warrior. While you are still
exactly as you are today. After 30 years or so of time, he will be forced to live with the fact that
you have become his nursemaid and no longer his lover! How do you think he will deal with that?
Do you think it will please him to have you clean him when he can no longer make it to a chamber
pot. How will you feel, when you watch him rot from age and probable disease, until he takes his
last breath? No Mer of your age, should have to deal with the oncoming demise of your mate!"

Raising his hand to Fillim's chin, Dhaunare lifted his face, forcing him to meet his green eyes.
"They blame us for their ruthless ways and vicious acts. They blame us for their wars. But in all
actuality, Fillim, it is in their very nature. A Nord loves none else, the way he does the bleeding of
his blade! And he will find a way to fight, even if none is provided for him, and he will revel in it
till his dying breath. They would rather die with a blade in their hands, than with their loved ones in
their arms. And if you stay with him or them, this will be proven to you."

Taking a hold of his jaw, he firmly but gently held it steady, even as he felt Fillim's attempt to pull
away. Seeing the tears that now filled the young Mer's eyes, his voice soft as he told him once
more.

"You do not belong with them..."

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Fillim wept.

He wept, and they settled in around him and held him, speaking soft words of comfort. It wasn't
that what he felt for the Nords wasn't real, it just wasn't what he needed. A Mer belonged with a
Mer and that was truth.

What other could he hope to have, than the next twenty or thirty years of his life spent mostly
alone. Every time the one he loved leaving him, wondering over whether or not they still lived and
when they were to return. Only to be faced with crippling pain when the end of their life came,
watching them die. He needed to be with one of his own kind. Living a lifespan of over four
hundred years or better. Many living two to three times that!

Finally when he had calmed and sleep seemed to be taking him, they snuggled into their many furs
and together, watched him as he fell into slumber. They were all exhausted, but having only so
many days with him, decided to stay awake as long as they could. He wanted to remember this.

They were both determined to make the most of this trip, hoping that the Dragonborn would keep
ture to his word that he'd given the young Mer, in his oh, so sweet, words of parting. As much as
he hated to admit it, right now he was their only hope. And one of the very reasons that they were
taking their time with this.
They would be at the Embassy in plenty of time before Anariil's arrival. And Dovahkiin would never attack the Embassy, he was far too smart for that. He would wait until Anariil had him, and then he would separate them somehow...

Laying there with the lanterns turned dim, Dhaunare listened to his mate's low, even breathing. Leaning over, he placed a feather-light kiss on Fiiralmo's forehead. Pulling the furs higher around them, he closed his own eyes as his mind ran over it and over it. Everything surrounding Fillim's arrival with Ancano... then their separation. Why he was even sent. Why he was actually given to Anariil, and what could have possibly been going through Telindil's mind when he'd made the decision.

Thinking over what Fillim had said at Whiterun, when they'd caught him. None of it made any sense. His mind flew to his Commander, and how he had assured them both, that whatever Anariil's plans were with Fillim, he had absolutely no intention of doing it there for all to see.

For it wasn't just the fact of who it was, that was coming that had them all nervous. It was why?

Never would someone of Anariil's magnitude, travel to Skyrim just for a runway slave. But everyone else didn't know of Fillim's importance... not like they did. In fact if anything, Ancano would be getting reprimanded for losing sight of him!

The thought of that made Dhaunare smile. He had some questions he'd like to ask Ancano himself! Like, *Why on all of Nirn, would he tell a Mer that was assigned to be his servant, to leave his duty and go to Whiterun?*
Chapter Summary

Things were getting ready to change. And it was because Ondolemar had been changed by his actions... Anariil's actions all those years ago. And he, himself had been changed when he'd first seen Fillim, and then was sent here by his ruthless father. He'd been changed when he'd sat with his longtime friend in Markarth, sharing with each other what they knew.

And now Fillim was about to be changed. Permanently.

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Rising the next morning, Fillim sat dressed in his new attire, while Fiiralmo combed out his hair. Dhaunare carefully handing him a cup of hot tea, smiling as his mate added the final touches to Fillim's hair. Golden thread, had been braided into the plaits that now adorned the young one's head, perfectly matching the embroidery on his quilted coat.

Taking a sip, he rested the cup on his lap as the Altmer finished. Just thinking about it all, there was so much that he could be downtrodden over, but he just couldn't allow it to take him over. What was the point? All he could think about was what they had told him last night, and what they kept telling him he would learn when they reached the Embassy.

He also couldn't deny that he loved the attention he was getting, he loved the new clothing he'd received. His mind still couldn't encompass the fact that they had come to arrest him, only to dress him in finery, that they had picked out just for him, prior!

Removing one hand from his cup, he ran it over the fine doeskin leggings he now wore, wiggling his toes in the warm, woolen socks, he smiled. "I'm going to get used to these clothes... I feel almost like I'm being teased with them. I know if I make it through this, I probably won't ever have things this nice again."

His face grew somber, "Where would I possibly wear them, even if I could? I'm a Smith..."

Behind him, Fiiralmo huffed sharply, blowing the small hairs about at his neck! "You may enjoy Smithing, Fillim... but you were not born to be a Smith! And when you get through this, and I have faith that you will! You will be wearing this type of attire on a daily basis!"

At the other side of the tent packing their belongings, Dhaunare's smile widened, his heart warming as he paused, listening to his mate talk sense into Fillim.

Fiiralmo finished with his hair, setting the combs aside, moving around him to look in his face. Warm amber now meeting his own. "Heed my words young, Fillim! We would not be going through this with you, nor telling you any of this, if all were lost! There are powerful Mer on your side... please, have faith in Au-riel! Have faith in those that aid you! I firmly believe that you will get through this, and when that happens, you will no longer be the Mer you once were!"

Standing up, he held out his hand to Fillim, helping him to his feet. Dusting off his shoulders,
Fiiralmo took another moment to primp over him before sending him out with his tea. "Go and help the Cats with the food preparation... it will relieve your mind."

Sharing a smile with the Altmer, he exited the tent still showing his teeth. If they had hope, then so would he... As soon as he saw the fire ablaze and smelled the herbs being chopped, his smile broadened and his heart lightened.

Fillim busied himself with helping the Khajiit prepare morning meal. Once again dressed in their Thalmor robes, they both watched him curiously as he sipped on his tea and chattered with the females. Cooking definitely was his soother. And with the freedom they had given him to do as he pleased throughout the camp, he truly did seem much more at ease. Even if it was just to occupy his mind on something else, it seemed to be working for him.

Even the Khajiit seemed to be more at ease this morn. Perhaps it was simply the fact that Fillim appeared to be fine and in good spirits. Now, they would be grappling with their own curiosity over why he was.

But that wasn't anything that they needed to concern themselves with. The Khajiit were a curious people regardless, hence their natural knack for finding trouble. Why not give them something new to ponder over? Dhaunare chuckled into his tea as he thought about it, gaining himself even more stares from their feline company.

The tents and gear were all packed. All they had to do was eat, and stow away what food and cookware had been left out, and they would be on their way. Sitting down on the fallen stump of a tree that faced the fire, they sipped and watched, as their stomachs growled from the wonderful smells that now wafted throughout the camp.

One of the senior female Khajiit, walked over to the fire, laying a large flat iron griddle across the metal rack that had been set up. While that was heating, Fillim finished chopping herbs and cutting pieces of goat cheese from a large block that rested atop some cheesecloth.

Fiiralmo smiled as he sipped, listening to Fillim hum an old Elven tune as he worked. Dhaunare shook his head slowly, smiling to himself, as the females had now joined in with him. They were both completely amazed at how easily he fit in amongst them, and how relaxed they all were. Neither would've been shocked if song had broken out.

They both looked on in interest as the elder female cut slices from a loaf of bread and cut out the centers of each one with a cup. Smearing butter over each side, Fillim handed her a piece of cut, raw garlic, which she then rubbed through the butter on each piece.

Fiiralmo's brows gathered up slightly, but it was not in disdain, for he was taking internal notes that he would act upon later. He knew that his mate loved the Khajiit's cooking, of course he loved Elven cuisine as well, but a blend of the two was even better! And he would love anything that Fillim had taken part in... they both would. For just the small touches he'd added to their stew the prior evening, had been absolutely divine!

Fillim, carrying a plate filled with the sliced cheese and herbs in one hand and a platter holding the bread in another, knelt by the fire and set them both down onto a cut tree stump that was just a few away. Quickly, but carefully, he lay each slice of bread onto the griddle, positioning them just so, while a young female knelt next to him, carrying a basket full of chicken's eggs.

Dhaunare, noticing that Fiiralmo was glued to the activity, got up and poured them more tea. He was truly fortunate to have such a mate that loved to cook for him, and was so good at it! His feelings for Fillim in no way diminished that, and now smelling the bread as it cooked... the garlic
and fresh butter, he knew that Fiiralmo was memorizing each step made by the young Mer and the Khajiit. He would be making it for them soon, when they were alone and had time for each other.

Sitting down beside him, fresh tea in their cups, they watched with mouths watering, as the bread was turned and the eggs cracked. Each slice of bread now had an egg, sizzling in the center where the hole had been made.

Fillim watched them closely, sipping on his tea. Putting his cup down, he turned each piece again, sprinkling the freshly cut herbs and garlic over the cooking egg, topping it all with the cheese. He closed his eyes, completely oblivious of his audience, and inhaled deeply of the aroma! He couldn't wait!

He'd made this so many times, even for dinner with wine to drink, it was a very comforting meal. His eyes open, he set down his tea and reaching for the spatula, began to remove them from the griddle, placing them all on separate wooden plates that had been laid out for him in advance.

This was exactly what they all needed right now. A little piece of home.

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That day had proven to them that Fillim's attitude about his situation had brightened. They had all sat, eating together, enjoying the perfection that was a blend of Khajiit and Elven cuisine, in good spirits. The entire atmosphere in the camp had been changed, and even though they knew the cats were still curious over their relationship with their once prisoner, now somewhat companion... they had relaxed some as well.

Each night, the intimacy they shared was nothing like it had been that first night. For that was the first time he'd entered him, and it was the last. It wasn't that he didn't want him in that way. It was simply that after sharing all they had that first evening, their needs had changed.

He had finally gotten a taste of what he'd craved for so long, and actually having him near, and seeing and feeling what he was going through... what they all were going through, they both felt more of a need for simple affection. For closeness.

That need increased the closer they got to their destination. And even though Fillim tried to remain upbeat, they could both tell the stress of what was coming was taking it's toll on him. He wasn't the only one that feared the unknown. They all did, and every time he thought of it, he would remember what his father had taught him. That worrying was useless! To fret over something, whether it was something that was known, or something of the unknown, was to suffer twice over the same thing.

Remembering his words, Dhaunare smiled... he could almost hear the strict old Mer now as he chastised him! 'Why do you cause yourself undue suffering Dhaunare! If you are to suffer, it will happen once the object, or situation you struggle over comes to fruition!'

Remembering how his father would walk a circle around him, as he stood at attention... his cropped, white hair gleaming in the light cast from the stained glass of his study window. His green eyes watching every move Dhaunare made, his head held high. 'Do you wish to suffer needlessly?'

And he would answer him, 'Ne Ata, a do ni.' ('No father, I do not.')</n
His father had knelt down onto one knee, and taking him by the shoulders, had looked him square in the eye. 'Dhaunare, no matter how much control you attempt to have over each situation, there
will always be some that are beyond your reach. This is fact.’

His heart ached, as he recalled his father tilting his head as he'd looked at him, still seeing every line in his aged face, the bright green of his eyes, as if he were still here with him... as if it were just yesterday. 'This is exactly why our people seek to have such control over our emotions Dhaunare... for even if we cannot control all that surrounds us, our future and what is to come, we can control how we deal with it, and how we react.'

His father's voice faded from his mind, an echo from the past. 'Do not ever invite needless suffering my young Mer... ' Very softly, Dhaunare finished the sentence his father had spoken to him all those years ago... "for there is always more waiting for you... "

Fiiralmo and Fillim both, watched him... listening to the words that had tumbled from his lips so unexpectedly.

He didn't even notice them, he was so lost in thought. His father had taught him so very much. And the needless expending of emotion, was just one among his many lessons. He had been a very realistic Mer, very wise! And had wanted Dhaunare, his only son to be as well prepared as possible, for the future that he would be facing without him.

Having a daughter, his sister, early on in their marriage, he had been their only son. And he'd been born quite late in both of their lives. His sister had been a grown Mer, with a spouse and a child of her own, by the time he'd been born. But that hadn't mattered... his parents, especially his father, had been extremely proud and very happy.

The years that he did have with his son, had been spent in constant teaching. And although he was a strict Mer, he was also a very loving father. Dhaunare never had to question whether or not he was loved... he knew it!

When he was but in his thirties, he'd lost his father to age, his mother lasting only a decade longer. But not before they got to witness his graduation, and his rise into the ranks as a decorated Justiciar.

Often when he was younger, he thought over whether or not he should marry and carry on their lineage and their name, but he was dedicated to their cause and their people. Never finding the time, or enough of an attraction to anyone to do so, he focused on his duties. Besides, thanks to his sister, he was now an uncle twice over, and still young in years herself, was now expecting her first grandchild. Their family lineage was being carried on through her.

He truly believed that his father would be proud with the decisions he'd made thus far concerning their people, and the actions and goals that he now moved towards. He also believed that he would have approved of his choice in a mate. Living his life in service of his people, was a noble thing... he would never have expected him to do it all alone.

And even as he missed his father, he never forgot his words. 'Our world is a hostile and unforgiving place Dhaunare. Hold true to who and what you are! Fight, to change and shape it... so that it does not change you!'

He knew what his father meant, and though his words rang with truth, there were always exceptions to every rule. As long as one was able to learn, which was done daily, that person had no choice but to eventually be changed with each new experience. It was an endless cycle. The main problem being, what were you learning? How was it affecting you? Changing how you thought and felt? And what would you then do with that? Who and what in turn, would you change by your actions?
Things were getting ready to change. And it was because Ondolemar had been changed by his actions... Anariil's actions, all those years ago. And he, himself had been changed when he'd first seen Fillim, and then was sent here by his ruthless father. He'd been changed when he'd sat with his longtime friend in Markarth, sharing with each other what they knew.

And now Fillim was about to be changed. Permanently.

Dhaunare stared ahead, the entrance to Solitude was in sight, the stables over to their right. They would part with their Khajiit company and then be on their way to the Embassy. As early as it was, and now being able to travel faster, they should be there by late evening. By that time, their horses would be thoroughly worn out and in need of rest, food and warm shelter. Their stables there were better than these provided here, especially since the weather was colder than it was here in Solitude.

Even as his mind went back to it so often, he knew stopping in Solitude for a days rest was out of the question. They were all ready to be done with this, so why delay the inevitable any further? It was best to just get it over with.

Anyway, once they reached the Embassy, they could all rest. Anariil's ship was not to arrive for another day or two. Dhaunare's stomach turned at that thought, forcing him to look over at one of the soldiers on horseback, that since they'd gotten so close to the city, had now broken formation. Speaking as quietly as possible, "Go down to the docks and see what the situation is... see if there has been any word or sighting, then get back here! We will take a few minutes in separating from the Khajiit."

Stopping at the guard towers, just yards from the large gates that led directly into the city, the Khajiit began to set up and unload where they knew they would be allowed. And no matter how relaxed they had become in their company, there would be no shaking of hands as they parted ways. There was still no real trust on the Khajiit's part towards the Thalmor, and the even though Dhaunare didn't distrust them, they were hired hands and nothing more. They'd already received their payment, a simple nod would do.

The soldier rejoined them, stating he had nothing to report. There had been no sighting and no word. Relief filled him for but a tiny moment, and then was gone. His lips twisted into a sardonic smile, as he thought about another of his father's lessons... chuckling softly, he pushed it away. He would feel what he felt, and that was that. It was almost as exhausting trying to pretend that he wasn't suffering.

Turning their horses around, the gates of Solitude shrank into the distance. Fiiralmo now driving the carriage, with Fillim on the seat beside of him. Dhaunare rode to the side next to Fillim, serving as a shield for the young Mer, while their soldiers took the front and rear.

Noticing the grim look that Dhaunare bore, Fillim leaned over and whispered quietly into Fiiralmo's ear. "He's upset..."

Glancing around him to see for himself, he leaned in and whispered back. "His mind and heart are in turmoil Fillim, it cannot be helped."

Staring straight ahead, completely oblivious to his onlookers, his temper flared anew as he thought over it again. He just simply couldn't understand how Ancano had been able to escape reprimand! He should have been questioned!

The fact that he'd actually had the audacity to bring his own servant, when only the Ambassador herself, had been allowed to bring them and none else! Their own Commander hadn't been
allowed, even though he had his own guard assigned to him, it was still much different than having a servant. Being the Commander of all Justiciars assigned there, he had to travel constantly, and thus needed more protection. Any Justiciar that had to travel here was assigned them.

But Ancano had overstepped his bounds in the most gross manner, and had used Anariil's name as backing. Ondolemar had stated that because Anariil had signed the documents himself, and that actual ownership of the slave was his, that he'd evidently given his permission, meaning that what anyone else wanted had been overridden.

Ancano also didn't care that every Thalmor there, was now quite furious with him. Especially the Ambassador, but even she wouldn't dare risk angering Anariil. What bothered Ondolemar and Dhaunare the most, was the history that Ancano had with his own slaves, especially the one that had been taken from him. It made them wonder how much Anariil knew about him.

That worried Ondolemar as well. The evening before he and Fiiralmo had set off to fetch Fillim, their Commander had told them over wine, that he no longer trusted Ancano. He hadn't now, for a very long time. The very fact that Anariil had signed over a Mer of such importance as Fillim to him, meant that they were in league together... it had to.

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Fjolrin stepped from the trees and into the stone pathway, watching as the Thalmor's carriage got farther and farther from the city gates, fading into the distance. Fillim, sitting next to the Justiciar... in the driver's seat.
The Taste Of Revenge

Chapter Summary

Looking out the barred window at the back, she listened to his shouted orders.

"Search every room! Take every chest, every book! Every bit of parchment! I want jewelry! Keys! Check for safes and cellars! I want at least two of you to check the servant's cabin at the back of the property and two on that boat!"

A second wagon pulled in. The sharp crack of a whip got their's rolling, and as they pulled out, she could see the items being removed from her home.

Chapter Notes

Try to keep in mind, or reread chapter 57 (A dog that runs-part 2) as you read this. Very important.

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Revenge is the act of Passion, Vengeance is an act of Justice...

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Pounding at the door roused her.

Taking a break from packing, she'd sent the servants back to their quarters and had lain down on the day bed that adorned the shaded corner of the main room. Rubbing her eyes, she blinked, trying to clear them as the knocking became more persistent!

Swinging her legs down to set her feet on the stone floor, her eyes caught movement at the back windows... the back windows that overlooked the deck. The very deck where their son had been bound.

Panic rose in her chest as pounding now began at the back door as well! Before she could fully stand, an earsplitting sound rang out into the room, as what could only be a battering ram struck the front doors! Double doors, four inch thick mahogany bulged inwards on the framework before finally exploding into the room in pieces!

Instinctively going down onto the floor on her hands and knees, her arms came up around her face in a fruitless attempt to shield herself. If her ears could have registered, they would have heard the cries of their servants as they were restrained from entering.

Large hands covered in black leather, grabbed her by the arms! hoisting her roughly up onto her feet! In complete shock, her head spun as her jaw was taken painfully and turned to face a very large Altmer Justiciar.

He looked down at her, taking in her widening eyes as his soldiers flooded into the house awaiting his command. "Fairne, spouse of Anariil Charmaen, you are hereby detained for questioning!"
Two soldiers literally took her from his grasp. Sputtering in sheer amazement, her mind could barely comprehend what was happening! "For... for what?!"

Her eyes bulged, her mouth agape as she was forcefully taken through what had once been their front entryway and led toward the Dominion wagon that now sat in the circle drive in front of their home! Iacve walked beside the soldier to one side of her, signalling for them to stop. They halted in their tracks, bringing her to jerky stop, their grip on her arms tightening. His head tilted as he lowered his hood, "You are in the process of selling this estate, am I not correct?"

Her mouth worked to form words, but none would come. Without waiting for her to respond, "Has anything been removed?!"

His gloved hand came up, long fingers wrapped around her throat, giving it a light squeeze! She tried in vain to shake her head no! Lowering his face down to hers, his upper lip curled as his voice lowered vehemently, "You'd better pray that we find what we are looking for!"

Pushing her backward with his release, the soldiers led her into the wagon, now accompanied by every servant in her employ. Looking out the barred window at the back, she listened to his shouted orders.

"Search every room! Take every chest, every book! Every bit of parchment! I want jewelry! Keys!! Check for safes and cellars! I want at least two of you to check the servant's cabin at the back of the property and two on that boat!"

A second wagon pulled in. The sharp crack of a whip got their's rolling, and as they pulled out, she could see the items being removed from her home.

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Moonlight shone down from high in the night sky by the time they'd finally dismounted. The horses were led into the massive barn and stable area, and the carriage unloaded. Four Justiciars and numerous soldiers had come out from all areas to greet them and aid them in carrying their gear.

Fillim edged closer to Dhaunare, listening as they all spoke about him in hushed tones. Trying so hard not to look any of them in the eye, and yet not appear to be as terrified as he really was. They crowded around him, looking him over, and yet speaking above his head to the two at his sides."So this is the one?"

"Oooh, he's quite attractive."

"You know Ancano is inside."

Fillim tensed up, and with each word spoken his unease grew.

Dhaunare exchanged a glance with Fiiralmo, listening as they were filled in. One of the larger males stepped in their way, forcing them to pause as he whispered. "The Commander and the Ambassador are speaking with him right now. You'd better watch your step with Rulindil. He's quite angry over Ondolemar being here and taking over."

"Taking over?"

The Justiciar looked down at Fillim, his green eyes roaming all over the small Mer as he spoke. "Ancano was called here by Elenwen to be questioned once more prior to Anariil's arrival, he's gotten Rulindil all worked up over this half-breed." His large hand motioned at Fillim, smiling as
their new guest attempted to hide behind Dhaunare.

"Evidently Elenwen is allowing the Commander to take reign over Rulindil. He's angry that he won't get to question him before Anariil arrives."

Dhaunare stepped in front of Fillim fully and crossed his arms. "Why should he want to question him? This has nothing to do with him!"

The group of Mer, robes and soldiers alike, now completely surrounded them. Fillim wanted to disappear. Feeling like he was in a fishbowl, he clutched onto the back of Dhaunare's robes, hiding his face.

"Little one looks like he's attached to you, Dhaunare... " A hand reached out and actually felt of his hair, caressing gently along the edge of his ear.

Fiiralmo's arm raised up, blocking Viarrion's hand, receiving a glare back in response. "We've been assigned to keep him safe for Anariil's arrival. That means from you barbarians as well!

Viarrion let out a mock gasp, smiling widely, he chuckled, watching as the little Mer attempted to get even closer to Dhaunare's backside. He couldn't be cross with Fiiralmo, but still would not deny that he'd love a taste of what they were guarding.

He stepped closer, lowering his voice. "Ancano's revved up for battle... " motioning to Fillim, "All he's been able to talk about is this one here." His green gaze landing on Dhaunare, "Be careful... you know what I mean."

Finally parting to allow them entry, they walked inside wiping the snow from their boots on the long runner that led from the doorway into the main room.

Moving as one with Dhaunare, he fought the panic that rose up inside of him causing his stomach to turn. Venturing peeks here and there, under normal circumstances he probably would've wanted to look around and take in the almost pristine surroundings he was now in. To appreciate it. But all he could think about was what was coming... who was coming.

Until he heard his voice.

Upon hearing the last Altmer voice he'd heard before stepping onto this new land's soil, he looked up and took in the massive room as he was led farther inside. His eyes searched for him, he could hear him but not see him anywhere. He was talking to someone, and he was angry.

Another hooded Altmer stepped into the room from a side hallway, and every Mer that had once surrounded him immediately dispersed.

Coming right up close to him and lowering his hood, Ondolemar looked him over, "Take him below and get him settled. We've got a cell ready for him."

Fillim was going to cry! Looking up at Dhaunare, his breaths came out short and quick, his face pinched up, his voice wavering, "A cell?"

Looking away from the terrified face that was now pleading with him, he nodded, taking Fillim by the arm, they turned.

Before another thought could enter his mind, a furious Ancano marched out from one of the side rooms, briskly walking right up to them until he was nose to nose with Dhaunare, ignoring the other Mer completely. Crumpled up parchments filled one fisted up hand, the other held the black
leather gloves that matched his robes.

Ondolemar watched the display, crossing his arms. Elenwen had already said her piece. Literally due to his behavior regarding the subject and his longtime connection with Ancano, Rulindil was not to go below while Fillim was with them, and would therefore be confined to his office and living quarters with his pet, until Anariil came to gather him and had departed.

Ancano, for his lack of following protocol, a reprimand was being entered into his file and he would face a hearing regarding the subject once he returned to Alinor. The entire time since his arrival, he'd not offered a single believable answer to any of their questions. Telling them that Fillim, instead of heading to Winterhold as told, had evidently fled on his own accord, ending up in Whiterun.

After the Solitude guard and Thalmor assigned to the docks had been questioned, along with the carriage driver, it was found out that they had seemed to part ways amicably once the ship had docked, and Fillim had taken the carriage to Whiterun. None of those questioned seemed to believe that Fillim was trying to run or escape. He'd simply handed the small bag of coin he'd had to the driver, asking to go to Whiterun, and climbed aboard as if nothing were amiss.

Instead of Elenwen getting in the middle of something they all felt was bigger than they could handle, it would be better dealt with by their superiors once the hearing actually took place. Then it would gratefully be out of her hands.

After all, she had enough to handle in Skyrim without this. Hence the reason that she'd gladly handed things over to Ondolemar until the Mer was gone. She didn't even plan to greet him, she didn't want to see him. Stating she would be in her quarters and was not to be disturbed until Anariil arrived.

Amber eyes glared down at him, and much to everyone's surprise, Fillim straightened his shoulders, raised his head and stared right back at him. Ancano actually laughed at his boldness, looking down on him as if her were lower than a bug. "You really are worthless, aren't you, Fillim?!"

Fiiralmo stepped forward and received Dhaunare's raised arm, holding him back. Dhaunare silently shook his head in warning. This was simply the cock's way of puffing out his feathers and nothing more. Ancano was pissed that he was being reprimanded, and was now doing the only thing that he could do.

It was a last ditch effort to patch up his wounded pride. And he would do it by pushing someone down that was already wounded... helpless, emotionally beaten up and bloodied.

Everyone that stood witness, knew exactly why he did what he did and though it may be infuriating, they would hold their tempers and get through it. There was no sense in causing a scene. Causing a scene would not only bring them down to his level, but show that they cared for Fillim, and to everyone else that didn't know the scope of the situation, they had no reason to care.

Ignoring Fiiralmo, Ancano stepped closer to Fillim actually leaning down into his face! "It's laughable! You who have the blood of both races, and yet are completely blinded to your own potential!" Taking another step, "All you know how to be is a slave!"

Color stained Fillim's throat and cheeks! What exactly did he consider to be potential? *Him!? This!? This, was fucking potential!?* Unbelievable!

Looks were shared between Ondolemar and the Justiciars behind him. Rulindil now stood in his
doorway watching them, Gissur stood behind him, carefully peeking around his shoulder.

Angrily tossing his gloves onto the sofa to the side of them, he raised his now free hand up to pet Fillim's hair. Fillim's hand slapped his away, causing Dhaunare and Fiiralmo to step back in shock!

Frustration, embarrassment and anger twisted at his features! He was sick of being treated like one of their damned dogs!! "Don't touch me!!"

Devious laughter sprang forth from him as his hand shot down to Fillim's coat, grabbing him up by the lapels! Fillim gasped as he was jerked forward into Ancano's face!!

The Altmer's voice was getting louder with each word he spoke. "You're nothing more than a pretty little plaything! A bed warmer! Good for nothing but laying down and offering up your ass! That's why your own father sold you!! You're nothing to him!!"

Ondolemar's arms lowered, fists clenched up as he stepped forward and yelled! "Ancano! Enough!"

Completely disregarding him, he went on. Furious red stained his face and ears! Lifting Fillim to his toes, he gave him a rough shake! "This is what happens when you fuck your slaves!" Glancing to those around him, his mouth twisting up into a smirk, "Don't act so shocked! We can all see it's quite plain who he belongs to! Quit playing the fools!" Amber eyes once again met his own, "The only reason Anariil had you was to ease the burden from your father... wasn't it!?"

Fillim's hands furiously dug at Ancano's trying to free himself! Fighting the tears that now threatened to spill over, he cried out! "Don't touch me!!"

Throwing him backward into Fiiralmo, Ancano spit in his direction and wiped the hand that had held him onto his robes, as if he'd touched something filthy. Turning, he grabbed up his gloves and put them on. "Consider yourself lucky that I hadn't been given free reign with you! Now you're not even worth bedding! Two Nords? Or was it three? Disgusting."

His eyes combed over Fiiralmo, who now held the half-breed, consoling him. Raking a now gloved hand through his hair, he handed the ruined parchments to the soldier that stood beside him. Looking at them all with sardonic amusement, "Don't get too attached to him! Anariil's going to take him apart! Mark my words! When he's done with him, there won't be enough left for the buzzards!"

Marching off toward the doors, his soldier escort in tow, Ondolemar was instantly on his heels, cornering him in the entryway! "Where do you think you're going!" Now nose to nose. "You're supposed to be here when he arrives!"

Ordering his escort to wait outside, "Anariil has nothing to say to me, I have served my purpose! He's literally coming to collect his property and nothing more!"

"You're purpose?" Ondolemar's mouth dropped open in amazement! "What purpose was that exactly! Wasting the Dominion's precious time and resources to play some ridiculous and cruel prank! This is nothing more than his and your way of getting revenge!"

Ondolemar was near screaming at him! "Wasn't it!?" Pointing his finger in Ancano's face, he lowered his voice, speaking between clenched teeth! "Do you know the ramifications of what the both of you are doing will be?! This won't stop here and you know it!"

"I was simply acting on a Superior's orders!" Grasping his Commander's hand viciously, he took it out of his face and pushed him backwards! "And you can remove your hand from my face!"
Ondolemar righted himself and again stepped forward! A crowd had gathered in the main room, watching the exchange closely. Elenwen, herself, was now amongst them.

An astonished look had taken over Ondolemar's face. "Do you wish to add the attack on your Commander to your growing list of transgressions? We both know why you aided him! Your useless pride rivals that of the Nords, Ancano! That, and your foolish need for revenge! Both of them will swallow you whole in the end! Now that is something that you can mark me on!"

Grabbing hold of his Commander's robes, the leather groaned under his firm grip! Reaching up, Ondolemar's fists took hold of his subordinate's! Holding onto each other tightly, Elenwen stepped forward! Her eyes dancing back and forth between them! She would wait to see what her Commanding officer's next move was before she stepped in.

Literally pushing his nose into Ondolemar's, he'd been waiting for this day, and now he would speak his fucking piece! Teeth clenched until his jaw ached. Ears pinned back against his skull, his voice shook in all his rage. "Revenge... you dare speak to me of revenge! You have him!! You fucking took him from me!! ADMIT IT!!"

Using all his strength, Ondolemar pushed him away, knocking him backwards into the stone wall behind him! Fists clenched at his sides, he yelled! "Yes!! I took him!! And I will never tell you where he is!! EVER!! You didn't deserve him then, and you still don't! Your actions over this situation right fucking now, prove it!"

Elenwen rushed forward as Ancano lunged at Ondolmar! His hands dug into him so hard, he feared his flesh would give way beneath his robes! Both oblivious to her, as her hands pushed against their chests, trying in vain to separate them!

The expression Ancano wore was one of pure agony. Furious bitter rage and the agony of betrayal. Betrayal and that of a broken heart. Hands went up to mouths in shock as he screamed out. "BAAASSTAAAARDD!!! You fucking bastard!!! You tell me where he is!!! You fucking tell me!!!"

Elenwen shoved them apart, calling for the guards to now approach! Ondolemar shook his head, an almost saddened look on his face as he whispered out of breath from the overexertion. "Never... I will never tell you."

Wiping the back of his hand across his mouth, catching the spit that had gathered from his screams. Tears, for the first time in so many years than he could even remember, made their way down his cheeks. A choked sob escaped his lips and he turned to face the door. He would never look upon him again.

Barely getting the words out, these would be the last he would ever speak to him. "I will never forgive you... not ever!"

Pushing his way through the doors, he stepped out into the brisk night.
Chapter Summary

At least he'd never heard Ancano complain over anything. He'd never acted afraid or in fear of anyone, never shown any apprehension at going back home after spending time at his family's home.

But what one saw in the light of day could be very different in the shadow of darkness! What they were willing to show while they had someone else's child in their home and when they were alone, could be two very different things.

Propriety... societal norms, etc. Everyone had their secrets. Things that they wanted kept hidden from view.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

**********

Ondolemar watched the doors close as his once closest friend walked out. Having been friends since they were just Elflings, he couldn't deny that his heart was hurting him.

It was very possible to love someone and not like them, and that's exactly what this was. He would always love him, and he wished that things could be different. Though he had always tried to remain a positive force in his friend's life, it evidently hadn't been enough. He hadn't been enough.

There had come a time when Ancano had changed. Though he honestly couldn't pinpoint that time, he'd definitely seen a transformation take place in him over the years.

Was it family?? He wasn't so sure about that. Their families had always been close in the extreme. Both had always been dedicated to their people and the Dominion, in the extreme as well.

He'd never seen anything whilst being in their company that would make him think he'd been poisoned by them though, and he'd spent much time there as a young Mer. Just as Ancano had spent time with his as well, and if there were any major differences that Ancano had noticed between their family's lives or ways of living or treatment, Ancano had never shown it or told him of it.

He and Ancano had been all but inseparable! The Mer seemed to have a close and loving relationship with both parents, their full support. His mother and father had seemed to have a happy, healthy marriage. His father was a high ranking official in the order, strict, but still caring.

At least he'd never heard Ancano complain over anything. He'd never acted afraid or in fear of anyone, never shown any apprehension at going back home after spending time at his family's home.

But what one saw in the light of day could be very different in the shadow of darkness. What they were willing to show while they had someone else's child in their home and when they were alone, could be two very different things.
Propriety... societal norms, etc. Everyone had their secrets. Things that they wanted kept hidden from view.

Just like the fact that there were many happily married males that would secretly take a male on occasion. It didn't keep them from loving their mates, but at times they just had to indulge.

There was a huge difference in that, and what Ancano had done. It was one thing to take a lover where there was mutual consent, once in awhile, and another thing entirely to imprison a Mer for that very purpose against their will.

One was the indulgence of... well, what some would call a weakness. He would call it a treat. The indulgence of a treat, like sweets. Sometimes you just had to ruin your dinner with the desert.

The other... now that was a character flaw. More than that. There was something terribly wrong internally... in the mind, to do what Ancano had done.

What had happened? Over and over he'd pondered it, trying to figure it out. Was it outside influence? Their society? The demands put in place by the very Dominion they served? Or was it literally something inside of him? Maybe a combination of it all.

Or perhaps it was himself that had changed? And he could definitely pinpoint the exact moment that had happened. It was when he'd assisted Anariil in the taking of Fillim's mother.

But even before that, he'd never once thought of having a slave for any reason. His family's servants were all hired and paid. They were employees. They were treated like an extension of their family, some having been with them for generations, almost all having homes of their own on his family's land or elsewhere in the community.

He, himself, had never been with a female. He'd never once had the desire. And when his father finally approached him over it, he'd been honest with him. He hated secrets. Absolutely hated them! Which made what he'd had to do for Anariil, and the aftermath, all that much worse.

From the time he was very very young, he'd been drawn toward males. And feeling that it was simply what came natural to him, he'd never questioned it. At no point in time, did he ever feel that he was strange, or that there was something wrong with him.

He'd never questioned it, but from seeing the norm throughout their society, he did know that it had to be kept somewhat hidden... private.

That, in itself, bothered him. Not about how, or who he was, but about the measure of control that it had over his freedoms of sorts. To put it logically, he only had control over himself and his actions, not their society. He couldn't control how others felt and thought.

But he did, and always would feel, that the restraint and prejudice that many faced, the fact that they were made to feel that they had to hide how they wanted to live, or keep who they loved hidden, was the cause of many bad things.

He refused to allow how others felt, and believed, hinder him, in his mind nor in his heart!

He and Ancano had shared their first kiss with one another. They'd shared many firsts. In that aspect they were very much alike.

But when it came down to admission of who they would rather take to their bed... choose as a mate, and spend their eternity with, Ancano had decided that keeping it from his family was best. Which just gave him one more thing to think about.
The fact that he was afraid to tell them could mean a multitude of things. He couldn't see Ancano's father condoning what he'd done with Gerrad... but again, it wasn't proof of anything.

He had no idea how many times Ancano had dodged his own parent's questions, as at that point in their lives, it was quite evident that while they were still quite close, they were no longer sharing everything with each other.

Instead of him dodging and going through the evident stress that Ancano had dealt with, the first time his had asked about females and betrothal... grandchildren, he'd decided to be right upfront about it and simply get it over with.

Of course his father was upset at first, as was his mother. He was an only child, and him deciding to live as he felt was natural for him, was to his parents, killing their family's lineage. Even with that, it'd been nowhere near as bad as he'd envisioned it to be.

He'd simply told them both, that he didn't see it as a choice. It wasn't as if he was choosing to be this way. It was literally who he was, and he could no more change that, than he could change the fact that he needed oxygen to survive.

He also would not regret or feel guilt over who he was, as to do so, was giving outside forces control over his mind and heart. Control over his life! Taking some time to try and prepare himself for their reaction beforehand, he'd considered the fact that they may disown him and while he would be pained if they did, that came down to being their choice, not his!

He wouldn't deny who he was for anyone! For if someone expected that of him in order to keep their love, then they really didn't love him and he was better off away from them.

After awhile they'd gotten over it, and decided that keeping their relationship close, the way it always had been, was more important than losing a link with their only child. Needless to say, he'd been relieved.

What confused him over the situation with Ancano doing what he'd done, was the fact that he'd never had a problem getting bed partners. Why in all of Nirn would he feel the need to take a prisoner? Why wouldn't he just find someone that was a willing partner?

He knew that his friend had always been on the domineering side, but even with that, there were males that would've definitely bound themselves to him. Ancano was an attractive Mer, he was powerful, accomplished... born of pure lineage. He just couldn't understand it.

To him it was more than just the indulgence of a kink! If age was the deciding factor, and he felt the urge to be mated with a younger Mer, there were much younger Mer than him that would've wanted him! In fact, he'd seen him with some almost questionably young Mer.

Perhaps that was why he just couldn't comprehend it.

Every time he'd see Ancano with his half-breed, it would just light a fire in him! It would awaken every single thing that he hated about what he and the others had done... and what Ancano had done, and what he was doing. Bringing the nightmare that he'd tried so very hard to push down right back up to the surface. Forcing him to look at it square in the eye.

As soon as Ancano had told him about Gerrad, he'd felt sick! More than that, he'd been terrified. Immediately, he'd been overwhelmed with the desire to turn Ancano in. An action that would've set the young Mer free, but he couldn't. Ancano knew of his own secret.

Never had he regretted sharing something personal with his friend, until then. Up till that point,
Ancano was the only other one to know, other than those that had actually taken part. And it had taken him years before he'd known Dhaunare and Fiiralmo long enough to trust them with something that grave. The fact that they'd also been wronged by Telindil and had knowledge of Fillim, having greatly helped his decision along to confide in them.

Although at the time, he couldn't show Ancano his true feelings, it'd taken everything he had in him to act sincerely happy for him. He wanted to see the little Mer... meet him. Out of curiosity, and just the horrible need he'd felt to know more about the situation. To make sure that the young Mer wasn't being hurt.

If he could keep his true feelings in check, then perhaps he'd eventually be in the position to do something about it, and that's exactly what he'd done. Four horribly agonizing years of waiting for just the right moment, and by the time he'd finally been able to free him, he'd been aged seventeen years.

Even though he couldn't deny that he was attracted to Gerrad when Ancano had still had him, he hated the fact that he'd been taken from his home and was forced to be with someone against his will... as a slave.

It had become his personal goal to see him freed.

With so many years of life under his belt, he knew that each Mer, even each human, loved in their own way. What some would consider barbaric treatment, others would consider fair or good.

Ancano may have thought that he loved him, and perhaps that was all that he was literally capable of... his version of love, as it were.

To Ondolemar, Ancano's version had been reprehensible! And after finally finding out about how Ancano came to have him, and who had fathered him, he thought it even worse. If that was at all possible.

No matter how many times he'd asked Ancano about the little Mer's lineage, he would always clam up, making excuse upon excuse.

After a lifetime together, sharing the some of the most intimate things of their personal lives with each other, the fact that he held so firm on withholding the facts surrounding these details with him, meant that he knew how it would be seen.

He knew how Ondolemar would react, and thus would never tell him. And if Ancano was hiding something from him, than it truly was horrific.

Once he'd released Gerrad from his bondage, he'd made it a point to ask him. He'd wanted to know every single thing about him. And when he finally had him safe and away from any danger, the young Mer had told him.

Honestly, once he finally knew it all, he'd wished he didn't. Knowing the truth and knowing that Gerrad himself knew, had made him utterly ill.

One thing was for sure, it had made him love the little Mer all that much more. Never in his life had he felt something so sincere, so desperate. Something that he would die for... kill for.

Was it partly his guilt over what he and the others had done for Anariil? The need to make reparations, that had planted the seed for this love? Perhaps.

Perhaps it was that, and many other things combined.
Now that he'd seen Fillim and seen how beautiful he was, it still paled in comparison to Gerrad. They'd been born of different looking Bosmeri females, and different looking Altmer males had fathered them. They were different. Down to the skin tone, hair color, eye color, features and probably in many other ways as well.

He couldn't deny Fillim's beauty though, it was just a different beauty than the Mer that he loved. Perhaps that was it. Perhaps it was the love that made all the difference.

Taking a moment to get hold of himself and straightening his robes, he turned to see the crowd of Mer, including Fillim and his overseers, staring at him... silent.

Elenwen dismissed her guard but remained, watching him as well. Her voice lowered as she spoke to him so the rest couldn't hear, "I am aware this may be of a personal nature between yourself and Ancano, but his actions-"

Raising his hand to her just slightly, he shook his head, appreciative to her for the concern, "We have more than enough to deal with right now or I would be in agreement with you."

She nodded, taking him in as he straightened himself further, "Thank you, Ambassador."

Raising an eyebrow to him, the evident concern still showing on her face, "Please, Ondolemar, how long have we known each other?"

"It is out of respect that I address you as such... you know that."

Raising her hand to his shoulder, she looked deep into his eyes. It was the very same look he would've received from his mother when he wasn't taking his own needs or safety into consideration, and it almost made him smile. It definitely made him feel better. "You were just attacked by your subordinate! For personal reason or not, it cannot be let go or things will simply escalate... we both know how he is."

No longer being able to restrain himself, the corners of his mouth twitched and he raised a hand up to hide it. By pure instinct alone, he turned back toward the doorway, hiding his face not only from her, but the crowd behind them that was just now starting to disperse.

Staring into the doorway, he fought to gain control as she moved around to face him, an unusual thing now on her own face. Just upon seeing it he almost broke into laughter! His teeth actually showing, she very quietly began to chuckle, "You know it is only the stress you've just suffered that now makes you feel this way." A deep sigh escaped her, and she smiled freely at him for the first time in what seemed like forever. "It feels good doesn't it?"

Uncovering his mouth, he looked upward, "Yes... yes it does. Au-Riel! But I need to feel laughter again!"

Seriousness once again took them over, an almost somber feeling. Looking at him, a friend... "You will have it again... you will, Ondolemar, this is almost over."

He knew what she meant, it wasn't the conflict here... that was just getting started, it was this ridiculous issue with Anariil as well. But she didn't know everything. Swallowing, he nodded. He was back under control now, but he felt thankful for her and as she turned to leave him, his hand briefly touched her sleeve, making her pause. "Thank you, Elenwen..."

Giving him the slightest smile with a bit of a nod, "You're welcome."

Without even a glance in their new prisoner's direction, she walked away and headed to her
quarters. It was late, well after midnight nearing the early hours and they needed to sleep. There was little point in starting any kind of conversation with Fillim tonight, which would leave him even more exhausted for tomorrow and he would need his energy for whatever lay ahead with Anariil.

Taking a deep breath, he walked toward them. All of them were weary looking and in desperate need of rest. His eyes landing on Dhaunare, he lowered his voice. "Take him below and get him settled. There is an extra cot set up, so you may stay with him tonight. I will be sleeping up here, but my guard will be posted at the door. You will not be disturbed."

Even as he said those words, his ears could hear the intake of breath from across the large room. Rulindil was listening to every word he said. It mattered not, the Mer would not have his way regardless of how infuriated he became over it.

Turning to Fillim, Ondolemar looked down at him for a good long moment. A deep furrow now lay between the small Mer's brows, an almost pouty frown pulled his full lips down.

Of course what he wanted to show him, he couldn't, but at least he could try to put him at ease a little. "Try not to fear tonight young, Fillim. Anariil is not set to arrive at the docks until late tomorrow night or the next morn. I have guard posted and standing watch, they know to travel here as soon as his ship is spotted."

Ondolemar's head tilted, knowing the concern for him showing on his face was clearly evident, he was too tired to care. "Find your respite in the arms of your companions this night."

Rulindil stood in the doorway to his office, his hands down at his sides, clenched so tightly that his nails had cut through the skin of his palms! Making it's way around each nail, over his cuticle beds and around each knuckle, small droplets of blood fell to the stone floor, landing at both sides of his feet.

Ondolemar was now headed in his direction. "M... My... My Lord... your ha-"

Gissur jumped back in fear as his Master spun around on him! Hissing through his clenched teeth! "Get to my quarters! NOW!"

Allowing Gissur to pass him, he walked into Rulindil's office and shut the door. Leaning his back up against it, he crossed his arms and waited for his subordinate's tirade.

Spinning around on his heels, Rulindil turned away from him and walked over to his desk, pulling out a handkerchief to wipe his hands on before the blood could fully dry. Sputtering and huffing out sharp breaths the entire time, he healed each of his palms and sat down.

"You're acting like a child... you know that?"

Pushing back his hood, he sat back in his chair and glared up at him! "You're letting the two of them sleep with the prisoner!"

Pushing away from the door, he pulled out the chair opposite him and sat down, raising one leg to rest upon the knee of his other at the ankle. "Let's be honest with each other, shall we? The only reason you're cross, is because it is not you that's down there."

Rulindil sat silent, the expression on his face like stone.

"If I were to let you down there to share his cot for the night, you would have nothing to complain over would you?"
Still silent.

"But it's not you... is it?

In an act of pure disrespect, Ondolemar lifted his boot clad foot to Rulindil's desk and pushed himself back in the chair so that it rest on the two rear legs. Watching as his subordinate's face attempted to hold it's expression and failed, making him fight to keep his own face straight. If he were to laugh at him, it would only make it all that much worse.

"I tire of these juvenile complaints of yours. Go bed your own pet. Take out your frustrations on him."

Finally bringing the chair back down to the floor, he pushed away and stood. "That's what you normally use him for anyway, isn't it?"

Rulindil's mouth dropped open in disbelief! "You feel sorry for him! Don't you?" He pushed away from the desk, staring at his Commander's back in sheer amazement!

Holding onto the door handle, Ondolemar paused, turning to him. "Of course I do. Everyone that sees how you are with him does. You pass him around like a party favor. Even the ones that have bed him, other than Ancano of course, probably feel bad for him."

"Then you must also feel sympathy for the prisoner! You allow him comfort!"

His hand tightened on handle and he turned away, looking into the wood grain of the door as if to see through it. "I feel sympathy for anyone that is owned by Anariil. So yes, I'm allowing him comfort, as it may be his last."

Chapter End Notes

I hate to paint poor Ancano in such a horrible light, but I just can't resist using his assholeish nature to my advantage. I know... I'm constantly apologizing to him over this.
Should I Thank You? Part I

Chapter Summary

Fillim looked as though he were being led to the block. The corners of his mouth were tilted downward, he'd completely lost control of the quiver in his chin and bottom lip as tears spilled over, rolling down his cheeks to land on the chest of his quilted coat.

Standing in front of that metal door, he broke. His arm tightened around Dhaunare's as he turned away from it, shielding his face into the larger Mer's chest, sobbing! "I can't! Please! Don't make me go down there... please!!!"

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Every man is guilty of all the good he did not do.
~ Voltaire

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What kept wanting to circle his mind, was the fact that Ondolemar had indeed taken Gerrad. That not only had his own suspicions been correct, but all that had been told to him by other Mer as well!

How many years had it been? How many years had he hidden it from his close friend... well, once close friend.

His arm tightened around Fillim as he watched his Commander walk into Rulindil's office. What he wanted to ask him was, where was Gerrad? Did he still have him? If he did, where in Oblivion was he? And where had he kept him that there was absolutely no trace... no word from anyone that he'd been seen?

From what he'd also been told, Ancano had used a great amount of his own personal resources searching for the Mer for years after his disappearance. Paying others to search for him as well... all over the Isles, to Cyrodiil, Valenwood, rumor had it that he'd even had a party search Hammerfell when the Mer's native land produced nothing.

But all of his questions would have to wait. They'd wait, but they would be addressed.

Looking down at the trembling Mer that he held, they began a slow walk to the doorway that opened up to the Embassy dungeon. Fiiralmo walked behind them completely silent.

Fillim looked as though he were being led to the block. The corners of his mouth were tilted downward, he'd completely lost control of the quiver in his chin and bottom lip as tears spilled over, rolling down his cheeks to land on the chest of his quilted coat.

Standing in front of that metal door, he broke. His arm tightened around Dhaunare's as he turned away from it, shielding his face into the larger Mer's chest, sobbing! "I can't! Please! Don't make me go down there... please!!!"
Dhaunare's eloquent voice lowered down to a whisper as he spoke into Fillim's hair, holding him tighter. "Fillim, please don't make this harder than it already is... I beg you." His green eyes met the amber ones of his lover, seeing the emotion etched across his face. They absolutely could not lose their composure! Not here!

Glancing around and seeing no one else, he placed a soft kiss on the top of the smaller Mer's head, whispering, "We will be with you all night..."

Fillim's body shook against his as he fought his sobs. Sniffling, his hands finally coming up to wipe at his face.

Taking his chin with an index finger and thumb, Dhaunare tilted it upward, gently forcing Fillim to meet his gaze, seeing the terror in his eyes he tried his best to calm him. "It's not that bad... really. You'll see."

He himself almost cringed as the ridiculous sounding words left his own lips! *It's not that bad... you'll see...* He'd never been a guest in their dungeon, but he'd seen plenty that had! *It was that bad!*

Closing his eyes, he knew that Ondolemar had cleared the cells and had them cleaned of any remnants of past prisoners. He'd known how upsetting this would already be for the young Mer regardless. All three of them did! But had it been left in it's prior condition, it would've been even more so.

Leaning in to kiss Fillim's lips lightly, Fiiralmo stepped closer from behind them, petting his plaited hair. "Fillim, please be strong! You can do this! We have faith in you! And we promise that we will both be here for you when this is over. You will never have to face anything else alone!"

Just hearing his mate speak those words filled his own heart with hope. Looking away from the stricken Mer, Dhaunare smiled at him in thanks, took in a silent breath and opened the door.

Fighting to keep his breathing under control, Fillim stepped into the entryway, them standing behind him. Immediately taking in his surroundings, it was like walking from his father's immaculate home, directly into his barn.

The landing and stairwell were made entirely of wood, clean, warmly lit and huge! His eyes taking in the bales of straw that sat in the corner just before the stairs, and the way the entire upper portion seemed to wrap around, giving a view of what lay below, *this* part of it reminded him of his father's loft.

A sharp stab of pain hit his heart as he remembered every detail and the fact that he'd snuck away on numerous occasions to sleep up there. It'd almost been a sort of novelty to him... a secret place, that at the time had felt like it was just for him and him alone. One of the only places where he could let his imagination soar! Where he could be a young Mer, instead of having to act aged, rigid and proper all the time.

A place where he could be anything he wanted... anything except his father's servant.

The pain turned to warmth and the warmthness of the memory surrounded him, until he took a real good look over the railing and saw the rest of it in it's entirety. It was still clean, still warm, but that's where the comparison *and* the coziness ended.

Swallowing the saliva that instantly pooled in his mouth, his hands flew up, covering his lips as the tears came again. He no longer cared... he would weep. He'd never been in a cell before. He wasn't a criminal, he'd done nothing wrong. The injustice that he was being dealt completely staggered
him!

What he wanted, was to demand that his father be notified! He swallowed again, fighting the growing nausea in his gut. Of course, what good would that do, other than earn him the block anyways... his father had always told him to never speak of his lineage. He'd sold him. He'd sent him away without even a seconds glance in his direction as he left him.

How could he be strong... how could he? What was there left to fight for? Dawn would come soon. He had mayhap one more day until Anariil arrived. Then it would be all over. Anariil would have his evidently much needed revenge and his father would forever be free of him.

Reaching up, Fiiralmo took one of his hands away from it's protective place over his mouth and led him down the stairs, leading them to the largest of the cells. Noting only the one cot inside, instead of the two that their Commander had just mentioned, Dhaunare left momentarily to get another from an adjoined storage area.

Either Ondolemar's command to have two prepared for them had not been heeded, or someone had taken it down in disagreement with his wishes. Of course neither of them had to guess at who that individual would've been.

At least now they could push them together, allowing them the illusion of being able to sleep in one bed together.

As soon as his feet crossed the threshold, Fillim sank to his knees, his hand pulled free from Fiiralmo's as he leaned over the cot, covered his face and sobbed.

Fiiralmo turned away, exiting to give his partner the room needed to bring in the second cot and pulled off his robes. Folding them, he draped them over the chair that sat at Rulindil's desk.

Behind him, he could hear Dhaunare's attempts to sooth Fillim. He could hear the cracks and waver in his partner's voice, the strain that it was taking to try and be strong himself.

Staring at the wall before him, his hands absent-mindedly smoothed down over his white tunic as his own tears finally spilled over.

He would not let them be seen.

Chapter End Notes

My description of the Embassy dungeon may be a tiny bit off as I haven't played this portion in a really long time. So I'm getting it as close as possible to the actual dungeon and tweaking it a little to fit my needs.
Should I Thank You? Part II

Chapter Summary

Trying to stay focused on their superior in front of him, he lay a hand on each Mer's leg beside him simply to try and reassure before continuing on. "I want you to know that I appreciate the treatment you've all given me and still are. But... you can't really help me... can you?"

He didn't wait for an answer. "He's going to come here, and he's going to take me... and there won't be a thing any of you can do about it... is there?"

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It seemed there was nothing that could stop his endless tears. Nothing.

They lay together, bundled in the furs. Dhaunare snuggled into him from the rear in perfect spoon position, Fiiralmo facing him just inches from Fillim's face, holding the smaller hands in his, releasing them only momentarily to wipe the young Mer's running nose.

His face shone wet from the flow of tears even as he passed out from his emotional exhaustion, and Fiiralmo knew that Dhaunare had spilt his own when the fire had died down and he tucked his face deep into Fillim's hair.

He wouldn't let him see his tears.

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Not knowing the condition they may be in, and not wanting it to be seen by the guard nor anyone else, Ondolemar, upon waking had decided to bring them their breakfast.

Due to the commotion that had taken place so late in the night, they had all slept late, everyone in the Embassy it seemed. All but the guard, who had changed at their normal hours.

Freshly bathed in icy cold mountain water, his skin still shone pink in places from the frigid temperature. He found that when he was exhausted and in need of clarity, a cold bath was the best thing for re-invigoration. And that was something he was in great need of right now.

More than that, he needed strength. And the only Mer that had been his source of strength... no, his wellspring of it, was miles away from where he now stood. If he could only see him, touch him.

Standing in his quarters, he looked at himself in the mirror as he fastened the last of the buttons on his white tunic, trying to avert his gaze from the shadowy half moons under his eyes. Those eyes... his eyes... he couldn't meet them.

So many times Gerrad had sat with him, showering him with the many reasons that he had to go on! Not only the fact that he had saved him! But the fact that he needed to see this through! Justice had to be done!

And every time the young Mer would finish his lecture, he would weep. Not only because he
couldn't tell him that one of the reasons he had to keep on going was to be with him, so they could finally live a life of peace together.

But because if this was ever seen to fruition, the chance was great that Ondolemar would never be coming back home to him. It was the possible price for what they'd all done.

The end was drawing near, they both knew it.

Taking a deep breath, he lowered his hands and tied the laces to his leggings. He would break fast with them and he would do it in comfort. As much comfort as possible at least. He could wait till later to don his robes, there was no hurry as he planned to spend every minute with Fillim and his comrades as possible until Anariil arrived. This would take awhile.

Opening his duffle, he pulled out a small silk satchel, tucked it into his pocket and walked out, taking care to lock the door behind him.

Going into the kitchen, he greeted Tsavani and aided her in gathering items for the two trays he would need. He liked her and she liked him. She liked the fact that he waited on himself, he didn't wait for one of their servants to get his meals. And when he did come into her kitchen, he didn't boss her around or talk meanly towards her. He prepared his own tray and set it up the way he wanted it, carrying it to his own quarters.

She'd told him more than once that she wished he were there more often. He understood. Having to live under the same roof with some that were there had to be quite unpleasant for many of them. But she was Elenwen's personal chef and they were on very good terms, and knowing Elenwen, the amount of grief she would allow Tsavani to take from anyone would be minimal.

Briefly wiping his hands on a towel and setting it aside, he looked down surveying the trays to make sure nothing was absent they may need prior to making his trip with them. One held a pitcher of boiled water, four tea cups, that had been turned upside down upon matching saucers. Bowl of tea leaves, strainer, sugar bowl, fresh cream and spoons. The other held four small plates with napkins resting atop them and a platter piled with scones and biscuits. Fresh butter and snowberry preserves. Perfect.

Tsavani nodded to him as he turned and left holding one, and one of their resident Altmer servants behind him, holding the other. As soon as they approached the door, the guard stepped aside, unlocking the door so Ondolemar could enter.

Setting the tray he held onto a nearby bale of straw, he looked below and seeing that the three of them were dressed already, he quietly called the servant in. Speaking to her very quietly, "Follow me down, and then I'd like you to empty any used chamber pots and replenish the bathing and drinking water, then the wine."

Nodding to him silently, she followed him down. Dhaunare walked to him as he set his tray down atop Rulindil's desk, eyeing the servant as she did the same and watched her quickly turn toward the corner where the used buckets were sitting. He didn't speak until she was up the stairs and out of sight.

Leaning toward his Commander he whispered, "It is urgent that we speak prior to your meeting with him."

Just the look on his subordinate's face told him that it wasn't good. Should he have expected anything less? Looking past Dhaunare, he looked into the cell, Fillim was dressed, but was huddled in the corner of the cot closest to the wall with his arms wrapped around his knees. Fiiralmo sat
across from him speaking soothingly to him in hushed tones.

Like himself, both of his subordinates wore their casual clothing, their robes folded neatly across the chair belonging to the desk he now stood at, which made him think of Rulindil again and how he must be completely fuming over his space being taken... his control being taken. That made him wonder about Gissur and how he had fared once Rulindil got to his quarters last night.

His thoughts compounding his feeling of helplessness, he shook them away as his gaze fell upon the trays and he slowly began to ready the tea leaves. "Tell me quickly as I prepare this. We are all in need of nourishment, perhaps it will lighten the load some."

Dhaunare leaned in closer, now dreading to tell him what he must even moreso, he swallowed loudly in his Commander's ear. "She... she is dead."

As soon as the words left his lips Ondolemar's hands fumbled the bowl full of leaves, causing it to crash down onto the tray, the leaves flying about!

The tray was forgotten.

Oblivious to the fact that they now held the other's attention, Ondolemar's hands splayed open as he leaned his full weight against the table, trying to stabilize himself before he went down! Tremors wracked his body, his head lowering down to meet the contents of the tray before him!

Dhaunare yelled for help as he grabbed the chair, sliding it behind his Commander's knees, he gently eased him back into it before he fell to the floor. Fiiralmo and Fillim both were now at his side. The young Mer's hands up to his mouth in shock, watching as Fiiralmo placed a cold rag behind the stricken Altmer's neck and one atop his forehead.

Tears made their way through the sheen of sweat that covered his pallid skin, opening his eyes, he stared up at the ceiling, trying in vain to regain just a tiny bit of control over himself. It was useless. All he wanted to do was sob.

Raising his trembling hands from his lap, he plucked the rag from his forehead, covered his face with it and wept, his shaking voice whispering through the rag, "What have I done?! What have I done?"

Fillim stood to the side, not knowing what to do as he watched them attempt to console their superior. He couldn't remember seeing an Altmer show such a display of emotion since Anariil had poured his soul out to him while he was healing from being whipped.

Having no idea what could have possibly brought on something so severe as to overtake the powerful Mer, and feeling quite uncomfortable, he decided to ready their tea and began to clean the mess of leaves from the tray.

Hearing the slight clatter of cups and silver, Ondolemar quieted and removed the rag from his face. Righting himself in the chair he looked at the offspring... the result and final victim of his horrible actions that night, trying to think again of how he might tell him what he had to. What he had rehearsed so many times since he'd found out about his existence.

Fillim slowly and carefully spooned the precise amount of leaves into the pot, closing the lid to let it steep while he reorganized the trays. Placing a small plate out for each Mer present, he paused as the servant set down the box filled with wine bottles and left for the final time.

Whatever the problem was, they could deal with it better after they'd all eaten. Pouring their superior's first, he moved closer to him, cup and saucer in hand, observing the Mer's red rimmed
eyes and the evident stress and exhaustion that had taken over his face. He sat slumped in the chair, his body showing extreme weariness.

Bowing slightly to him, he held out the saucer. "Please... drink. It will help."

Finally taking the saucer he balanced it on his lap and shook his head, looking down into the cup, fighting off the new tears that threatened to spill over. "Amazing... even with the position that you are now in, you go out of your way to soothe your jailer... " His green eyes moved up to meet Fillim's amber ones, still red rimmed from his own, quite evident night of tears. "Dhaunare was right. You are an uncommonly exceptional Mer."

Fillim sat down across from him, taking his own tea in hand. "I don't think you're really my jailer... Anariil is."

Holding his cup to his nose, Ondolemar inhaled deeply, breathing in the aroma that wafted from his steaming cup. Closing his eyes momentarily, he thought over what Fillim had said as he listened to everyone get settled around him. A lock of his white hair had come loose during his display and now hung down across his cheek, raising his hand he brushed it behind his ear and took a sip.

Dhaunare, having prepared his mate's and his own biscuits, now handed him a plate. He would gladly accept. There was so much to say, but it was best to try and get something down. This wasn't going to get any better. Not by a long shot. They all would need their strength.

Uncomfortable silence grew as they nibbled and sipped, each Mer's eyes landing on the others just briefly then fleeting away. None of them wanting to deal with what was at hand, and yet longing to just be done with it. Even Fillim looked as though he wanted to speak, but simply out of propriety did not. Finally, Ondolemar brushed the crumbs from his leggings and set his cup aside.

Dhaunare and Fiiralmo both, were so close to Fillim that they could move their chairs no closer and yet as soon as he began to speak both their bodies leaned nearer to him, as if attempting to shield him from what was about to be said and the possible effect it may have upon him.

"Dhaunare was about to tell me what he had learned from you during your travel here. Instead of him telling me, Fillim, I'd like to hear it straight from you." Taking hold of the tea pot, he poured himself another cup and filled all of theirs.

"I would like you to tell me about your father. I would like you to tell me about your mother... anything that you actually know of her, and I would like to know how you came to be a possession of Anariil's and why you are now in Skyrim."

Ondolemar took a sip of his tea, "Then I will tell you why I have an interest in you and why we are attempting to help you in your plight."

Fillim gulped the last of his tea and set the dishes aside, raising his feet into the chair with him. Fiiralmo's arm now resting round his shoulders, he began, but it wasn't quite where Ondolemar thought it would be. "I don't think any of you can really help me."

In his peripheral vision he could see the reaction his words inflicted on both sides of him. Trying to stay focused on their superior in front of him, he lay a hand on each Mer's leg beside him simply to try and reassure before continuing on. "I want you to know that I appreciate the treatment you've all given me and still are. But... you can't really help me... can you?"

He didn't wait for an answer. "He's going to come here, and he's going to take me. And there won't be a thing any of you can do about it, is there?"
"No. There is nothing that any of us can do to prevent him from taking you."

Resigned to his fate, Fillim released their hands and wrapped his arms around his knees. "I will tell you what you want to know. At least what I, myself, actually know. There has been much kept from me, so it may not be very accurate."

Ondolemar crossed his stretched out legs, ankle over ankle and folded his arms. Fillim looked into him, not at him. Almost as if he was seeing through him as he retold his tale.

"First, I know that my mother was one of my father's slaves. She was given to him by Anariil as a present. Anariil told me this himself, that he'd gotten her during a raid in Valenwood. He told me that my father loved her dearly, but that he was too terrified of the social ramifications of having a relationship with her to be forthright with it. I don't really know her name, as no one was allowed to speak it within my father's home. I... I don't know if any of them even knew her real name, but she was called Rielle, and he would allow that. She died giving birth to me. One of the midwives that was there told me that she did get to hold me for awhile before she passed, but that was all."

Fillim looked about for a drink, and instead of being handed wine, it was tea that he received. Probably for the best. It was early and if he started drinking now he'd be pissed by the time midday came. Sipping on his tea, he released the saucer and clutched his cup, balancing it atop his knees. "Also from what I was told, I was nursed by another Mer that was servant to my father. She was getting ready to ween her child and took me on until I was ready for milk from the stables."

Ondolemar took his cup as well and refilled it, struggling to keep his expressions under control.

"I was raised by the servants in his household. I lived with them. Anariil was there almost weekly from the earliest time that I can remember. He was civil to me only when my father was present, but whenever he wasn't, and any chance Anariil got, he would speak foully to me."

Clearing his throat to interrupt, "I'm curious. Did Telindil ever spend time with you? Did he ever tell you anything else about your mother?"

Shaking his head, Fillim looked at him clearly, "No. He never really spoke of her to me. He did call me into his study once though, when I was around four or five. He told me that he was my father, but that it was to never be known. He gave me strict instructions as to where I was allowed when there were guests present, and that I was never to be seen by anyone other than the others that lived there and worked for him. The only other that knew was Anariil."

Taking a sip of his tea, Fillim went on, "Anariil told me that he didn't spend any time around me because when he saw me he was reminded of her. It was too painful for him."

By the end of all he had to say, the wine had been opened and goblets filled. Fillim stood and removed his new coat and tunic, revealing his back to Ondolemar. Of course, he knew from the summons the identifying mark that Fillim would bear. Seeing it was another thing entirely.

A knock upon the door startled them all, Fillim jumped up, his eyes wide in fear as he hid behind Dhaunare, clutching at his tunic!

Ondolemar climbed the steps to the door and called through, "Who is it? We're in the middle of something."

Instead of receiving a guard's voice through the door, it was a servant's. The same one that had brought down the wine and water earlier. "My Lord, mid-day meal is ready. Would you like me to bring it down?"
A wave of relief passed through him so great that he raised a hand to his heart, leaning his head against the door he thanked Au-riel that it wasn't what he'd feared. "Yes, I will need you to gather the trays from morning meal first, I will assist you."

Helping her with the trays, his head swam with all that he'd just heard. The fact that Telindil had relied on his best friend to keep his son safe. And secret!

Relying on him to give him the respite of knowing that he was cared for, and yet out of his home. Putting the full burden of Fillim's existence back onto Anariil. The one that had brought his mother into his life... the one that had lain this evident curse upon him in the first place. The center of Anariil's animosity and loneliness.

Fillim was a constant reminder of what he'd done, and what he would never have. And he knew exactly what had happened. Well part of it anyway. Anariil realized that Telindil would never be his, so he made Telindil think he was doing him a favor and took him.

Ondolemar stood silent, staring off into space, going over all of it in his head as the servant departed. The words tumbling from his lips before he realized they were even out. "He used you... he used you as a substitute... didn't he? He took the only thing he could get... the next best thing. Someone that couldn't tell him no."

Fillim paused, serving bowls in hand, the words and their meaning striking his heart! Swallowing, he tried to control the tremor in his voice. "I thought about that, after he told me how he felt about my father. But I was hurting so bad that I couldn't face it."

Fiiralmo led him to a chair, taking the bowls from him, he would finish serving them all. Fillim's hands wrung in his lap.

The last thing on all their minds was food. Looking down at the stew, his eyes then traveled to the wine setting on the table. "Let's eat. We'll all want more to drink before this is over." Ondolemar looked back to Fillim. "I want you coherent when he finally arrives."

Fillim shook his head, putting his spoon in the bowl. "I'd rather not be. I know he's going to make me suffer. That's the whole point in this, isn't it? Making me suffer?"

Speaking around his food, he was beyond propriety at this point. "I don't want you to suffer, Fillim. I want you to stand up to him. That's something you probably haven't ever done, is it?"

"No, it isn't. Now I don't really feel afraid of him, I just want it over."

Setting empty bowls aside, the fire stoked, goblets were filled. Ondolemar looked up at the stone ceiling. "I don't want that either. I want you to fight."

Fillim looked at him confused. There was no way he could fight someone as skilled as Anariil and win. He wouldn't even know where to start.

Ondolemar's eyes met his, the older Mer leaned back in his chair, crossing his arms. "He's defeated. That's what I think. I don't know why he would betray his oldest and dearest friend the way he did, with taking you and using you in the fashion that he did. I think he was more than likely driven by desperation and loneliness. And I also believe, after hearing you tell it all in it's entirety, that he probably really fell in love with you, Fillim. Then once that happened, things were really out of his control."

Fillim's feet were back up in his chair, his two only sources of support at his sides. He listened intently. "I know that Dhaunare has probably already told you this, but you look just like your
father. You also look like her as well."

Fillim's face went slack. "How... how do you know that?"

Rising from his seat, Ondolemar reached into the pocket of his leggings and pulled out a small satchel, handing it to Fillim. Once again sitting, he watched as Fillim pulled at the strings, frantically trying to open it. Dumping out the contents into the palm of his hand. A small tree, made of pure gold. It was in bloom and cradled into the center of each leaf was the tiniest, most perfectly cut little emerald. Fastened to a gold link chain.

His hands shook as he looked at the second piece. A ring, fashioned from bone. The same tree carved into the middle. Turning it over in his hands, he peered into the inside of the band. Einsa.

"Beauty..."

Ondolemar's words startling him, his hands closed around the precious items. He stared up at him in shock. "Rielle means beauty. It's Ayleidoon. It's from the term Tam-riel. That's why he let everyone call her that, because it wasn't her name. But it was true. She was beautiful."

Plucking his goblet from the table next to him, he downed half of it, resting the base on his thigh. "Her name was Einsa. Einsa Gaelrinthil. Her father is the Chieftain of a very prominent royal family in Marbruk, holding an incredibly powerful seat in the Dominion."

Tears trailed down Fillim's face, his mouth hung ajar, quivering as Ondolemar pointed to the items he held. "Those are... were her's. I know because I took them off of her the night I took her from her bed."

His own tears now came. His voice cracking under the strain of it all. Setting the goblet aside, he looked at Fillim and broke down. "I was under orders... as were two others that night. It was our last tour in Valenwood. We were under Anariil's command. Everything we did... where we went... it was illegal! If the Dominion had found out, we all would've faced court martial! Execution!"

Running his hand down his face, attempting to mop up the fluids, "She was seventeen... the daughter of Eniurron Gaelrinthil. We trespassed onto their land, crept into her room. Anariil slipped a doused rag over her face... and we took her!"

The sound of metal hitting metal rang from up above! Chairs slid back and fell to the floor as they bolted upright! Goblets and wine went flying! Standing there, gaping up at the loft in shock!

Anariil calmly and smoothly pulled his leather gloves off one finger at a time as he stared down at them. "Is that exactly how it happened, Ondolemar?"
"Nothing that these Mer have told you matters." Moving closer, he leaned into the small Mer, speaking against his hair, causing a shudder to run through Fillim as his breath washed over him. "You belong to me... and that is all that matters... isn't it."

It wasn't a question.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

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Fillim backed away until his back touched the bars of last night's cell, no where else to go, as Anariil slowly descended the steps down to them. Fiiralmo and Dhaunare both gaped at him, then back to Ondolemar.

How in all of Nirn had this happened? There were supposed to be guard posted at the god's forsaken docks!

Ondolemar's eyes went from his superior back up to the loft. The door had been closed by the guard that stood watch. It no longer mattered what had gone wrong... what had happened. Every single Mer in the Embassy would follow Anariil's command to the letter, even Elenwen.

Even if what he commanded was lunacy. No one would fight him. He was deadly, and they all knew it. Even if he was wrong, not a single Mer there wanted to end up meeting Auriel over trying to prove it.

He no longer cared. He was ready to face what he had coming and to oblivion with the rest! Meeting Anariil's amber eyes, he held out an arm, trying to shield Fillim! "Yes! That is exactly how it happened!"

Tucking his gloves carefully under his belt, his head tilted in Ondolemar's direction, a look of absolute nonchalance on his face, as if to say 'Really?'

In earlier days, he would've had them all arrested for insubordination, treason and whatever else he could drum up to get their heads separated from their shoulders! But again, back in earlier days, their Dominion wasn't in love with the idea of making friends out of those that needed to know their rightful godsdamned place!

Now nothing mattered. None of it. Except what was still his. And what was his, was standing right there in front of him. Standing in front of him wearing the clothes of a royal.

Turning towards Fillim, he slowly walked closer to the small Mer... he was going nowhere. His back was jammed up against the bars of the cell, his supposed allies frozen to their spots in fear. And though he spoke to their Commander, his eyes never left Fillim's. "Prove it..."

Ondolemar's mouth dropped open in shock. His lips worked to speak, but nothing would come. His
eyes bugged out, searching for help... for unknown answers. He was expecting Anariil to make attempt to defend himself, and he wasn't.

The only word he could finally speak came out in a hoarse whisper. "Wha- What?"

Pushing Ondolemar's arm down, he passed him, walking directly in front of Fillim, stopping to look down on him, his eyes combing over every inch. "I did not stutter. I said, prove it."

Fillim stared down into Anariil's chest. He couldn't look to the others for help now, he could see how they were reacting to him. There was no one that could help him! Just as he'd tried to tell them all along!

There was no point in fighting back. If none of these capable Mer could oppose him, what was the point? He was just prolonging the inevitable. He just wanted it to be over with.

That's what he kept telling himself, but all the while he stood trapped between him and the bars of his prison guestroom, his hands clutched the objects within them, attempting to keep them hidden.

The precious things that he held were the proof. Things that Anariil knew nothing about.

Quietly, Anariil spoke to him. "You are still mine Fillim... do you believe what I say?"

"Yes..."

Dhaunare stood watching Anariil's display of power over Fillim, listening to the defeat that laced the young Mer's voice, feeling Fiiralmo's hand as it clutched his arm tightly! His eyes found their Commander's. No one dared move, lest Anariil take it as a threat and attack.

"Nothing that these Mer have told you matters." Moving closer, he leaned into the small Mer, speaking against his hair, causing a shudder to run through Fillim as his breath washed over him. "You belong to me... and that is all that matters... isn't it."

It wasn't a question.

Unable to speak without his lips brushing against Anariil's throat... his intent, he croaked out. "Yes..."

Backing away from him, Anariil looked to the side and into the cell. His green eyes now meeting Fillim's warm amber with an amused look. "There will be no need to take these things... you will not be in need of them."

Fillim's swallow was loud enough to be heard by all as he stepped aside and walked toward the stairs. He couldn't cry... not anymore.

"Stop..."

Fillim halted in his tracks as if being manipulated on strings by his puppet master. Standing completely still, his face positioned downward, staring blankly through the floor, awaiting his next command.

Anariil turned to Ondolemar, taking his gloves from his belt, he slowly began to put them back on, looking down at his hands as he spoke. "Did any of you actually think about what you were doing prior to acting?"

As he spoke, the loft door opened and his personal guard, accompanied by several Imperial troops,
filed down the stairs. Dhaunare and Fiiralmo moved in closer to their Commander, looking at one another in amazement at what was taking place! How dare they allow Imperials into the Embassy!

Ondolemar's mouth dropped wide as Elenwen herself entered and waited by the door.

Holding up his hand to halt his escort's approach, he moved in closer to Ondolemar, his voice deep and menacing. "Your look out is dead! His body now feeds the sea bed and all her inhabitants."

Moving in even closer to his subordinate, "All you did was give him false hope. All of you. In the end he's mine and all you've done is earn yourself and those faithful to you the block."

Fillim's hands left his pockets, moving up to his mouth to silence the sob that finally escaped him. Anariil chuckled, waving his hand for his entourage to proceed. "Your Ally was spotted as well... some time ago, just off the path here in fact. He won't break the Concordat... not while Imperial troops are in my company."

Turning from them and forcefully grabbing Fillim's arm, he led him up the steps, directing them as he approached Elenwen. "They are all three under suspicion of treason against the Empire and the Dominion! Bind them, they will be residing in the Solitude Dungeon whilst I am there!"

Their eyes followed him up the steps, stopping at Elenwen. She wouldn't return their gaze. Turning before they even reached her, she followed Anariil out, standing silently by Rulindil as they were led outside to the awaiting Imperial carriage. Six troops and four of Anariil's personal guard would be riding with them.

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Fjolrin stood inside Castle Dour, his massive arms crossed at his chest as he glared at the General! Rikke just stood back, watching as Tullius did the only thing he could do. "This is their business Fjolrin! You should count yourself lucky that Elenwen hasn't given me complaint about your interference!"

The smaller dark skinned man now crossed his own arms, craning his neck to look up to the Nord. "Stay out of it! There are more important things that I could use your help with! Other than you worrying about some runaway Thalmor slave!"

Tullius' face turned a darker shade of red as he raised a hand up to gesture at Fjolrin's attire! "And what's with this! The last time I saw you, you were wearing something suitable to fight in! What in Gods name has happened to you?"

Turning from him before his mouth ran away from itself, he stormed out, slamming the door behind him! Tullius ran after him, flinging the large door open as if it were nothing, yelling at him! "I know who it is that came into port yesterday! He came directly here Fjolrin!"

Speaking as he walked. "I know who it is as well!!!"

Grabbing Fjolrin's arm, he spun him around so he had to face him! Tullius, out of breath, pointed into his chest accusingly! "His guard and some of their Justiciars came here as soon as he docked, telling me that anymore interference into their affairs would be a direct violation! You had guards posted down there! Watching for his ship!!"

Fjolrin swatted his hand away, leaning down into his face! His white blonde hair standing out in stark contrast to his now deep red face! They weren't my guards!! I told you that!! They were Thalmor guard, watching for his ship! Under orders by their own!!"
Tullius shook his head, "I don't care! Get out of their business and stay out! I've got enough on my plate with the mess Ulfric's made here! More and more of our people are dying each day Fjolrin! Or have you forgotten that?!!"

Turning to leave him, the General spoke as he walked back toward the guarded doors. "And if I hear one more thing about you dealing in matters that aren't your concern, I'm not going to have any other choice but to alert the Emperor about your interference."

Fjolrin nodded, watching as he got farther away. "So that's how it is?"

Before the doors closed he heard him say... "Yes, that's how it is!"

Walking down the steps past the Fletcher and the Smith, he could feel all eyes upon him, hear the whispers as the townsfolk that had seen him there so many times in his armor, doing the General's bidding, and now that he was wearing robes. The same people that once looked upon his as a hero, now shot him the same looks they would toward a leper! One of the afflicted!

Doing his best to shake it off, he needed to focus on the matter at hand, which would be a little harder now that Tullius was up in arms about it! Watching his every fucking move! He needed a drink, and he needed to find out more about what was happening here!

Walking over to the Skeever, Sorex stepped out before he could even get close to the handle. "You can't come in Fjolrin... sorry." His dark eyes dropped downward, red staining his cheeks.

Fjolrin's chest tightened. Corpulus had always been more than gracious whenever he'd stayed there... which had been often. He was starting to feel like the entire city had been turned against him. "On who's authority? Their's?"

Sorex looked up to him, watching him sling his duffle over his shoulder. "I'm sorry... it's just, they've already complained to my Da! They said if you're allowed in, they'll see it as a confrontation!" Raising a hand up to run through his black hair, he looked embarrassed. "They said they'd go to Tullius Fjolrin... Da doesn't want any trouble."

Fjolrin took hold of his shoulder, pulling him gently aside, whispering to him. "Look... I just want to know how many of them there are and how long they're staying... that's all."

Looking around nervously, Sorex leaned in and spoke real low. "There was one Justiciar. He came in with eight soldiers. Then this morn he up and left with four of em', leaving the others here to secure the rooms for another two days!"

"What about the Imperials that are with them? I couldn't get anything out of Tullius!"

Sorex put his hand up to shush him! "Nobody knows for sure! Just that the one in charge went in to see Tullius and after that, he comes out with a group of our men."

Letting the duffle fall to the ground, Fjolrin's hands went to his hips, "Come on Sorex! You know how those boys talk! Somebody knows something!"

Blowing out a quick breath, he gave another look around, the red in his face getting darker. "Look... " he could barely look him in the eye and say it... "Some of the men said after there bein a scuffle down to the docks over things, that he insisted on protection... says it's from you."

A look of pure betrayal flooded into his light blue eyes! Betrayal and astonishment! "Do you believe that?!"
Turning to lay a hand on the handle to his Da's tavern, "Doesn't matter what I believe Fjolrin. We were told that if you threaten them one more time, the whole Dominion's gonna come down on us hard. We don't want a war with them too."

Fjolrin watched as he pulled open the door. "Angelina's got a room for rent if you need it."

With that, Sorex walked back into the Skeever. The door shut behind him, leaving Fjolrin out in the street.

He'd been ready. He'd waited for Anariil. Prepared to follow him once he left with Fillim. That'd been the plan.

But he was late. They all were. Anariil's ship was already gone. Who he thought he laid in wait for, was brought by Imperial carriage. He couldn't touch any of them. He'd been seen and it had already been reported to Anariil before he even knew the Thalmor was there!

All he could do now was wait to see if Fillim was still alive. Wait to see if he was still alive so he could watch him die, or be taken back to that hell!

Giving another glance toward Angelina's, he headed in that direction. If he couldn't be in the same Inn as they were, he'd be next door.

Chapter End Notes

Also, this little mention of the civil war stuff is exactly that... a little mention. So hopefully I didn't ruffle any feathers with the little bit that's in here about it. Back to it then...
Dead To Me

Chapter Summary

It was the thought that he was with another that drove him to do what he must. The pain of knowing that someone else would have what he could never. That Fillim was actually carrying on when he could not.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Thank you for makin' me
Feel like I am guilty
Makin' it easier,
To murder your sweet memory,
I'm severin' the heart line,
I'm leavin' your corpse behind
Not dead yet, but soon to be though

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Everything that he had thought would be forefront in his mind the moment he saw Anariil again, wasn't.

He thought he would struggle with old feelings of wanting, feelings of regret over his dishonesty to his very first love, and the heartbreak that he'd felt at being expelled from his homeland and everything he'd ever known. He thought he would be defiant regarding being anyone's property for another single second in his lifetime!

That he would fight against him.

No. As they approached the gates of Solitude, the only thing in his mind was that perhaps this was just the way it was meant to be. That perhaps this was just his lot in this life and if this Mer had chosen to want him again, mayhap he should be thankful that it wasn't his death he was choosing.

And if it was his death that Anariil chose, then perhaps that would be his own release from this fated existence.

His mind had barely even had time to wrap around the idea that his mother being in his father's home had actually been illegal. That what had happened to her, and how, had been an utter travesty! That he had family. A real flesh and blood family in Valenwood. And that they knew nothing of his existence! They knew nothing of what had become of their daughter!

His mind had spun with everything he'd been told by not only the other servants in his father's home, but by Anariil as well. How he'd been told that his father had loved her. That he'd wanted to be with her and was afraid to be openly. That he had mourned her death.

What he had planned to ask Ondolemar right before they were interrupted, was if he had known anything about how long she'd been in the household prior to his birth.
Because if she was taken away from her home, away from all that she'd loved. Forcefully plunged into a world of slavery, coming from a lifetime of royalty, how had she dealt with it? How long had it taken his father to go to her bed? Or take her to his? Was she afraid? Was it her first time?

Had his father forced himself upon a virgin that was young enough to be his granddaughter! Simply because she was now his servant! His fucking property!

If his father had felt all those things for her! Did she lose all hope in ever finding freedom again, and fall in love with her jailer!

Everything in him was telling him, no.

No! He would never believe that she had just given up on her life... her freedom... her family! And fallen in love with someone that kept her imprisoned!

Or was it all guilt. Horrible, never ending and rightfully deserving guilt, that his father had felt. How could his father even look her in the eye without dying inside from it! But if it was guilt, and he had any remorse at all, how could he do the things he had done to him?

If he felt that he owed her, how was selling their child a way of showing it?

But he hadn't had time to grasp any of it before Anariil had walked through that door and turned the tables on all of them. Keeping his head low, he wished his hair was undone, then he could hide behind it the way that he had so many times before. Not only with this Mer, but the first time he'd been with Vilkas as well.

Wincing at the painful memory, he slowly lifted his eyes toward Ondolemar, taking in his demeanor. There was an Imperial seated between each one of them. No one dared speak, let alone give any kind of a glance that may show what they were feeling or thinking.

It was obvious to him that they'd all just been betrayed by their very own, for reasons unknown to him and perhaps unknown to them as well. Of course, there was obviously quite a bit that was unknown to him. Like how Fjolrin was going to save him now. Now, when his own people were involved and evidently on the Thalmor's side.

If they were helping Anariil, nothing in all of Nirm could save him. There was no way that Fjolrin would go against his own to help him, he couldn't even expect that.

Anariil must have sensed his mind wandering, either that or that his gaze had shifted, because the grip he had around his wrist tightened. He wouldn't look at him though. Not while surrounded by all these Men and Mer. He wouldn't show any kind of weakness.

Fillim stared at the wooden planking beneath his feet as the gates opened and they rode inside. The gasps of onlookers was lost to his ears as the gears spun inside his head over the situation he was in and who he actually was.

Here in Skyrim what the Thalmor said was law. And right now, Anariil was the most powerful Thalmor there. He was quite sure of that. Hence Ondolemar and his allies' current plight.

He couldn't stand up and say who he was and that they had no right to imprison him! He was the son of a very powerful Royal and the son of a Bosmer Chieftain's daughter!

His own father had given him away. Anariil's name was carved onto his back. There had been an arrest warrant with his description on it.
The carriage jerked to a stop in front of what looked like an Inn. Every bound Mer in the carriage stared straight ahead as they were forced to stand and wait their turn in climbing down. He could see the color staining Dhaunare's and Fiiralmo's faces. This was a horrible humiliation indeed! To be paraded in front of the humans in chains! The arrest being led by one of their own!

Hearing the sound of horses outside, Fjolrin stepped through the door of Angeline's just as Tullius' voice rose above the growing crowd. Staying as far back as he could, he stood partially behind the large beam of wood that supported the corner of her porch roof and took in who was climbing down out of the carriage.

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His eyes finally caught sight of him! He was there! Surrounded by Justiciars wearing not their normal garb, but casual attire. That was a first. The two that arrested him in Whiterun, right along with the Justiciar's Commander that he'd met and conversed with on numerous occasions prior to all this in Markarth! They were all in binds!

Fjolrin swallowed as he fought to zero in his hearing in the midst of all the noise. He had to hear what was taking place!

Tullius' face was too dark to look pale from stress, but he could see that what the General was seeing weighed on him as he approached Anariil. Rikke of course, was right behind him. Normally her hand would've been on the hilt of her blade, but now she didn't dare, for fear that it would be taken as a sign of hostility.

Both of them and their troops, were completely dwarfed by the tall Altmer that now stood in a group, looming over them. Tullius stared right at Anariil, his mouth gaping open as he literally pointed at Ondolemar! "Wha- what is this? What is going on here?"

Fjolrin knew what he wanted to say, was something to the effect of, 'What do you think you are doing? And why are you doing it here!' But he couldn't. His hands were tied. And for all intents and purposes, his mouth was gagged. They could do whatever they wanted pretty much, and no one could say a word against them.

Staying safely behind the beam, he watched as Anariil's green eyes narrowed as he looked down on the small Imperial. His haughty voice speaking loudly enough so all could hear. "Our Commander and his Justiciars are under suspicion for acts against the Aldmeri Dominion and your Empire, General." One finger at a time, he pulled off his leather gloves. "They are to be held for questioning in your dungeon while I am here."

Fjolrin could see the General's adams apple bob up and down as he swallowed. "Questioning... questioned by whom?"

The slightest smirk tugged at Anariil’s lips as he watched fear play over the little man’s features. “Why General, I will be questioning them. Along with the Ambassador, of course.”

Fjolrin’s mind ran circles over it and over it, trying to figure it out. Here was a highly decorated Commander, one that he’d met on several other occasions at Markarth and two Justiciars that had been selected to gather Fillim. Now standing here in binds, being accused of possible treason? Why weren't they being held at the Embassy? Why was he parading his people and their wrongdoings in front of humans? This would have never happened the way it was. It would've been kept private.

None of it made any sense. Elenwen wasn’t here. It would only stand to reason that being she was assigned here to deal with the General, among other things, that she would be present now for
something this dire! Her own were being accused and would be jailed in the Solitude dungeon, and yet Anariil, who was only there to gather Fillim was heading up the investigation?

Anariil was hiding something.

Allowing the conversation between them to fade into the background for just a moment, his eyes once again sought Fillim out. The small Mer was standing in Anariil’s shadow, looking as though death itself were upon him.

“When is Elenwen due to arrive?” Tullius shook his head, hands on his hips. “I didn’t realize you planned to stay?”

Anariil leaned down into his face, speaking low. Fjolrin strained to hear, “None of these are your concerns General! All you need to know is that they are to be held!”

Tullius licked his lips, his eyes furiously scanning over the crowd that surrounded them before going back to Anariil. “I don’t like this Anariil!” His hand raised from his hip to point in the direction of the dungeon! “I don’t like having Thalmor locked up here! I don’t want our soldiers being in charge of- “

The devious gleam in those bright green eyes glowed fierce as Anariil bent down even further, now nose to nose with the smaller Man! “You are to give EVERY courtesy to us!”

The Altmer’s voice raising so loud that the entire market section of the city could hear every syllable! “EVERY COURTESY!!”

Red now stained the Thalmor’s cheeks as his temper flared! “If you are incapable of handling your duties, perhaps I should have a word with Skyrim’s widowed Queen! Perhaps your Emperor!”

The crowd had grown silent. Beirand’s hammering had stopped. Fjolrin could see the shadows of onlookers leaning over the stone wall above him, attempting to look down at the scene below.

Captain Aldis slowly walked forward, raising a hand for his men to stay put. “It will be done as you have requested Anariil. Please, let us get your people moved.”

Anariil straightened up, looking between the larger Nord Captain and his smaller superior. For a moment Tullius gaped at Aldis, then fighting to right his expression he closed his mouth, evidently realizing that his Captain was simply trying to diffuse the situation.

Without a sound, Fjolrin faded back into the shadows, waiting for Anariil and his entourage to pass by. Aldis walked directly beside the Thalmor, speaking low to him constantly reassuring him that his people would be extended every courtesy and that his prisoners would be treated properly. No Imperial would lay a hand to them while in their possession. He would make sure of it himself.

His attention immediately left them as two of Anariil’s guard split away from the group, each with a hand on one of Fillim’s arms, leading him toward the Inn. Fjolrin’s chest tightened as he realized Anariil had no intention of Fillim being jailed. He would be staying at the Inn with him.

Even as the young Mer’s expression did not change, Fjolrin’s eyes took in the two Justiciars that had arrested him, that had travelled with him all the way to the Embassy. Though their Commander stared straight ahead, they kept turning, glancing behind them to see him before he dissappeared into the Inn.

Fighting to keep calm, Fjolrin swallowed, thinking over everything that’d just taken place. They were actually worried for Fillim? That was the look he’d seen in their eyes. On their faces. They
were worried for him, and if their Commander held the same feelings, he did not show it. Perhaps he was too proud to show his concern in front of them all. But nonetheless, this whole situation was Anariil's way of keeping them quiet.

For whatever reason that was, he had yet to find out.

******

The only sound inside the Inn was the crackling of the fire. No one looked at them. No one moved. Each one of them sat stock still, staring down into their drinks or the plates that lay before them. Even the girl child that was present stared down into her folded hands.

The man behind the bar stood frozen in place, rag in hand, watching them as he was led through to the stairwell. Were they all that scared? Did they know what was going to happen to him?

Perhaps they didn’t care. Perhaps they just wanted whatever was going to happen to be over, so that they would finally be left alone to themselves once again.

The tension in the place was what roused him. That and the fact that once Anariil returned, they would finally be alone. That thought was terrifying. The thought of dying terrified him. He wasn’t ready.

He was led into a large room, one side filled with a large bed and nightstand, the other with seating and a table to work upon if needed or just to simply sit and read. Large book stands that stood almost completely empty, save for a scant few books that lay scattered about here and there.

And two windows. Fillim stood there staring at them. His mind filing it away as the door was closed behind him. His eyes combed about the room again, landing on the bottle of wine. Even if his stomach wasn’t sour, there wasn’t enough alcohol in the Inn to take away the dread that filled him. Not enough to make him forget what he was losing.

His freedom. His life. He would never see Farkas again, or Vilkas. He would never see Fjolrin or Dhaunare, Fiiralmo.

He would never meet his family.

******

The latch on the cell door fell into place, confirming it was firmly seated with a loud clank. Three cots had been moved into the cell, the fires stoked. A bucket sat in the far corner to be used as a chamber pot. Fresh rags sat beside it for wiping. Another bucket filled with fresh water, a ladle within, was placed next to the cots for drinking.

In his eyes, it was better than what they deserved. Even though the cells themselves were not as well kempt as those they had in the Isles, he was sure their treatment would be better here. Simply because the Imperials were in fear of retribution were they not treated well. For if on the chance they were to be released, they would know exactly who their jailors had been.

Satisfied that they were out of his way, he turned and left.

Ahtar stood looking in on his new prisoners, speechless, as the Thalmor walked out with his two guard trailing behind him.

******
Fillim’s back was to him when he walked in. Even the sound of him shutting the door didn’t cause him to turn for a moment. He was looking out one of the small windows the room held.

Normally he would’ve been irritated over not being acknowledged immediately upon entering a room, but things were different now. When he’d cut his ties from his homeland, his son and his wife to come here, his mind had gone over what he would do when he saw Fillim again.

He was sure that he would be in complete control of his emotions. That his anger would reign, helping him carry out the deed he absolutely knew was necessary!

His life lay in ruins. It was destroyed. And all because of that one night. That one raid. That one gift to his dearest friend, his only love.

She should have never been taken and Fillim should have never been born. Perhaps then he would’ve had the courage to face Telindil and declare his feelings. Even though the outcome would’ve more than likely been the same, at least it would’ve been out in the open between them, instead of being the cancer inside of him that it had been, eating away at his soul.

Instead, his friend had been burdened with his actions. His so called gift. Her existence… then their son’s.

This would be the end of it for all of them. His wife would finally be free to be with someone that she actually loved, living her life the way that she should’ve been able to from the start. His son would have the freedom to live out from under his tyranny, and Telindil would be free of their horrible secret.

Standing there, looking at Fillim’s back, he faced the lie that he’d told himself over and over. That he’d never really loved Fillim. He’d never really loved him. It hadn’t been him that he’d loved, it had been his father.

Telindil.

Whenever he’d looked at Fillim, that was who he saw… not Fillim. Until the night after he’d taught him.

As he’d lain in his tangled bed sheets, covered in sweat and his own seed from something that he’d wanted internally so much so that his own subconscious turned traitor against him.

From that point on, it hadn’t been Telindil that he really saw, it was Fillim. That revelation had terrified him, for what could they ever have? A mixed breed slave and a Thalmor officer. His best friend’s and superior’s son. A son that he was ashamed of. A son that should’ve never been.

At first it seemed as though he’d have his own little piece of what he could never have there with him. A wellspring that he could tap into anytime he wanted. Everything that he needed. Closeness, both emotional and physical. But what it became was a drug, and every time he was with Fillim the addiction grew worse. Feeding the cancer. Feeding his despair.

Oh he tried to rationalize it. He tried to make himself believe that this was better than being without Telindil, that he could live this way and heal the ache in his heart. But the more Fillim fell in love with him, each time they made love and he looked into those warm eyes, he could see the need there and see the demands that he knew he could never meet.

He could never give Fillim what he wanted. It was impossible.

And he could never divulge his love for the Mer either. If he ever did, the demand would grow
even greater, for Fillim would never understand why they could never be. The revelation that he, himself had caused Fillim to turn to his own son for what he could not give had been the final push that he’d needed.

In the end, he had only delayed the inevitable, hurting them all in the process.

Fillim turned to him finally, looking at him with those eyes.

They just stood there, staring at one another. A raging torrent of emotion ran through him so fierce he feared what he may do. He didn’t want to show weakness! What he wanted was to show the rage he’d felt at his betrayal! Not the suffering he’d endured because of it. The pain and loneliness after he’d sent him away, knowing that was what was best for all of them.

It was the thought that he was with another that drove him to do what he must. The pain of knowing that someone else would have what he could never. That Fillim was actually carrying on when *he* could not.

He could never just leave his homeland and the order. Live in a land that his own were now inhabiting and would continue to further do so. Any of those high enough up in the Dominion knowing who Fillim belonged to just by a glance! They would never be free! How could he live knowing Telindil would face complete ruin because of his failure to keep his word.

It seemed almost trivial now with what lay ahead, but he had to know.

“Did… did you love the Nor- “ he could barely say it. “the Nords you were with? Did you love them?”

Before the words even left his mouth, tears so bitter flowed from his eyes.

Fillim took several steps closer to him, looking as though he were afraid to speak and yet also acting as though he wanted to reach out to him. His soft melodic voice piercing his heart like a dagger.

“Yes… yes I did.”

Anariil dropped to his knees! His arms hung limply at his sides, throwing his head back he screamed out in absolute anguish! His eyes tightly shut, he slowly rocked back and forth weeping.

Fillim knelt down to him, unsure of what to do. Even during his punishment, when Anariil had declared himself and told him about how he’d felt and why he’d done what he’d done, he knew the Mer was hurting, he could feel it. But now… this was different.

He’d never seen Anariil completely lose control like this. He could feel the pain that radiated off from him as if it were his own and he wanted to console him, he just didn’t know where to start. He was afraid.

If Anariil was in this state, and he’d gone to these great lengths… what else was going to happen?

Now knee to knee with him, Fillim raised his arms up wrapping them around Anariil. Very slowly, he pulled the larger Mer closer, laying his head against Anariil’s throat until long arms Shakily wrapped round him, holding him.

Chapter End Notes
Lyrics ~ Undertaker
by: Puscifer
Cutting Out The Root

Chapter Summary

Anariil's smile faltered just slightly, the tears from his eyes never ceasing. Making no move to wipe them, he wanted to feel. "I know you're probably wondering where we're going... aren't you?"

Fillim nodded, glancing up at him, their eyes meeting for just a moment. Anariil was smiling, but it wasn't a happy smile. It was a pained one, his tears streaming over his now, trembling lips. Anariil released his hand and brought his arm around Fillim's shoulders, pulling him close as they continued to walk.

A soft chuckle escaped the Altmer's lips. "I have the most perfect spot for us to enjoy the sunset, Fillim."

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

**

Angeline Morrard sat in her living quarters, her niece, Vivienne at her side. She had closed up the shop early for the day, as had many others. All the commotion in the town square earlier scaring many to the point of locking their doors.

The market stalls sat empty and unmanned. Not a soul walked the streets. All the children had been taken indoors. It was as if the entire city were holding it's breath in wait of what could be coming. The only noise that could be heard was coming from the Smithy, evidently too busy to quit early. She did notice however that his wife had closed her shop. Probably on demand from him.

Her weary red-rimmed eyes watched the enormous Nord as he paced back and forth through the second floor of her shop, always coming to a stop at the window which faced the windows in the upper floor of the Inn next door. He would stare for a few moments as if he were hoping to see something, only to then turn and walk away when he didn't. The look of unease on his handsome face grew more severe by the second.

The fact that he'd been banned from the Winking Skeever upset them both, but they understood the reasoning behind Corpulus' decision. Of course, the decision hadn't been his entirely either. He wasn't really given much of a choice. When your life and that of your family's and everything you had worked for was at stake, you picked your battles carefully.

Things were becoming a might dangerous now and folks were uneasy. The Imperials were supposed to be there to protect them, and they couldn't. It was completely obvious now to all that their hands were tied.

As soon as Fjolrin had been turned away, he'd come to her and she'd taken him in. He'd always been helpful and kind to her, spent a good amount of coin at her place whenever he was in the city, and brought her a lot of ingredients that were hard to come by. And he'd delivered the painful news about her fallen daughter to her when no one else had taken the time to.
He'd helped their city. He'd helped Elisif. There was no way that she would be turning her back on him.

Setting up a cot for him in the back room of her shop, she'd asked him upstairs to eat with them. "Fjolrin-"

Before he could even turn to her, a knock sounded at the front door downstairs.

Angeline stood, Vivienne doing the same and walked down the stairs, him close on their heels.

*It may be nothing. Perhaps just one of the townsfolk needing remedy.* But that wasn't what his senses were telling him.

Even though they were trying to be quiet, he could hear more than one person at the door. He could smell them. Human *and* Elf. And whoever was right up close, doing the knocking, they didn't want to be there.

A torrent of emotion came through the heavy wooden door at him, causing his already sweating palms to clench up into fists. Calming his breathing, he stepped in front of Angeline, turning to her slightly. "They're here for me, Angeline. I'll see to it."

Vivienne gently pulled her aside, letting him open her door. Standing with his hand upraised in preparation to knock again, was an extremely nervous looking, very young Imperial soldier. And he was surrounded by shadows. *Living* shadows.

**

Tightening his arms around Fillim's small frame, tucking his face into the half-breed's neck where it meets his shoulder, he inhales deeply, breathing him in. The agony in his chest intensifies. *This is the last time he would smell him.*

Heat from the slight frame he held radiated into him. Running his hands over Fillim's back, from his bottom all the way to his head, he memorized every curve of the little one's pliant body... *this would be the last time he would feel him.*

His tongue darted out quickly, tasting the tender skin there. The precious flavor immediately assaulting his memory. He knew he needed to stop. He knew he needed to end it, before he became so weakened by his wretched heart that he changed his mind. He couldn't give Fillim time to think of a way out. For if he started to beg, he may buckle and give in.

He pulled away, taking Fillim's shoulders in his hands and holding him at arms length. Tilting his head back, he kept his eyes closed, breathing deeply as he fought to control himself. Get his mind cleared. Suddenly he longed for a privacy that even the room they were in couldn't give.

"We have to leave, Fillim."

Fillim watched him, confused. Anariil's eyes were now open, but he wouldn't look at him. He just stared into the ceiling.

"I'd like you to walk with me." Pushing up from the floor, Anariil immediately turned away from him to face the bed. "I'd like us to take a walk... like we used to. I miss that. Taking walks with you... out to our pond."

Fillim wanted to reach out to him, to take his hand and hold it. To comfort him. His heart ached for him. Even with all the horrible deeds that had been done, he felt love for this Altmer. Love, and
Anariil looked towards the small window on the opposite side of the room. Crimson rays fought to be seen through the thick glass, casting the room in a purplish-red hue. The color he once loved seeing as the sun set over the Isles. Loved seeing as they would lay on a blanket carried from his home, literally for that very occasion. Simply for the ambiance it provided. Sipping wine and nibbling on cheeses and bread as they stroked each other and kissed.

A chance for him to be the romantic that had always lay buried deep inside of him. Stifled by who he was, and every wrong decision he'd ever made. Stifled, because the one he so longed to share these moments with, he could not.


Leaving his gloves on the bed, he would no longer need them. He wanted to leave his hands bare for this. He wanted to feel everything. He led Fillim to the door, allowing him to walk before him, ignoring the questions held in his amber eyes.

The guards that stood on either side of his door didn't question his order for them to stay. None of them would. He was no longer concerned about what they thought. They would be sent back to the Isles and reassigned, his ridiculous commands no longer their problem.

What mattered to him, was seeing one more sunset with Fillim. Just the two of them.

They walked down the stone path, and as the giant gates of Solitude closed behind them, he reached out and took Fillim's hand in his. He smiled. A genuine smile, for the first time since he could remember. Tears made their way down his cheeks, dripping onto the leather of his robes. He stared ahead, not caring who may see him.

His hand tightened around Fillim's, and the small Mer gave a slight squeeze in return, staring down at the stones as they walked. "It was a mistake bringing you here... it was."

Anariil's smile faltered just slightly, the tears from his eyes never ceasing. Making no move to wipe them, he wanted to feel. "I know you're probably wondering where we're going, aren't you?"

Fillim nodded, glancing up at him, their eyes meeting for just a moment. Anariil was smiling, but it wasn't a happy smile. It was a pained one, his tears streaming over his now trembling lips. Anariil released his hand and brought his arm around Fillim's shoulders, pulling him close as they continued to walk.

A soft chuckle escaped the Altmer's lips. "I have the most perfect spot for us to enjoy the sunset, Fillim."

His own tears began to fall and he raised an arm up, wrapping it around Anariil's waist, leaning his head against the underpart of his first love's arm where it met his chest. He listened and wept as Anariil spoke.

His voice cracked, "Do you remember the sunsets in the Isles, when we would stay out just to see them? It was so beautiful. And you... you were so very precious."

They turned to the right, walking up a steeper stone pathway that twisted beyond his view. Through his tears, he could see the top of what appeared to be an old stone ruin. Anariil's soft words cutting through to him once more.
"I had to get us away from that room... away from the bed. I still want you, Fillim. I still do. I had arranged for two nights there, thinking that perhaps we could... but no. No... we can't. I can't do it and still... still do what I have to do. You know that."

In the back of his mind somewhere, he knows he's being led to his death. Anariil is taking him someplace where they can truly be alone so he can do what he feels he must. He knows he should feel fear. He knows he should try to run... try to escape. But he can't bring himself to do it. Instead, he clings to him even harder.

Taking another slight turn, they move off the path and into the grass towards what appears to be all that's left of a relic from the Dragon age. He remembers hearing Fjolrin tell some of the Companions about these. Word walls, he called them. He looks up as they stop, craning his neck to look up at the statue of Meridia. This is her temple.

Anariil turns him so they can face each other, looking down into his eyes. His expression is one of love. Real love, for the first time, he thinks. Not lust. This is the first time that he's allowed his true feelings to show through his ever vigilant wall of protection.

Fillim's hands hold onto Anariil's waist, his fingers tightening onto the leather. He looks up at him.

His hands move from Fillim's shoulders to cup his face. He can barely stand the pain in the heart, but he must speak to him... he must tell him. The words pour out from him like a flood that has broken free from a dam. There is nothing that will stop it now. "I loved you. I loved you, Fillim. I was so, so afraid. But... but not anymore. Not anymore."

He shakes his head, his flaxen hair spilling around his shoulders and into Fillim's face. "I shouldn't have punished you. I should have ended it the right way... right then. But my heart was broken. You broke my heart."

His smile actually brightens. He's showing teeth, his tears rolling over his lips and into his mouth. He's oblivious to them. "That should've been proof to you then, that I really loved you."

Fillim can tell as he looks into Anariil's eyes that the Mer is no longer there. His bright green eyes have a distant quality to them, like he's not really seeing Fillim when he looks at him, he's seeing something else. He's no longer himself, or any semblance of what Fillim ever knew. That is all gone.

This, instead of frightening him, forces him to hold on even tighter. Forcing a smile through his own tears, his nose running into his mouth from over his upper lip. His lips shake as he fights to get the words out. "I love you, Anariil. I still do."

Anariil chokes out a sob, his hands tightening around Fillim's head as he lowers his mouth down to kiss him. Very gently, he brings their lips together. It's so gentle, this kiss. They're mouths quiver, all their wetness combined for just a brief moment before Anariil backs away just far enough to look him in the eye.

The horrible pain that he felt, lightened just a little by those words and he smiles again... hopeful. "I know this isn't like our home. That's where we should have been together... for this. I wanted it to be romantic."

Another sob tumbles from his smiling lips. He'd envisioned it so many times, how it would've been perfect and pain free. But they're not afforded that now, and he was above doing what needed to be done in that Inn, surrounded by intruders. It was his fault.
Fillim should've never left his home. That was where he belonged, and it was where he should've met his end. Both of them. They should have made love, declaring themselves fully to one another. Laying skin to skin, tasting one another... then, the wine. One drink would have been all that was needed. They would have clung to one another, falling into an endless sleep.

His wife and his son would have found the two of them the way they should have been. Laying entwined together, frozen in a lover's embrace forever.

Gently pulling Fillim's shaking hands away from his sides, he holds them up between them, looking down into the weeping Mer's face. He swallows, pulling something from within the pocket of his robes.

It's a band. Gold, lined with small diamonds running through the center. It's delicate. Anariil sniffs, his nose and cheeks are turning pink from the cooling temperature as the sun gets lower in the sky, finally beginning it's descent behind the ruin.

Taking Fillim's right hand, he slides the age softened, gold band down onto his slender index finger, whispering low to him. "This is what I should have done a long time ago."

He can hear Fillim's sobs, can see his small body shake as the tremors rock him. He can feel it. His own tears continue to fall. He smiles, holding Fillim's small hands in his. He lowers his forehead down so they touch together. "This was my mother's. I've saved it, for what seems like a millennia. Holding onto it for the one that I truly love. The one that I want to be with forever. It took me a long time to realize that, Fillim... too long. I am truly sorry."

Anariil's arms come around him, releasing his hands. He's pulled into the warm body of his mate. He wants to get closer... closer. He's not afraid. He's not. He watches as his hands come up to grasp Anariil's lapels, as if they had a mind of their own. They're holding on so tightly that his knuckles turn white and he can see the fading sun glint against the gold of the band that now graces his finger. His eyes rise to meet Anariil's, their foreheads still touching.

Anariil has the most gentle smile on his face. The strain of pain is all but gone, smoothing out the lines on his sharp features, and right then he actually looks years younger. "I would've left the order for you if I could have. You know that?"

Fillim can't move. All he can do is look into that face, those eyes. "I should have. I should have left. Then this wouldn't have happened."

Anariil's right arm moves slowly from around him, going down to his side. Their lips meet once more, Anariil's breath blowing across them as he whispers, "I promise I'll make it quick."

The air is forced out of him. Anariil's hold becomes fierce and unrelenting, pushing his face against his chest. Agonizing pain flares through his midsection, making him feel the need to fold in two. He whimpers, crying out into the leather. His feet flail against Anariil's legs as he's lifted off the ground, crushing strength holding him against the larger Mer.

Anariil's choked voice whispers harshly into his ear, "It's alright... it's alright. It'll be over soon."

Something moves from between them. Every ounce of strength he has is taken to turn his head and look. Steam is rising up. He's wet himself, he thinks. Then the smell hits him. Hot copper. In the fading light, he sees Anariil's hand draw back from him. His dagger in his hand, covered in blood.

The hold around him slackens as he's released, his feet are back on the ground. He wobbles, taking a step backward before he falls to his knees, his hands coming up to clutch at the wound in his
stomach.

Anariil turns the blade in his hand, positioning it so he can better control the force of his strike. He wants to wait though. He wants to make sure Fillim is the first to go, so he's protected. He wouldn't be able to bear the thought of some animal getting to him before he's gone. He wants to lay with him, wrapped around him. He wants himself to be the last thing Fillim sees. And Fillim will be the last thing he sees.

Shadows have fallen over them. He can't get his arms around himself any tighter than they are. The pain is still there, but now it's dulling down to a horrible, throbbing ache. He knows he's in shock. That's what's happening... just like when Farkas saved me, he thinks. He's crying, he can hear it coming out of his mouth... so is Anariil.

Almost in awe of the amount of blood on himself and the ground, he looks up at Anariil. His entire hand and part of his sleeve is covered in blood, he's changing how the blade is held in his hand. He's going to stab himself. We're going to die together. "I'm c.cold"

The words are out before he knows it and Anariil consoles him, raising his hand up in the air so he has enough strength to make a killing blow. "It's okay... it's alright, Fillim I'll keep you war-"

Light, shining and thin as a spider's thread flash behind where Anariil stands. Fillim struggles to get himself upright, watching as Anariil's face goes slack. The words of consolation gone from his lips.

The light in his green eyes goes dim, as a line of red magically forms across his long, slender neck. Blood cascades from it like a waterfall down the front of his robes. Fillim raises his hand to cover his mouth, the scream it fails to conceal pierces the air around them, echoing into the distance.

His eyes bulge as Anariil's right leg instinctively moves backward to try and right his stance. The bloody blade falls to the ground from his limp hand.

Shadows envelope around the tall Mer right before his head nods forward and leaves his shoulders, tumbling down to the ground to lay between them. A flood of flaxen hair, stained with red, falls to the ground behind his headless body, which is being held up by some invisible force.

Raising the other hand from his blood soaked stomach, he reaches out for Anariil with both arms, hands stretched wide into claws! His voice spiraling higher and higher as he shrieks into the night. "Nnooo!!! Nnooo!!!"

Something hits him hard from behind, knocking him forward, then pulling him back!

Strong hands have him... arms holding him. His vision is fading, and somewhere beyond his own screams, he can here a man's voice... soothing him.

**

Tarenen lays his father's body down onto the ground. The invisibility and muffle spells both, now gone, he can see himself. His hands are shaking. He fights to calm his emotions, pulling his eyes away momentarily to focus on Fillim. Cradled in the Dovahkiin's lap, he's surrounded by three of his fellow wizards, warm light flowing around his limp body as they work to heal him.

Taking in a deep, but silent breath, he watches as Carene kneels on the ground, unfolding the deep red, velvet blanket that will encase his father's remains for their journey home. The gold filigree thread along the edges sparkling as another candlelight spell is cast to give them enough light to see by.
He kneels down, lifting with his mate, centering the lifeless body. A matching satchel is opened. Carene carries Anariil's head as carefully as possible, making sure he is not faced toward Tarenen. Gently, it is placed within, and the silken ropes are tied.

Both are securely wrapped and bound, ready to be carried down to the docks to the awaiting ship. There, he will be placed in a makeshift coffin that will be kept under a constant frost spell, so he is preserved until his funeral can be prepared.

Fjolrin stands, holding Fillim in his arms. The bleeding has all but halted entirely, his midsection wrapped firmly with what had once been the man's tunic. They need to leave the area and get into the lamp-litten street, before the smell of blood draws predators they don't want to have to deal with.

He watches as his father's enshrouded corpse is carried down the steep pathway, Fjolrin walking just ahead of them. He's done what needed to be done. It's over. Fillim is finally free, and so is his father. So is he.

But that's not what has settled in his heart, taking it over.

He stoops down to his knees, motioning for Carene to re-open the satchel that holds his father's head and begins to collect the silken hair that lies pooled on the ground before him. The tears that he'd held so carefully at bay, now come. They are alone. There is no one else to see him other than his mate. He weeps, holding the hair as if it were something so precious.

Each strand is carefully placed into the satchel. Nothing will be left behind. Only the blood that stains the earth. His father's antique dagger, still wet with Fillim's blood, is now settled into the sheath that's tied to his thigh, in lieu of his own.

Combing the ground for anything that may have been missed, his eyes are caught by something shiny, reflected by the candlelight floating just above them.

Feeling in the grass, his fingers close around it. A white-gold chain. Standing, he lifts it for both of them to see. Something is hanging from it. Moving his hand enough for the light to catch it, his breath catches in his throat.

Auriel's amulet.

Chapter End Notes

This took me longer to write because even as necessary as I knew it was, I wasn't ready for it to happen. I knew it was going to be painful, and it was. I wept through most of it holding my own personal vigil to Anariil. He will always be one of my favorite characters, and I mourn him.
Chapter Summary

The dagger would be carried daily. He will never be without it. A testament to his father. To his love for him. To his father's love for Fillim, and for Telindil. A testament to his own strength. The strength to take the life of someone he held so dear, in order to save them and those around them.

To right the wrong.

**

Tarenen slid his hand into the sewn-in pouch of his robes, safely depositing the Amulet within. Just one more thing to remind him of his father's agony.

The gift.

His father had rarely been without it... until Fillim.

He'd read through the Journal again before they'd docked that day, with Undilar and Volana. He knew every page by heart. Every word. He knew the exact date that it had been given to his father, and the exact date that he'd stopped wearing it.

He hadn't donned it again until he was ready to end it all.

Running his hand over the outside of his robes, just where the hidden pouch lay on the underside, he whispered to Carene, his eyes staying on the Nord and their fellow Mer ahead of them. "I was so sure that I would feel things resolved once this was done. But I don't."

Holding the still leaking, velvet bundle in one hand, Carene allowed his other arm to come up around his mate's shoulders, keeping an eye on the others ahead. He would be ready to remove it if any one of the others were to venture a glance back at them. Of course, knowing the severity and personal nature of the task they'd just performed, they were being given their space, and rightly so.

He wouldn't speak. He would listen. He would be there for him.

His tears glistened in the lamplight as they walked down toward where their ship was moored in. "My anger toward my father has only turned to sorrow, and that makes me angry."

Standing on the stone roadway, between where the carriage was stopped when they'd first arrived and where the stones would lead down to the docks, he watched as their comrades and the Dovahkiin, carrying Fillim, now boarded their ship.

He stopped and turned to Carene. "I feel relief that my father's pain has ceased. I feel relief that Fillim is still alive. And yet... and yet, I feel so angry that my father had to endure his pain at all! Every action was based on that pain. That need that he could never quench."

Unable to remain quiet any longer, Carene lowered his arm from around him and locked his hands
together behind his back, as if standing at ease in front of a superior. Clenched within them, were the silken ties around the top of the satchel that kept his father's head protected. With how he was suffering, the less he saw of it the better.

He felt his pain and he sympathized, but he had to speak the obvious truth. His father, regardless how much he wanted his friend's affections, was not an innocent victim by any sense of the word! And Tarenen putting him into that category was only increasing his pain.

"Tarenen... " he swallowed, "You rightfully suffer. You've had to take the life of someone very dear to you. But that is the reason you feel what you are feeling. You mourn him, and you will continue to do so until your heart heals."

His own tears fell again, and he let loose of what he held just long enough to raise a hand and wipe them away. His voice thickened from grief as he continued on. "But... but his actions were his own, and they were unjust! He could have confessed to Telindil at any time. Instead, he allowed his own wounded heart to fester. His untended-to feelings, caused him to make the warped decisions he made and affected all those around him!"

Tarenen nodded, keeping his eyes upon the ship. Guards were standing watch. Lanterns were lit. Nothing else moved on the deck. "I know... I know. I just... I wanted him to be loved. To know that someone loved him!"

Tarenen's voice cracked and broke again and he turned away, attempting to stifle his sobs with his hands. The pain in his heart was so great that he felt it would eat him alive, making him feel the need to simply drop down to the stone he stood upon. Right then he felt as if he could weep forever. That he would feel the crushing weight of this grief for all time!

"Fillim loved him. He did." Carene let his tears go unchecked and stepped closer to him, laying his forehead against the back of Tarenen's head.

"He still does, Tarenen. Fillim knew that they were going to die together, and yet, when Anariil died he lost all control. He knew that he was going to kill himself. He knew it, and still... we all saw it, Tarenen. Even after all that your father had done to him, he still loved him. Anariil knew that. It was just too late."

Reaching behind him, he held the back of Carene's neck, leaning back into him. "I know, and that makes me angry too. Not that Fillim loves... loved him. But the fact that my father felt he couldn't be with him the way he needed to be." Or should have been.

Tarenen turned, placing his forehead against his partner's, looking into warm eyes that mirrored his pain. He knew that Carene was right. His father had done terrible, terrible things all because of a step that he was unable to take, and many had paid the price because of it. Especially Fillim. What mattered now, was that his father was finally at peace and Fillim was safe.

That was another thing that kept plaguing him. Was Fillim actually safe?

Pulling them closer, he touched their lips together. "What would I do without you?"

Carene smiled lightly, kissing him back. "You would be lost to the fates. That's what."

Both turning, they resumed their walk toward the ship. "Tarenen, things will be confusing to you for some time. It's going to take time to heal. You're not alone."

Watching his mate, he yearned to be back where Volana and Undilar could help Tarenen understand and deal with his pain. He knew Tarenen wasn't going to be the only one needing help.
He felt lost, and he wasn't the only one. None of them were seasoned in the art of battle, let alone assassination. Which was what he and Tarenen, and all that had accompanied them on this voyage, would eventually be called to do.

They were all still students. Their ceremony still lay ahead of them. All of them had struggled when the time came. To have to stand and watch something so heartbreaking... to listen, and then finally intervene. The sight of Tarenen, cradling his father's decapitated body. No, they were all going to need some help when they got back.

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Stepping on board, he pulled in a deep breath and ran his hand down his thigh over the hilt of his father's dagger. This would be his reminder.

The dagger would be carried daily. He will never be without it. A testament to his father. To his love for him. To his father's love for Fillim and for Telindil. And to his own strength. The strength to take the life of someone he held so dear, in order to save them and those around them.

To right the wrong.

Going down below decks, all he had to do was follow the tiny droplets of blood that stained the wooden planks, mixed in with the giant Nord's large footprints to find where Fillim was resting.

Carene had excused himself with the precious bundle he held. Tarenen knew where he was going and why, but he couldn't think on it. Instead, he thought about where Carene would be... their quarters. Their comrades, more than likely were now resting in their own.

The scent of pheasant broth and root vegetables hung in the air. No doubt something was being prepared for their wounded passenger, along with dinner for themselves and the rest of the crew.

Tarenen stopped outside the door, unsure if he should go in. There was no sound coming from within. Looking up at the ceiling, he let out a long sigh. He wanted to see how he was doing, but he knew that literally seeing him would be enough to make him break down again. Let alone having to speak to him if he was awake.

He simply wasn't ready. If he was in the state he was in, he could only imagine what frame of mind Fillim would be in when he woke. Hysterical, or perhaps a state of shock. Whichever it was, he would be grieving. A different grief than what he, himself was feeling, but grief all the same. And he was in no condition to try and console anyone. Not when he was so close to falling apart himself.

Having to do what he'd done was overwhelming enough, and he was the superior in this venture. No matter what the others knew of the situation, and whatever concessions they were willing to give because of it, he still needed to remain strong. He had to show that he was capable of leading them.

Perhaps it was best to leave and come back later, when he had himself more together.

Before he could turn away, the door opened. Fjolrin stood there, his robes now back in order. That was another thing. Something that his mind had tucked away for further inspection. The Nord was wearing Telvanni robes.

When they'd been at the temple, he'd undone the upper portion, removing only the tunic he'd worn underneath it all in order to wrap Fillim's wound. It wasn't important now, but he would definitely be asking him about it later.
They stared each other in the eye for a moment, the Nord just a touch taller than him. That wouldn't last long though, he still had several more years of growing before he reached his full height. Some of his people not reaching it till the age of twenty five or thirty. He swallowed, then attempted to speak at the same time as the Nord. They both quieted for a second, Fjolrin allowing him to speak first.

Keeping his voice as low as possible, he fought to keep it even, to keep the pain he felt from bleeding through. "Is... is he... is he awake? Will he live?"

Fjolrin stepped forward just enough to close the door quietly behind him. "He sleeps for now. I've healed him as much as he can take and cleaned and wrapped the wound with fresh bandages, but he will need remedy when he wakes. Some for pain and for healing. We won't want him moving for awhile."

Listening to his words, he watched as the Nord's sky blue eyes combed over his face as he spoke. "How long are you in port for?"

Tarenen's brows gathered slightly. "Only until tomorrow. But that won't matter. He's coming with us. So he won't be moved for some time."

Fjolrin's jaw clenched up, his lips pressed firmly together. Attempting to whisper as to not disturb Fillim, his words came out in low growl. "How do you know that's what he wants?! Is he still a slave?!" Raising up an arm, Fjolrin waved it around them in agitation. Obvious to all that saw, that he was gesturing at all that had already happened.

Immediately, one of the nearby guard was at Tarenen's side, his slender hand on the hilt of his blade. Holding his hand up to halt the Altmer soldier, he stepped forward, noting the red rising up in the Nord's face till it met the man's hairline. "He is no longer a slave, but a free Mer! And though you may not believe it, he did not want to come here! This is not his home!"

A crowd had started to form, standing around them. Carene made his way through the gathered Mer, stopping when he'd reached Tarenen's side, watching the exchange.

Fjolrin moved in closer, nose to nose with the young Altmer. "Does he even have a home to go to? Back to a father that sold him?!" Leaning back, he raised his arms and crossed them over his broad chest. "We shall see what Fillim wants when he wakes! And where he goes, I go!"

Carene stood silent. Tarenen's face flushed crimson in his frustration, but he remained still. He would not succumb to anger. He would not! Nor was he in the mental or emotional state to deal with the infuriating Nord, or his demands at the moment. What he needed, was a hot meal, some strong drink and to rest. Then, he would sit beside his father's remains and meditate. Perhaps not in that order.

Turning to all that now stood around them, he spoke softly, but sternly. "Please leave us."

Waiting patiently until every Mer, but Carene, had left them, his green eyes once again met the blue ones before him. "I understand your concern for him. I too, want the best for him. I want his happiness."

Carene moved just a tiny bit closer, ready to intervene if needed, but more so to show Tarenen and the Nord both, that he was not alone.

"Today has been a very trying day. I suggest we all try to rest for now. When he wakes, he will be given the choice to make for himself. And if he chooses to leave with us, and you still desire to
travel at his side, then you are free to accompany him. I have to go into the city tomorrow and deal with General Tullius. If you need to gather any belongings or supplies, you may do so then."

Tarenen turned away, hearing Carene speak quietly to the Nord. "Remedy is being prepared as we speak. They will be delivered along with some broth and tea for him to sip, as well as your meal."

From his peripheral he could see Carene give the human a slight bow before leaving him. All he wanted to do was collapse into a bottle of Colovian Brandy and forget all of this for just a moment. But forgetting, was something that he would not be gifted with... ever.

In a daze, he walked through the galley, grabbing a bottle of wine before descending the steps down to the cargo hold. He had no appetite. The smells of dinner being prepared that he'd walked through had no affect on him, neither for the positive nor the negative.

He didn't want to look upon anyone and see their sorrowful faces filled with empathy. Neither that, nor his subordinate's looks of pride, that he'd been able to complete such a harrowing task. He didn't want to hear words of sympathy or condolence. He didn't want to talk to anyone. He simply wanted solitude. Silence.

The cargo hold, was divided into sections along the entire length of the ship. There was a small area where two cells, constructed from iron, were built into the wooden beams to serve as a brig. There were extra beds, a chest at the foot of each one, for the possibility of any added passengers or crew. Usually in the event of illness or injury, those persons would be separated from the rest and housed below the normal bunking areas.

Chests, casks, and barrels lined the midsection, holding numerous supplies and fresh water. Iron hooks and racks hung from the ceiling, all manner of things hanging from them, ranging from pheasant and chicken, to rabbit and beef. Numerous herbs were tied in bundles and hung to dry.

Lanterns hung from iron hooks along the walls, illuminating the area just enough so he could see. He walked until he approached a door that separated the bunks, storage and brig. Placing his hand onto the handle, he opened it.

The morgue.

A small room that was sectioned off on almost any decent sized ship to house the deceased. One lantern lit the small room and one chair had been stationed by the only coffin that lay within, there for him to sit by his father.

He didn't know who had put it there. It may have been Carene, or any of the others. For all he knew, it could've been the crew member that had hurriedly mopped up the droplets of blood that led the way to where his father now rested.

The room was cold. The wooden beams and planks within were covered in a thin layer of frost. Shutting the door behind him, plumes of his breath floated and dispersed into the frigid air around him as he uncorked the bottle and took a drink. This would warm him. At least enough to sit for awhile.

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Fjolrin closed the door and turned back to the bed. The bedding was opened and folded down around the unconscious Mer's bare feet. His entire torso was naked, save for the linen bandages that were wound tightly around his midsection, from just below his nipples to just above where his pubic hairline began.
If only he had his belongings, he would have had all that he'd needed for him in his satchel. Healing potions, pain remedy, and all the herbs and items he needed to make more. But everything he'd traveled with was still at Angeline's, and he wouldn't be able to get to any of it until tomorrow.

He didn't dare leave Fillim in the state he was in, and he didn't know or trust any of the Mer on the ship enough to feel safe leaving him either. Part of him felt foolish for thinking that way, but so far, most of the people in Fillim's life that had said they had his best interest in mind, had only thought of themselves. Including himself at one point.

These Mer had sought him out. Evidently the young Imperial soldier that had accompanied them to Angeline's had been forced to fill them in on what they hadn't been able to witness on their own.

They'd watched the events unfold from the shadows, from the time Anariil had arrived with Fillim that morning. They watched as their own had been jailed. They watched the entire scene play out in the town square. They'd also, he found out, had bore witness to his conversation with Sorex outside the Inn. They knew he'd been banned and why. They knew where he was staying.

They'd watched Anariil lead Fillim away to a secluded spot, where he could take both of their lives. Only to intervene before the psychotic Mer could end his own life, taking it from him instead. In his opinion, forcing Fillim to suffer even more than he already had. Of course they'd saved his life. That, and the fact that they'd finally taken Anariil out of the damned picture, was the only reason he trusted them at all right now.

It burned him a little that he hadn't been able to keep his word to Fillim. His eyes combed over the little Mer laying before him. It burned him that his hands had been thoroughly tied from doing what he believed was right. He was tempted to sail away with Fillim and never return. To Oblivion with them all... let them fight it out amongst themselves. He'd disappeared before. He'd have no problem in doing it again.

Leaning over him, his leggings were pulled down to the point that he was almost fully exposed. There'd been no choice. He'd had to get him cleaned up and bandaged. Now he just needed to get the filth and gore stained things off from him and get him covered up before someone arrived with dinner.

Hooking his thumbs under the doeskin, he pulled them the rest of the way over Fillim's hips and down his legs, taking one foot out, then the other. Dropping them onto the floor next to the bed, he pulled the secondary sheet out from under him that had been placed there to keep the bedding clean. Pulling the blankets up and over Fillim, he tucked him in securely.

He'd have to speak to the young Mer that was in charge, see if they had a breech and some clothes on board that Fillim could wear once he was able to be up and about. Perhaps he'd buy him something in the marketplace tomorrow while he was there.

Kicking the ruined leggings into the corner, along with the rest of his discarded clothing and what remained of his tunic, his eyes caught the glimmer of something that Fillim's leggings had left behind.

Bending down to inspect the items further, he picked them up. A ring carved from bone, and a gold necklace. He stood, turning with them in his hand to once again look upon Fillim's hand as it lay atop the blankets. His eyes fixated on the binding ring that still adorned Fillim's finger.

They'd stood cloaked under their spell's effects, watching as Anariil had said his words of endearment, placing the ring upon him. Right before he nearly succeeded in completely gutting him with his dagger!
Shaking his head in disgust at the memory, he looked down at the items in his hand. *Had Anariil given these to him as well?*

Taking the seat next to the bed, he leaned closer to the nightstand, inspecting them in the candle's light. Both were exquisitely made and definitely would be worth an extreme amount of gold. Turning the ring over, he noticed the engraving within.

*Einsa.*

His brows gathered, looking from the items he held back to Fillim. These were Bosmer. Both of them. *Einsa. A Bosmer name. Why would Anariil give him these?*

A quiet knock sounded at the door. Very quickly, he stood and tucked the items safely into the inner pocket of his robes.
Love, with no place to go

Chapter Summary

The way the Nord hovered over him. The way he'd defended him when he'd thought injustice would be done. It baffled him. But right now it was his thread. His thread of hope, and he would cling to it.

*If Fillim and this Nord... if they were in love... then mayhap?*

Carene swallowed, his eyes meeting the Nord's. "Are you in love with him?"

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"Grief, I've learned, is really just love. It's all the love you want to give, but cannot. All of that unspent love gathers up in the corners of your eyes, the lump in your throat, and in that hollow part of your chest. Grief is just love, with no place to go."

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Warm, amber eyes, peeked through the crack in the door at him. A soft, melodic voice, asking to come in.

Nodding his okay, he absent mindedly allowed his hand to run over the small bulge in his robes where he'd tucked the objects away before lowering them to his sides.

Carene's eyes swept over the man, noticing the spot that his hand had lingered over nervously before he had stepped forward to gently take the tray from him. He watched Fjolrin as he walked around the bed, placing it carefully down on the nightstand.

Then his eyes went to Fillim.

Unable to stop himself, he stepped closer to the bed and stared down at him. He'd been completely cleaned of all the blood splatter that had speckled his dark skin. His crimson red hair was undone and brushed back away from his face, perfectly arranged on the pillow around his head.

He was beautiful. Beautiful. And it pained him.

It pained his heart to look upon him, knowing that Tarenen had loved his Mer. That they were now on the same vessel. Both of them in agony over the loss of Anariil. Perhaps in their separate ways, but both, suffering. Not only had they been forced to endure what Anariil had inflicted upon them, but they'd been forced apart. This would be their first reunion since that separation.

Closing his eyes briefly, he would be praying tonight as he held his love. Praying to Au-riel that he would heal them both.

Yes, he was being selfish. He knew. He wanted them both to be healed, but separately. The thought of bringing Fillim back to the Isles terrified him.
Opening his eyes, he once again looked over the doting way that the Nord had taken care of Fillim's needs. He looked about the room. The Nord still completely silent as he watched him, seated in the chair beside the bed.

The room was spotless. Even with all the blood and mess that had been brought in with him, it was impeccably clean. Fillim's blood-stained clothes were nowhere to be seen. More than likely taken to one of the braziers they used for heat and burned.

The way the Nord hovered over him. The way he'd defended him when he'd thought injustice would be done. It baffled him. But right now it was his thread. His thread of hope, and he would cling to it.

*If Fillim and this Nord... if they were in love... then maybe?*

Carene swallowed, his eyes meeting the Nord's. "Are you in love with him?"

Instantly, the Nord's eyes widened and his full lips fell open. Carene could tell he definitely wasn't expecting the question that had just been thrust upon him. Every change in his expression was noted. The dilation of his eyes, the change in his breath, the miniscule beads of sweat that graced his forehead. The flushed color that now stained his cheeks.

And the Nord was aware. He was aware that he was being inspected. But why? How much did he actually know?

Exhaling deeply, it almost felt as if he'd been holding his breath. The question had hit him like a punch to the gut. That was the last thing he'd ever thought the Mer would say.

Fjolrin's eyes involuntarily went to Fillim.

Just being near him, even with the scent of the un-dealt with mate mark, his pulse quickened. If there had been another close by with the same curse, they'd have known immediately that he was taken wth him. Irregardless of the fact that by their rules, he belonged to someone else. None of that mattered to him though. It didn't matter to Fillim.

Yes, he was taken with this little Mer. But was it love? That thought terrified him. Even with that fear, he wanted it all the same. He wanted to feel that again.

Another exhale. He couldn't look the Altmer in the eyes and say it.

"I care deeply for him. I want him. But... " he swallowed, "but I'm not sure that it's love yet."

Carene looked on as the expression on the big man's face became pained. His voice getting lower, taking on a sorrowful quality.

"I know it's not there yet for him as well." Their eyes met. "His heart is pulled in too many directions right now. Even before all this, his heart belonged to many."

Carene's heart sank. *Many. How many? And whom?*

Fjolrin looked at the unconscious Mer. The painful realization tightening around his heart like a vice. *It may never be there. Not the way I would need it from him.*

He could never force something on him that would hurt him any further than he already had been.
He would not be just one more to take advantage.

As much as it scared Carene to say it, he knew it was the right thing to do. "If you... or he, needs anything when he wakes, please do not hesitate to call for one of us."

Without another word, he turned and left, closing the door behind him.

Fjolrin sat there in a bit of shock. Shock over the whole conversation that had just taken place. Everything in him wanted to push it from his mind, but there was a very good reason why the Mer had asked what he had.

Knowing that it was probably just a fraction of what lay behind his reasoning for asking. He had yet to find out why. But that Mer, he was afraid of Fillim.

Even for as young as he was, the Mer was highly skilled. He'd been under massive scrutiny the entire time the conversation was taking place, and he'd allowed it to happen. Fact was, there probably wasn't much he could've done about it even if he'd wanted to. Fact was... right now, he didn't care.

He felt what he felt and he wouldn't hide it. But as good as the Mer was at reading others, he was no good at hiding his own feelings. At least right at that moment anyways. Of course he realized it was probably just his gift that was giving him the insight he now had.

Pain and fear had been surging through the Mer from the time he'd walked in, until the time he'd left. It had taken much effort for him to get out the last words he'd spoken before he finally closed the door.

Perhaps it was a good thing Fillim hadn't woken yet.

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Carene closed the door and walked back to the galley. Preparing a tray for the two of them, he took it to their empty quarters. The lanterns, succeeding in warming the small room were turned down, their purpose met. Laying another blanket at the foot of their bed, he turned and left.

He knew where he was. Sitting at his father's side, freezing, while he mourned over regrets and wishes of things that would never be, and the unfairness of it all.

He walked slow, thinking over everything he was feeling and how it was affecting him. How it was affecting his actions. While he walked, he tried to remember everything that was in the journal.

Fillim had been involved in a relationship with two brothers. Nords, that were in the Companions. It had mentioned that Fjolrin, the Dovahkiin, was in the faction, but there was never any mention that they were in any kind of a relationship. From what he knew from the journal, and what he was seeing now, Fillim was perhaps drawn towards Nords.

His eyes fastened firmly on that single door ahead of him. Quietly, he moved through the cargo hold, thinking about what he should do and what he shouldn't. What he needed to do.

Taking hold of the door handle, he took in a quiet breath.

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For awhile he'd sat and thought back through his life to when he was but a little Elfling. He thought about the brief moments when his father was home and actually had been a father to him. When he
grouped his good memories together, it seemed like they were plenty.

His father had always been more concerned over his schooling and the likes. His duties with the Dominion required that he be away for long periods, and when he was home he always seemed to be preoccupied. In reality, now that he looked back on it, there weren't many times affection had been shown. From either of them.

But when it was, it had been precious to him, his mind holding on to it like a steel trap. When he was younger, his father would pat his head over accomplishments. Then when he was a little older, the head pats had become a hand on his shoulder, or a pat to the back. Then they'd become a hand shake.

He'd yearned to hear any form of praise from him, over anything and everything.

He just couldn't believe that he'd betrayed him so... he just hadn't known. How was he supposed to know?? And Fillim had been afraid to tell him.

He didn't blame him, as he may have done the same if he were in Fillim's shoes. But his betrayal had literally destroyed any chance he'd had of gaining his father's approval. He'd wanted him to be proud of his accomplishments. And he'd truly hoped that once he was in the Dominion, they would finally have some form of common ground. Something that would connect the two of them. Now he would never have any of it!

*He had to talk to his father. He just had to, and he fucking couldn't!! There was no way he could say he was sorry now! No way! It was too late!!*

*There was no way that he could tell him that he loved him.*

Sitting in the chair, and staring at the box on the floor in front of him wasn't enough. Tossing the empty bottle aside, he got down onto his knees. Numb to the frost that dampened the knees of his leggings, he pushed the lid off from the coffin and onto the floor. His eyes combed over the enshrouded form. The crimson velvet sack, tied up, that sat neatly in its rightful place.

Tears fell, leaving their trace on the dark red cloth as his hands softly ran over the silken ties that bound it all around him. Releasing the ties at his father's mid-section, he pulled at the soft cloth until he could see one of his father's arms. Taking the now cold hands, he pulled them over, so they lay together over his waist.

This was how they would end up having him for his Last Rites. His hands would lay together, fingers possibly laced in a relaxed fashion at his waist. It would almost be as if he were taking a nap.

He looked at them, laying his hands over them. His tears falling onto his father's bloodied leather sleeves. He wanted to scream to the heavens in all his anguish! He wanted to scream to the Gods and have them hear him! Oh would this pain never cease?

Laying his head down onto his father's chest, he slid his arms around the cold form before him and wept. His sobs rocking them in unison. His voiced words of love coming out hoarse through his tears.

"I love you, Ata! I love you... I am so sorry! I am so sorry."

Digging out the amulet from his robes, he clenched it in his fist and raised it above them as he held him tightly. He never wanted to let him go. His nose ran across his face, down onto his father's chest. Squeezing his eyes tight, he cried out into the empty room, his pained words echoing around
"I beseech you, Au-riel! I beg you for my father! For his sake! Please! Please! That you forgive his shortcomings! Forgive the actions made here! That you remember the love that was in his heart! The love he felt as a young Mer. The way it was before it was tainted. Before it changed him from what he was. Before it turned him into what he became. I beg that you heal him. Take him into your arms and allow him to become what our people were destined to be! Allow him to hear my words and know the love that I, his son, have for him."

_Please Au-riel... know that he paid for his wrongs while he was here._

**

Carene's hand left the handle and fastened over his mouth as he listened to his mate's voice. His previous worries were forced from his mind, as all he could think about was what the one he loved was going through and _how_ was he going to help him?

He longed for Volana's words of wisdom. His support. He was scared to death and he absolutely _had_ to keep it together. This venture was nowhere near done, and they had to show strength in front of their subordinates.

He had to be strong for the both of them.  

**

The door opening behind him brought him forcefully back from where he'd gone. The thought that he wouldn't want anyone to see him in this state faded as soon as Carene's arms came around his shoulders. Ever so gently, he was pulled upright to lean back against him. His mate's warm hair nestling against his wet face.

Carene held him, rocking them slowly back and forth. Tears made their way down his shoulders as they fell from his face.

Tarenen held the arms around him with one hand. The other, still tangled up with the amulet, was holding firmly onto his father's lapels. Letting his head fall back onto Carene's shoulder, his eyes fell shut as he cried out. "I loved him. I loved him so much! I loved him... "

**

It was almost like taking care of a child.

Tarenen was beyond himself with grief, and he was drunk. He'd held him on the floor of the freezing room until he was close to passing out from drink and emotional exhaustion. Very carefully, he'd pried his hand away from his father's robes, tightening his hand around the amulet in place of them.

Placing an arm around him, he walked him through the galley and into their quarters. Not a single soul, other than those in the galley saw them pass through, and he silently thanked the Gods.

He would almost liken it to moving a life-sized doll. Tarenen was in a daze, his red-rimmed, swollen eyes staring blankly out at nothing as he sat him onto the bed and undressed him. His father's blood was smeared into his flaxen hair and across the side of his face where he'd lain against him.

His robes were already a lost cause, as he'd been holding him when he'd died and were covered in them.
blood. Everything had happened so fast once they'd boarded the ship that neither of them had taken the time to change.

Taking great care to clean it all off from him so none of it would be visible tomorrow. He'd dressed him for bed, feeding him broth from a spoon while fending off any errant tears that still came.

As soon as he was wrapped up under the blankets, he crept out, carefully shutting their door behind him. Leaving the bucket of wash water in the galley, so they could refill it for him, he went down into the cargo hold.

Walking into the small, cold room, he shut the door behind him.

His eyes combed over Anariil's corpse and the condition it was in. Partially unwrapped, his whole torso was visible. When he'd come in earlier, Tarenen had been bent over his father's corpse, clutching him tightly in his arms. His face buried into the dead Mer's chest, weeping bitterly.

In the state he was in right then, he wouldn't have been surprised if Tarenen hadn't crawled right into the coffin with him. Had he had less of his composure, he actually may have.

Volana was right. He knew nothing of loss. He came from a good and loving home. His parents were both still alive. Actually, both sets of his grandparents were still living.

No, he knew nothing of loss, and he would never understand this. Not what Tarenen had been through. He could and would try, but to really know what Tarenen was suffering, he would truly never know.

In truth, Tarenen had lost his father long, long ago. He'd spent the better part of his nineteen years mourning his loss without even being aware of it, and he didn't really have his mother either.

Volana, Undilar and himself, they would be his family now. The admiration that he felt for his mate went beyond measure.

Kneeling before the coffin, he set about righting Anariil's body. There was no sense in trying to clean his robes, as they would be destroyed once they reached their destination. He would be stripped and his body cleansed of any soil. Then he would be placed in his interment robes.

Finally getting him wrapped back up, he tied the silken ropes back around him. As he put the lid back in place, he thought about the words Tarenen had said before he'd entered. His plea to Au-riel for his father.

Yes, he was right. Anaraail had suffered enough while here. His days since Fillim's exile definitely causing him the most pain. Just from reading the journal and all that they'd heard while hidden, had shown that he had many regrets. And yes, it had been too late to do anything other than what they had done.

There had been no other course.

Frost flowed from his hand, coating the inside of the small room. His eyes quickly scanned over the interior and it's contents before he closed and locked the door.

Lowering the lanterns in the room further for sleep, he snuggled in around Tarenen, listening to his low, even breathing. His arms wrapped around the slender form, no longer frigid and shaking from over exposure to the cold, but warm and dry.

Placing a soft kiss to the tip of his ear, he whispered. "I love you, Tarenen. You are not alone."
Fjolrin ate, placing his empty bowl aside, he kept Fillim's broth and tea at the ready just in case. He could always warm it with magic once the Mer awoke.

Lifting his feet, he rest them on the side of the bed. His arms folded across his chest, he lay his head back against the wall and listened to the grief stricken Mer as he cried out down in the hold.

Having the ears of a wolf wasn't always a blessing, and if he could hear him this well, some of the other Mer on board had to be able to as well. Mer had excellent hearing. Well beyond that of any human. First, he'd learned this from his Master, and then from the Mer he had once loved.

Life lessons. Living and fighting with, and around the Elven people, you quickly became aware of the differences between the races.

He listened. 'I love you Ata! I love you... I am so sorry! I am so sorry.'

The pained words made his chest clench up in sorrow for the mourning Mer. Having no choice, he continued to listen, thinking over what was being said. Within seconds his fatique vanished, and the meaning behind those words took root in his mind.

Ata... Ata.

His eyes opened up wide in shock and he stilled his breathing, attempting to listen more carefully to what was being spoken. His arms tightened around him as gooseflesh rose up all over his skin. The realization of what had happened earlier that evening, and who had carried it out, made a shudder run through him right to his very soul.

The Mer that had killed Anariil... that had been his son. His son!

Fjolrin's eyes zeroed in on Fillim, his stomach turning over. Oh by the Eight... his son!

He remembered the words Vilkas had spoken in Fillim's defense down in Jorvaskr, telling him of how Fillim had came to be in Skyrim and why.

Anariil's son had been Fillim's lover... his own son had killed him.

Chapter End Notes

Author of quote unknown.
Horrible Knowledge - Part One

Chapter Summary

Reaching under the covers, Fillim dug his hand under the mattress, his fingers closing around the hidden objects. Now knowing what Tarenen had already done and the toll it was taking on him to do it, he hated to ask anymore of him. There was simply no one else that he could turn to. This was the only way.

"I need your help once more." Opening his hand, Tarenen looked at what it contained. "I know I can trust you, Tarenen."

**

Slowly, he rose up from the dark abyss. Wrapped completely in the quiet comfort of darkness, he had slumbered. There had been nothing. No memory, no pain... no fear. No need for nourishment of any kind. Just peace. If he'd been dead, and that was all there was, he would have been content with it. Content to remain there.

Light shone in through his closed eyelids. The burn in his parched throat stung him. Chapped lips, were caressed by his equally dry tongue as it snaked out in attempt to wet them. Everything hurt... it hurt. Memory flooded through him, and before he could even open his eyes, the last thing he saw replayed before him once again.

Fjolrin stood by him, taking in the pinched and pained expression as it took over his once, peaceful face. Fillim's mouth opened, the cry that ushered through his lips, hoarse and raspy.

Putting a hand under his head, he leaned down close to him, speaking low and comforting. "Fillim... Fillim... you are safe. You're safe now... it's alright."

The Mer's eyes finally opened. Just a little, but enough so he could see as he became fully conscious and aware. Enough so that he could see the pain in them. Not only the physical, but the emotional as well.

Lifting his head, he brought the teacup closer, hovering it just above his lips. "I need you to sip, Fillim. It will help you."

The early morning sun, shined red and orange through the porthole as he healed him once more. Sipping very sparingly on the reheated broth and tea, Fillim lay quiet, listening to him as he told of where they were. "We're on a vessel in Solitude's port, Fillim."

Fjolrin leaned in closer to him from his chair. Tears ran down into the hair at Fillim's temples. The hand, still wearing Anariil's binding ring, clenched into a fist as the fingers on his other constantly felt of it. Almost as a reassurance that it was still there, and that no one had robbed him of it while he slept.

Fillim swallowed, "Why are we in Port? Where's Anariil?"

Fjolrin couldn't get over the still terrified look in Fillim's eyes. Like he expected something horrible to happen at any moment. Folding his hands together, he stared down at the floor. He had to get it
together. He had to be here for him, regardless of his feelings for the bastard that lay on ice down below them!

"He's... he's down below, Fillim. They've readied him to go back to the Isles... for burial."

Fillim's face pinched up, his hands, closing around the ring. Attempting to stifle the cry that fought to break free causing his midsection to clench up. Pain flared in his belly, the ring, momentarily forgotten as he clutched at his stomach!

"Here, drink this." Fjolrin uncorked a healing remedy, bringing it up to his lips. The strained look on Fillim's face eased up some as he lay his head back down, but his tears still flowed. "You'll need something for pain as well, but I need you to take in more broth first."

"My ring..."

A stab of anger and hurt jealousy hit him square in the chest. Fighting to fix the expression on his face, he stared into Fillim's eyes. "Your ring is still on your hand, Fillim"

Swallowing, Fillim slowly shook his head. "No... my Mother's ring. Her ring... and necklace."

**

Someone moving about in the small cabin, roused him. The smell of herbs being smashed assaulted his sensitive nose, making his mouth water. His stomach ached from too much wine and no food, stress and heartache.

His ears tuned in to the pestle, as it was ground down again and again with expertise.

Carene knew he was awake, he was sure of it. Even though he hadn't moved, his breathing had changed. They were in tune with one another, and even over the sound of him preparing what he knew was a remedy for him, Carene would have noticed.

Closing his swollen eyes for a moment, he inhaled deeply through his nose in attempt to quell the already raging emotions within him.

A soft voice spoke low to him as the herb mixture was scraped into what could only be a teapot to steep. "This will be much better taken this way, I think."

Carene walked to the bed and sat down beside where he lay. Turning over to face him, he struggled to right the look that he knew was on his face, and failed.

Carene smiled down at him. It was an understanding smile. A concerned smile. It tried to touch his eyes, but couldn't. There was pain there. Pain and fear.

His mate's hand moved through his tangled hair, smoothing it out. "Close your eyes... let me heal you."

Doing as he was told, he could feel the regeneration as it worked through him. Relieving the puffiness in his face, his eyes. The sickness in his stomach began to fade. His lips quivered, even as he fought to control them. "Can you heal my ailing heart as well?"

He heard Carene swallow, then felt warmth as his body leaned down over him, the softness of his lips as they touched his cheek. "If I could do so, I would, my dearest love."

Carene got up and walked to the small table, pouring the herbal tea through a strainer and into a
cup for him. Sitting up, he inhaled, holding out his hand to take the cup. "Thank you... for everything, Carene. For last night... I know-"

Sitting down beside Tarenen, he held his own cup, their eyes meeting as he brought up a hand to stop his words. "You need not worry over your condition last night. I... I cannot imagine the grief you are feeling, Tarenen. You do not need to thank me. I only long to comfort you."

What he wanted to say, he couldn't. Not all of it. He was afraid to. Tarenen wasn't ready. Neither was he, but his heart was so full of sadness and worry, and soon he feared he would no longer be able to contain it.

Slowly, they sipped and embraced, cherishing this brief time they had alone for the day. Swinging his legs over the side, Tarenen stood and set his cup down. Digging through the small dresser provided for them, he pulled out fresh robes. "I cannot think about my hurt right now, or I fear I will never leave this room."

With himself already prepared, Carene remained seated and watched him get ready, completely shocked when he placed his last booted foot on the floor and turned toward him. "I know that you worry over Fillim returning home with us."

Unable to control his expression, Carene's mouth dropped, his chest tightening in around his heart. Tarenen stepped forward, his long fingers lacing into Carene's hair as he held his head lovingly. "You will never have to worry over me loving another... not the way that I love you."

Placing a knee atop the bed, Tarenen pulled him in close, whispering into his hair. "You are my strength, and I am so grateful for you. I am so weak right now... I hate to put this burden upon you."

Shaking his head against him, Carene tilted his head back to look up at his face. The pain; not only at his own fear and grief, plaguing him, but at voicing it to his ailing mate. "Never apologize, Tarenen. Not for what you cannot control, and... I know. I know deep down, that your feelings for him are not what they once were. I just... I just cannot bear the thought of losing you. You think me strong, Tarenen, but if you were to leave me... if you-"

Tarenen stepped back, looking down into his amber eyes. Seeing the pain, so real. So different from his own, and yet just as crippling. He listened as his mate poured out his heart, truly showing his own need. For the first time in their relationship, completely bare and devoid of control.

"After what happened yesterday... seeing what your father went through, and what Fillim has suffered. Both of you losing him... I am afraid."

A tear made it's way down Carene's face, his flaxen brows wrinkling up in grief. "I do not think I could live through losing you. I couldn't."

Soft hands slid down to his chin, lifting his head further. Brilliant green eyes, looked lovingly down at him. "You will never lose me. For if I am to die, then we shall die together."

**

Forcing down something to eat, he left Carene to gather several of their soldiers to make the walk up to the city. But first, he had to do something, that so far, he hadn't been strong enough to do. He had to see Fillim, and if he was able, he needed to talk with him.

Not only was Carene not strong enough to be present, but it was personal. Something that should only be shared between himself and the wounded Mer. With everything they'd experienced and
been through together, they deserved this time.

He stood in front of the door, preparing himself. Placing his hand on the handle, he gave a quick tap against it with his knuckles. Just enough for notice, and walked in.

Immediately, Fjolrin stood, his eyes wide. The skin on his face shined with sweat. He looked like he'd been caught doing something he shouldn't have.

Before Tarenen dared look down at the bed and who lay on it, he stared at Fjolrin, taking in his demeanor. He'd wanted to ask for the Nord to leave, to give them a moment of privacy. Before he could speak though, an ever familiar voice, called out his name.

"Tarenen?"

Fillim's eyes widened for just a moment, then as soon as Tarenen faced him... looked at him, he broke.

Fjolrin stood still as a statue, his body frozen in shock as Fillim's arms raised up to the Altmer, his hands stretched out to him. Heat filled his face, and a pain that he knew he had no real right to feel, flared up in his chest.

Tears overflowed from the Altmer's eyes as he dropped to his knees beside the bed. His long arms wrapping around Fillim, gently pulling him close.

Silently, he stepped around the bed and walked out, closing the door behind him.

Fillim's tears ran against his ear, seeping into his hair. For a moment, neither of them spoke. Tarenen allowed one hand away from him, holding it over his midsection, healing light flowed from it down over him. *How... how could he tell him this? How?*

Smaller hands, dug into him even harder. Pain filled words, pushed out, as though even speaking them was taking great effort. "He's dead... he's dead, Tarenen."

Unable to hold himself together any longer, Tarenen fell apart. The hand he'd used to heal Fillim with, now wrapped firmly around him, clutching him tightly. He couldn't look at him... he couldn't.

"You're free now, Fillim... you're safe!"

Fillim gasped out through his tears. Tarenen cried out against him, his broken words muffled against the soaked pillow. "I had to! I had to stop him, Fillim... I had to do it. I couldn't let him kill you!"

Finally pulling away, Tarenen reached over the bed, grabbing a rag from the nightstand to wipe his face. Standing, he sat at the bed's edge. Folding the cloth over in his hand, he lowered it to Fillim's face and proceeded to blot at the Mer's tears. He could feel the swelling taking over his face once again. His weary eyes burned.

Licking at his lips, he shook his head, breathing out a shaky breath. "We... we learned of what his plans were back in the Isles. Your father gave us aid... sent us to dispatch of him."

Even as he said the words, his heart felt as if it were being ripped free from him. Fresh tears made their way down his face. A sob tore from his lips, "I loved him, Fillim. I loved him so much... but I couldn't let him hurt you, or anyone else again."

"My father?" He couldn't believe it! His father, after all that he'd done, had done this?!
Tarenen stood, walking over to the small wardrobe the room held, taking a pillow from within. Sitting back down beside him, he helped him lean forward, placing the pillow behind him so he was elevated.

Fillim shook his head, "I don't understand? As much as I have wanted my father's love... his acceptance, I cannot believe that he would- "

Tarenen was at a loss. "Honestly, Fillim, I cannot tell you if his motive for helping us was to only silence Anariil or not." Fillim simply stared at him. "I am sorry, but after what your father did and the lengths that he went to, to keep you hidden. I cannot tell you of what lies ahead. Not where he is concerned, at least."

He took Fillim's hand in his, holding it gently as if he would break. "I want you to come home with us. Come back with us. He said to make sure if that was your will, that you would have safe passage."

"I will. But it will be to see my family... not him."

Tarenen turned to face him, shock and happiness taking over his expression. He smiled, and for the first time in days, he felt true relief. "Your family? You mean... you... you found them? You have found them?!"

Reaching under the covers, Fillim dug his hand under the mattress, his fingers closing around the hidden objects. Now knowing what Tarenen had already done and the toll it was taking on him to do it, he hated to ask anymore of him. There was simply no one else that he could turn to. This was the only way.

"I need your help once more." Opening his hand, Tarenen looked at what it contained. "I know I can trust you, Tarenen."

**

Closing the door behind him, Tarenen stared ahead. Not seeing the Nord that stood before him. The only thing he saw, was the nightmare that lay ahead as Fillim's words echoed through his mind. "These were my mother's. They were taken off from her the night that Anariil forced Ondolemar, and two other Wizards that were under his command to take her."

Only partial clarity had returned to the Mer's eyes as he finally spoke to him. "Will you stay with him, here? He is not ready to be alone, and I would feel better knowing it is you that is with him. I will personally gather your things if you wish?"

He could see all the questions in the Nord's eyes. "I know not of your knowledge regarding our past, mine and Fillim's. But, we still have much to discuss, and we plan to do this during our journey home. We have time."

Fjolrin didn't question if it was Fillim's wish this time. Tarenen knew that he'd more than likely heard every word they'd said. There was no reason to play games. The Mer was hurting, that was plain to see. He'd heard them both weeping, heard the anguish in their voices. "Of course... I will be in your debt if you would."

The Mer's carefully held together expression faltered for just a moment, showing his true feelings. "It is I, that am in debt, Dragonborn. Along with any Mer or human that protected him whilst he was here."

Up on the main deck, Carene and the same Mer that had assisted them with his father, had
gathered. Carene's eyes met his, unspoken acknowledgment showing in them. Everything was alright between them. No matter the time he still had to spend at Fillim's side during their journey, Tarenen was his, and nothing would ever change that.

Tarenen's eyes widened and he took a step back, as each of the Mer that stood to Carene's side, went down to one knee, their right hands clenched into fists at their hearts in respect to him.

The eldest of them spoke. He could tell that what came out of his mouth had been very carefully prepared, so to not offend him in any manner. But, it was also sincere. "For your strength, Master Tarenen, and for what you have endured, you have our greatest respect."

For just a moment, he was silent. He took them in, weighing the words that had been spoken, and their meaning. Thus far, the only words of sympathy that he'd been given, had been from his mate. The way he'd felt as he had gone down to see his father last night, remained the same. He didn't want pity. He didn't want to see that in anyone's eyes.

This... this, was different. This wasn't pity. It was admiration. It was loyalty. Respect. He knew they had heard him weeping. There was no way that his words down in the morgue had gone unheard, probably by many. He was not ashamed, nor would he ever be.

He had been able to do something that many would never be able to, and they recognized that.

He would not pretend to be something that he wasn't. That he had more strength than what he had. They needed to know that their superiors were not invincible. That they had their weaknesses, just like all Mer and men did. To think otherwise, helped none of them. His time spent with Volana and Undilar had taught him so. Even his mentors, those whom he looked up to, and had learned so much from had their weaknesses.

Thinking of them and of all he had learned, and how they had helped him, he felt renewed. He felt hope, and that gave him strength. He wanted to be, to these Mer who followed him, what Volana and Undilar had been to himself and Carene.

The Mer that had spoken raised his head, looking at him. Tarenen met his gaze and nodded, raising his hand for them to stand. Taking a step closer, he lay his hand on Rumaril's shoulder. His eyes meeting all of their's in turn. "Your words and your loyalty give me strength, for I need that now more than ever."

His eyes went back to Rumaril, the eldest of them, the one that had spoken. "Though what I did was necessary, and had to be done, I would not wish it upon anyone. Not even my worst enemy."

Tarenen stepped back, lowering his hand from the Mer's shoulder. Everything that Fillim had told him ran through his mind. He knew that he'd only heard a minute portion of what Fillim had found out. But what he had found out, was enormous.

In fact, it was the most important, and most condemning. Condemning to his father... to his family, and their name. None of that mattered now. His name. His family. What mattered now, was that justice be served.

He looked up. They were all waiting for him to speak. Carene had actually taken a step towards him, wanting to question if he was alright.

Taking in a deep breath, his head raised as he righted his stance, standing tall. His eyes passed to each Mer, his hand lifting and pointing toward the city. "Before we go back through those gates, I need to ask all of you one thing."
All of them stood at attention, their faces serious. "Do you trust me?"

He studied their expressions. As soon as the words left his lips, each Mer's mouth had dropped, their eyes widening in shock. Carene's brows gathered up. Tarenen could tell that he wanted to take another step towards him, but fought it.

Before any of them could answer, he spoke again. "Do you trust me to do the right thing for the Dominion? For our people? Altmer and Bosmer alike?"

Tears gleamed in Carene's eyes as his right hand went into a fist, coming up to rest over his heart. He took in the rest. Keeping their feelings in check no longer mattered. Not from him. Not over this. Each head raised in pride, their fists raised up in salute.

Even though Rumaril spoke for them, he could see in each Mer's face; their expression and the emotion in their eyes, that they would follow him to the end. "Yes, Master Tarenen. We follow you, as we follow the Dominion."

That was all that he needed to hear. At least now, he knew he wouldn't be facing a fight from those assigned to him over what they now had to do. Raising up his arms, he gestured for them to gather in closer to him.

He spoke low, so only they would hear. "You all know of Chieftain Gaelrinthil?"

He need not even gotten an answer to know that they all did. He could tell just by the looks on all their faces. "Do any of you know the symbol of their family?"

Rumaril nodded, "Yes. We were required to learn of all houses, Bosmer and Altmer alike."

Reaching into his robes, Tarenen's hand wrapped around the thing that Fillim had entrusted him with. "And what is it? This symbol?"

Rumaril swallowed, his eyes shifting to Carene, then back to Tarenen. "It is a tree, in full bloom."
Horrible Knowledge - Part Two

Chapter Summary

He hadn't told him that Anariil was dead. Truth be told, he would probably never know. Other than apologizing for the actions that had taken place in their town center, the Empire would never know of the chaos that was about to ensue within the inner workings of the Dominion.

It was not commonplace for them to advertise their problems. They would be dealt with accordingly, and in private. At least he had apologized. That in itself was something different for them. Different, but good. A good start.

Now what he had to do, was something even harder.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Bringing his hand out from within his robes, Tarenen held up the ring before them. "Years ago, a horrible injustice was carried out by my father, Anariil Charmaen. Three of our now, highly decorated officers, were forced to assist him in this act. I do not know all of the details as of yet. But knowing my father, if they had resisted, they more than likely faced personal ruin."

He lowered his gaze, shaking his head slowly. His voice getting even lower. "The safety of their families may have even been compromised if they refused him."

It was then that Carene stepped forward, placing a hand to his shoulder. Deep down, he felt he already knew what Anariil had done. Seeing the expressions on their subordinate's faces, he felt they had an idea as well, but he had to ask. "What was it exactly, that he did, Tarenen?"

Tarenen lifted his face to them. His color was pallid, and a sick and pained expression ruled his face. "The wounded Mer that we now house below us, is the son of Einsa Gaelrinthil. The Grandson of Chieftain Eniurron Gaelrinthil. He is also the son of Telindil Larethian."

Every single Mer before him dropped their guard ever further. More than one to the point of raising a hand to cover their gaping mouth. He couldn't stop. This was no where near done. It was just beginning.

"You were not made aware of his heritage prior to this mission, and I apologize, but precautions had to be taken. And I, have just now found out who his mother was. Before this, I had no knowledge of my father taking part in her disappearance."

Standing tall, he folded his hands behind his back, taking each one of them in. Just like himself, Carene knew of what was in his father's journal. But other than speaking of the fact that she'd been given as a gift, and Anariil's jealousy over Telindil's feelings for her, there had never been any mention of who she was, or exactly where she'd been gotten in Valenwood.

Anariil had been smart enough to omit that information. Knowing that smuggling a slave, at the time when their laws were going through such drastic change, though enough to tarnish his record,
would've probably just earned him a slap to the wrist. But had he included all the details, and the journal been found, that would have meant execution. Not only for him, but for Telindil as well.

Letting out a deep breath, he needed to get this over with. "Ondolemar... our decorated Commander here in Skyrim, was one of those Mer."

**

Quietly, he spoke as they walked up the steep stone pathway. Once past the carriage and the guardsmen that constantly walked the area around the docks, he paused for a moment and finished what he had to say, the other Mer gathering closer around him.

"I know this will not be an easy thing to do. The Commander is a great Mer. I need not state the impact that his service to the Dominion has had on us all. Therefore, I ask that all of you refrain from showing emotion whilst we go to the dungeon to retrieve him."

Stepping to the side of the path so there would be less chance of interruption, he glanced around momentarily and continued. "The fact that he gave Fillim this ring, and told him of his transgressions, shows that he was trying to right his wrong. He was evidently attempting to save him from my father, who, for not just personal reasons... as you all witnessed, was set on murdering Fillim, but to possibly wipe out the last remnant of evidence that could incriminate Telindil as well. As of right now, I am speculating on some of this, but we will have a chance to question the Commander further as we sail."

Turning from them, he began to walk. The dread of what he had to do settling into his stomach like lead weight. "It is important that you all know that we are not his judges, and regardless of the fact that they were forced to do what they did, it was still done. He, along with Telindil, will stand before the Elders, which will include Chieftain Gaelrinthil. They will serve as judge, and hand them down their fate."

Rumaril hastened to catch up with him! His hand going out to Tarenen's arm! As soon as contact was made, every Mer stopped. Rumaril jerked his hand back as if he'd been burned! Regardless of their shock over this horrible news, to touch their superior without direct permission was completely unacceptable. It was a punishable offense.

Tarenen looked upon him, attempting to keep the anger from his expression. He wanted their trust, and their loyalty, but they could not be allowed to forget their place. Even friends within the order had to remember this.

Rumaril went down onto his knees. His hands were placed before him on the ground. "Please... please, Master Tarenen! I beg you forgive my actions! I... I am..."

One of the Solitude guardsmen walked by, pausing for a moment at the display taking place in the pathway. Carene stepped towards him, his hand on the hilt of his blade! "Mind your business!"

The guardsman turned his head and swiftly left.

Carene stood close to Tarenen, looking down on Rumaril. This was a lesson. They were all young, and this was their first trial away from the Isles. It was best that he had done it away from the training center, as the punishment he would face there would have been much more severe. As it was, Tarenen still needed to handle it appropriately so it wouldn't become a problem down the road. They had to respect his title.

Not only that, but in this particular situation, they needed to know that they could count on their
subordinates. For Tarenen to state that Telindil had broken their laws, and would be brought before the Order, could be seen as treason in itself.

Telindil was a great Mer. He had done a great many things for their people... for the Dominion. Many of their people, Altmer and Bosmer alike practically revered him, as well as many others in the Order.

It was going to come as a great shock to many, when this was brought out in the open. Because of who he was, this would have to be dealt with very carefully.

"Stand, and look into my eyes, Rumaril."

The young Mer swallowed loudly. His shaking hands pushing him up from the ground. He stood before Tarenen. Staring at each other, Tarenen took in his face. He was almost in tears. His lips and chin quivered. He was fighting to keep it together. His voice wavered. "Telindil... how could he... what will this mean for us?!"

Bringing his hands up to the struggling Mer's shoulder, Tarenen pulled him closer, speaking low. "I know how you must feel, Rumaril. But you must realize something very important here. The whole while that Chieftain Gaelrinthil was searching for his daughter, the whole time he was mourning her, she was inside Telindil's home."

Rumaril straightened, the desperation on his face being replaced by something else. Disappointment? Disbelief? Soon, he was sure that it would be disgust. For that's what he knew he felt.

"We've all been taught this. You must remember! This action was what forced our very laws to change! It is written in our very own records that Telindil helped alongside Eniurron while this was being done! The whole time, her being in his home! She died giving birth to Fillim, Rumaril. She died! Her family knows nothing of this! They do not know they have a grandchild!"

Tarenen released him, addressing them all. "I have known Telindil's son for years now, and I know personally of how he was treated. He was sold by his own father to be used as a slave. This, was how he treated his own blood. Her blood! Justice will be served. And it will be done, no matter the cost!"

Looking directly into Rumaril's eyes, "You are concerned for our people. Our order. You need not be. What we do right now, will purge the corruption from the Dominion. It may be painful, but it needs to be done in order for us to remain strong. To be who we should be. For our people and our future."

Taking a step back from them, his eyes met each one's in turn. "I asked you before, if you trusted me. Knowing what you know now, do you still?"

Carene, not waiting for the others, raised his fist to his chest in solute. "You will have me at your side, always." He bowed, not raising.

Tarenen's eyes shifted from his mate, to the others. "Do not follow me, simply because Carene gives me his loyalty. Follow me, because you believe that in your heart that we are doing the right thing."

Each Mer, just as they had on the ship, went down to one knee before him. Their fists raised in solute to him. To their Dominion and all that she stood for.

Walking past each one, he stopped before Rumaril, looking down at him. "Remember this, the
Dominion is not one Mer. It never has been. She is much, much more than that. Together, we all are one. But we have to be together. Telindil and my father have tarnished what we all live for. What we have all stood for. What Queen Ayrenn Aldmeri began. They have soiled our beloved Dominion. And now, we will wash her clean."

Rumaril’s eyes met his as they stood. "You have my trust. You have my loyalty."

In his peripheral, he saw them all nod, but his eyes remained on Rumaril's. "You will have to be stronger than you ever thought you could be."

**

The rest of the walk to the gates was spent in silence. Carene walked closer to his side, but always just a step behind. This was something that he hated and always would. They were equals in every sense of the word, and if he'd had his way, Carene would be at his side. Their hands would be joined, their shoulders touching as they walked. He wouldn't care who saw them and what went through their heads when they did.

But that's not how it could be. Not right now. Not this time. This was his trial. He was in charge. He had to not only handle what needed to be done, but show that he could still lead regardless of his personal feelings.

He had to show that he would do what was right for the Dominion and her people. That also meant doing what was right for Skyrim and her people. Showing them that the Dominion was not the monster that Mer like his father had portrayed them to be. The past was past. It was time to put it behind them.

Volana and Undilar had sat with them briefly before they had departed. Telling them that, ‘They didn't expect the humans to always understand their ideals. Their reasoning for doing the things that they did. They were different, and always would be. They also didn't expect the humans to be anything other than what they were. Nor did they want them to be slaves. Their goal was not to change them in that manner, but, to help them. To guide them.’

'Things needed to change. If they didn't, the same vicious cycles were bound to repeat themselves. A being that lived four hundred, upwards to a thousand years or better, depending on how powerful and knowledgeable one was, was naturally going to be wiser than one that only lived to be sixty or eighty, if they were incredibly lucky. And they, themselves, even with their long lives, they were still learning as well. Things could never be the way they once were.'

Of course, age had nothing to do with ethics or morals. As his father and Telindil were prime examples of. Those were something that differed from Mer to Mer, and Man to Man.

Something they had been taught, was that morals, in and of themselves, varied, depending on what one believed and felt was right. Or perhaps where and how they were brought up. What one person felt was right... morally right, could mean something very different to another.

After all, those males that felt the need to be with another male, there were those in all the races that still thought this morally wrong. Unnatural. And yet it had been taking place since there were Mer and Man on Nirk.

Though it tended to be more widely accepted among the Mer races, there were still many in numerous places that faced horrible treatment over it. The exact reason why so many kept it hidden. He would be willing to bet that there were many more of the Nords that felt as he and Carene, Undilar and Volana did, than were willing to show it openly.
All these lessons... these were what had been going through his mind as they opened the door to Castle Dour. Change was not only coming... it was here. Here for them all.

**

General Tullius stopped what he was doing, standing upright from his bent position over the map on the table before him. His Legate standing by his side.

The strain of this conflict amongst Skyrim's people, having to deal with the Dominion on top of it, and having to report to his superiors of every move. It was all taking it's toll on this man. It showed all over his face.

If one thing lifted his heart just a little that day, it was seeing the pinched expression on the Imperial's face lighten as he spoke to him. With each word, he could tell that the man felt better. Better about being there, doing what he had to do. And if he could have, he would have gone up and addressed the widowed Queen, apologizing for the display that had taken place the day before in the middle of her city.

As it was, he was not supposed see her, nor was he to make a statement of any kind to the citizens. But he could to Tullius. It was enough to do it before this man. Enough to do it period.

A vicious battle played out in his heart as he spoke his words. Happiness that hopefully some recompense was now made. That he was able to apologize for his father's wretched deeds, to someone... anyone. And yet, he felt great pain. Agony over having to say them. The fact that these things were done at all. The fact that it hurt him, how sick his father had truly become.

It was almost as if he could hear Volana's words in his mind... in his ears. Words that he had not yet spoken, but would. Little by little, your ailing heart will be healed. The pain of each step giving birth to wholeness... freedom. You can and will overcome.

Before they turned to leave, he took a second to memorize the look on the Man's face. He wanted to see more of the like... many more. A look of relief. Thankfulness.

Turning to walk toward the Dungeon, the words ran through his mind. Anariil has departed... he will be returning to the Isles with us... you have the Dominion's utmost regret at the actions shown here... please find a way to give our regard to the people of this city... a formal notice will be coming to you once we have returned...

He hadn't told him that Anariil was dead. Truth be told, he would probably never know. Other than apologizing for the actions that had taken place in their town center, the Empire would never know of the chaos that was about to ensue within the inner workings of the Dominion.

It was not commonplace for them to advertise their problems. They would be dealt with accordingly, and in private. At least he had apologized. That in itself was something different for them. Different, but good. A good start.

Now what he had to do, was something even harder.

Chapter End Notes

I also know that the Khajiit make up a portion of the Dominion, but because Conflict
of Interest deals quite a bit with them, I wanted this one to be primarily about the Altmer and Bosmer people.
Chapter Summary

Ondolemar took a step back from the bars, his arms hanging limp at his sides. Dhaunare sucked in a breath, his hands going up to cover his mouth! "I don't know your forename, young Charmaen. But if Telindil sent you here to silence Anariil, then he's using you! You have no idea the lengths that he will go to in order to protect himself! I can guarantee you that his very last concern is Fillim's safety!"

Those words hit him like a punch to the gut. Taking in a deep breath, he turned, his hands shaking as he picked up the key from the table and walked toward the cell. He couldn't fall apart now. Not again. He had to see this through! All their eyes were on him! Fillim was depending on him! He'd let him down before, allowing his father to find them out. He wouldn't let him down again. This was his last chance.

The massive jailer stood there, his hands constantly fidgeting. Such a fierce and mighty man, looking so uncomfortable. A sight like this, Tarenen thought he would never see. Of course, there was a first time for everything and this was just the first of many to probably come.

Perhaps this was something that was going on in the giant Redguard's mind as well. More than likely though, it was probably just the fact that he wanted them all gone from the vicinity so he could have some peace of mind returned to him.

Right now, that wasn't much of a comfort to him. As much as he needed to be in control and act accordingly, he didn't really want to be feared by everyone. Respected, not feared. It wasn't setting very well in his heart. None of this was. His and Carene's positions would eventually be that of assassins, and or, if it was needed, rescuers.

The ones that moved in silent and invisible to all around them. They would take out the enemy and be gone before anyone was the wiser. If someone important to them was being held by the enemy, it would be to rescue them. Sneak attack.

It wouldn't really be necessary to instill fear in those around them for them to accomplish their goals. The fact that they would be able to get in, kill and get out, their enemy would have very little time to fear. This jailer however, this headsman... it was his job to instill fear and he had very little doubt that the man did his job well.

Right now, it was he, himself that was afraid. If truth be told, even more so than the jailer and the Imperial guard that had escorted them in. This whole thing, all of it, was starting to feel like a neverending nightmare.

Tarenen nodded his head to the man as he walked into the room and toward the cell. The door closed behind them as they were left alone with the ones being held, the tension in the air changing noticeably. With the jailer gone, it was now his fear that permeated the room. His, and that of those in his party.

Glancing at the small table in the corner, the key sat atop it, ready to be used. But before he released them, he wanted to make sure they knew what lay ahead.
They would be coming back with them. All of them.

What happened after they arrived would be up to the Council, and Eniurron. It was customary that when a crime had been committed against someone, that person had a direct say in the fate of the one responsible. A say. That didn't mean that it was final. The Council would take it into consideration and decide as a whole.

But, in this situation, being who it was that the crime had been committed against and the fact of who it had been that had carried it out, he felt Eniurron would have more than just a say. Especially given the fact that Telindil was supposedly helping direct the investigation the whole time it was taking place, when she was being held in his own home the entire time. Him knowing, of course, that no one would ever find her. The time and money the Dominion had spent looking had all been for naught. Wasted.

Honestly, he was more than afraid for what was coming, he was terrified. He, himself, being Anariil's son and having spent several years with Fillim in their household, he would more than likely be questioned as well. His mother would be questioned. With Anariil out of the way... he could... Telindil could...

The revelation hit him as he stood facing Ondolemar, looking into his green eyes. The fact that he had no idea just how far this was going to go, and the fact that Telindil was the only one other than Volana and Undilar that knew why they were really here. The only one that really knew who Fillim was... who his mother was.

What would they be facing coming back into Port? They would be facing Telindil. And if he found out that they had Ondolemar... he could silence Volana and Undilar, spinning any tale he wanted and the Council would believe it. They had no reason not to. As far as they knew, thus far, Telindil had done nothing but help the Dominion and her people.

They had to get past Telindil, and he had no idea how they were going to do that. His eyes widened as he stare into that aged and wise face inside the cell. His mouth dropped as the horrible reality of the situation they were all in took hold in his mind.

**

Ondolemar stood there watching as uncertainty, fear and panic, crawled their way all over the face of the young Altmer before him. When he'd walked through the door, it had been obvious from the way he'd carried himself that he was their leader, young as he may be. Young as they all were.

Were they that desperate now, to send Mer so young as this to do their dirty work? Mer that should still be home and focused on schooling? The fact still remained though, that if he was here and not Anariil, it could only mean one thing.

The young Mer was hesitating. He was afraid. Unsure. And he was in charge. It was because of who he was, he was sure of it. They would all know of his position. Having no intention of waiting any longer, he spoke.

"Am I correct in assuming that Anariil is departed?"

Completely unprepared, Tarenen literally flinched at his words, fighting to regain his composure. "Yes, you would be correct."

Before he could get anything else out, another question was fired at him. Another that he wasn't ready for.
"Was it you, who dispatched him?"

Pain and grief gripped his heart, squeezing it tightly. He couldn't right his expression, it was written all over his face. He swallowed, his voice coming out in a hoarse whisper. "Yes."

The two Justiciars standing behind Ondolemar stepped forward a little, watching him. Ondolemar's head tilted to the side, the expression on his face changing to one of pity. "How very cruel. For them to send you to do this."

Tarenen closed his eyes, breathing in through his nose.

"You are his son, aren't you? I am right... you look just like him."

Tarenen swallowed, looking at him once again, no longer caring that his emotion shown on his face. "I am here of my own will."

"Your own will? Really? Who sent you? Who gave authority for this to happen?"

He was failing. Failing, and doing it with a horrible lack of grace, right in front of the subordinates that stood behind him. It was too late to send them out to wait for him. That would just be another big blunder. "Telindil."

A look of pure shock passed over every face in the cell. "Telindil. Telindil sent you here? To kill your own father?"

"Yes. To protect and return his son."

Ondolemar took a step back from the bars, his arms hanging limp at his sides. Dhaunare sucked in a breath, his hands going up to cover his mouth! "I don't know your forename, young Charmaen. But if Telindil sent you here to silence Anaril, then he's using you! You have no idea the lengths that he will go to in order to protect himself! I can guarantee you that his very last concern is Fillim's safety!"

Those words hit him like a strike. Taking in a deep breath, he turned, his hands shaking as he picked up the key from the table and walked toward the cell. He couldn't fall apart now. Not again. He had to see this through! All their eyes were on him! Fillim was depending on him! He'd let him down before, allowing his father to find them out. He wouldn't let him down again. This was his last chance.

Ondolemar raised up his hands, gripping the iron bars! "Did he request that you return him home as well?! If so, and if he is still alive, then it is to silence him! So that he can see the body of his son and know that his error has been corrected!"

Tarenen put the key in the lock and turned it.

Ondolemar was near yelling. "Everyone in your party will be killed or exiled! Telindil will stop at nothing to cover his own ass!"

Rumaril gasped, one of his hands going up to clutch at the Mer next to him, the other covering his mouth! Within seconds Carene was on him! His fists full of Rumaril's robes, hauling him closer so they were nose to nose! "You will control yourself!"

The door swung open and Tarenen stepped back, holding up his arm for them to exit. "I am Tarenen. Tarenen Charmaen." Holding his other hand up to Carene, who had finally released a very shaken Rumaril, "This is Carene, my next in command."
Carene turned to face them, but stayed next to the others, keeping close to Rumaril. "Fillim is still alive. We saved him from my father."

Ondolemar finally stepped forward, facing him. "He is on board our vessel as we speak, healing. The Dovahkiin is with him."

Dhaunare looked to Fiiralmo with relief. "Thank Au-Riel."

"We know who he really is. Who his mother is. He told me that you, and the Mer with you, were attempting to help him when Anaril arrived at the Embassy." Pulling the ring from his robes, he held it up for them to see, instantly seeing the recognition in their eyes. "He wants to return home. He wants to see his family."

Tucking the ring back safely where it had been. "And I want Justice! I want Telindil to pay for what he's done, just as my father has. For Fillim and his mother... for her family."

He pulled his gaze away from their Commander for a moment, his eyes sweeping over the other Mer in the room. "We all do." His eyes locked onto Rumaril's. "No matter the cost."

Finally, Ondolemar stepped forward. "That is exactly what we want, hence the reason that I gave him that ring and his mother's necklace. He still has that as well, I presume?"

"Yes, he does. The Dovahkiin will be travelling along with us. He is refusing to leave Fillim's side."

For the first time in a long time, Ondolemar smiled. Closing his eyes just for a second, he silently thanked the Gods. *Perhaps this was going to work... justice may yet be served. Then, and only then, would his soul find rest.*

Walking out of the cell, Dhaunare and Fiiralmo following along behind him. "Good. We will need his help. His presence on board that ship may very well save you all."

Pausing at Ondolemar's choice of words, Tarenen closed the cell door. "Then you know what this could mean for you as well, Commander?"

"I do, and I am ready."

**

As soon as they left their confinement, Ondolemar took implied command. Having no intention of speaking to them regarding the coming events or his being in a position of control while they were within earshot of the guardsman, they all followed him out of Castle Dour.

Staying in a large group, they stopped at the Alchemist's to gather Fjolrin's belongings, then walked over to the small shop Bits and Pieces, to purchase some clothing for Fillim. Only Ondolemar, Carene and Tarenen entered. Dhaunare and Fiiralmo stayed outside the shop with the rest of Tarenen's party.

It was not only to make sure that there was no trouble, not that they thought the townsfolk would give them any, but to keep the already nervous young Mer from speaking foully of their superior. Even if they didn't speak the words, they were perhaps thinking them. On top of that, it was quite obvious they were all distressed over the situation. That alone could effect the decisions they made.

Ondolemar, for all intents and purposes, was supposed to be their prisoner. For him to be released
and then to assume command with Tarenen simply allowing it, could damage how they viewed him. Dhaunare was sure that their Commander would be speaking with them all once they boarded the ship to assure that this did not happen.

Tarenen had been through enough already, and had evidently held himself together well enough to get them where they were. What they were facing... what they could be facing, was nothing that should be placed upon the shoulders of one so young and inexperienced as he.

While Tarenen picked out clothing and anything else Fillim may need, Ondolemar stood to the side with Carene. He kept his voice low, advising the young Mer that they send Anariil's remaining guard, who were still at the Inn, to the Embassy. They were to be told that there was not enough room on the ship to house them and that they were to remain there until reassignment could be arranged. Knowing her, instead of sending them back, she would simply make use of them here.

"We do not want them on board with us. If they have spent time in his service, we know not of their allegiance. They could hamper things for us once we get to Port. We will already have to be careful enough of how much those that sailed with you know."

Carene nodded, lowering his voice. "Do you not worry that the Emissary will question them? She could-"

Ondolemar raised a hand, quieting him. "We do not have to worry about her. She doesn't want to be any more involved in this than she already is. That is why she never arrived here. Anariil was simply scaring the General into submission. He wanted us out of his way, so he could carry out his plan."

Tarenen listened to the words spoken between them while he laid out the coin required and the Redguard woman wrapped and tied their bundles.

Walking closely with Ondolemar and the two Justiciars that were held with him, Carene walked a few yards behind them with the others, giving them as much privacy to speak as he could.

Ondolemar kept his voice low, staring out ahead of them as they walked through the gates and down toward the docks. "You are still in Command Tarenen. I will make that abundantly clear to all once we are back on board the ship. But no one that sailed here with you; the guard and deckhands, can know of the situation."

"As far as we are aware, they do not. We've tried to keep as many of the details as quiet as possible." Tarenen glanced his way, "They do know however, that Anariil is dead."

His voice caught in his throat and he fought to keep his hurt from showing on his face. "They assisted in the housing of his remains down below deck. They also know we took on a wounded Mer, but I do not believe they know of who Fillim is. Telindil gave our Instructors complete control over the preparation of the vessel and who was on board. So I do not believe that he would've had time to place instructed Mer in any station."

"Your Instructors?" Ondolemar almost stopped in the roadway. His eyes widened in amazement. Correcting his gate, he looked out ahead of them. "There is evidently much that I need to know, Tarenen."

Raising up his hand, Tarenen rubbed his fingers over his brow, trying to ease the stress building up there. "I know. As soon as Fillim told me that you were involved, I planned to confide in you. We will have time, though, as we sail. Carene and I are very close with two of our Instructors. I turned to them. Volana and Undilar."
"Yes, I know of them."

"They put not only their careers, but their lives on the line to help us. Undilar faced Telindil in private with my fa- Anariil's diary."

Now Ondolemar stopped, turning to him in the middle of the roadway. Everyone stopped behind them, careful to stay back so they could speak. "Diary?! What did it say?"

"I've read it. It says nothing of who Fillim's mother was, just that Anariil got her in Valenwood and gave her to him as a gift. It doesn't mention you, nor any other Mer. It was mostly about his and Telindil's relationship, or lack thereof, I should say."

Ondolemar swallowed, beginning to walk again, he tugged lightly at Tarenen's arm to get him moving. His mind raced with the new knowledge. I wasn't mentioned... none of us were. "You can tell me the rest once we're on board and underway. I need to see Fillim. You said he was injured?"

"Yes, Anariil stabbed him. He was going to kill Fillim, then himself. We intervened, but unfortunately not in time to keep him from being hurt. He was doing much better when we left to get you this morn."

Ondolemar didn't need to turn around to know the effect this news had on Dhaunare and Fiiralmo. They would get to see him in a few moments. The turn in the road was coming just up ahead. "I understand the trepidation you may be feeling of arriving in Port with me on board, for you now know my place in all of this. Even though you say that there was nothing in your father's diary of our involvement, that still does not mean that Telindil is unaware of who assisted Anariil in his endeavor that night. That is something that I have thought about for many years. But, I am almost certain that if he did, I would not be alive today. I most assuredly would not be in the position that I am in."

Tarenen looked up to him, new hope shining in his eyes.

Ondolemar smiled down at him, "However, what you must remember, is that even if he does know... no one else does. Fillim's mother being who she was, and his involvement, would have been kept between himself and Anariil only! Fillim told me that it was possible that even the servants in his home were unaware. And if they were, they would never get a chance to speak."

They passed the last guard post. "This is good... the fact that we were not mentioned." He looked at Tarenen, "And you are sure of this? You read every page?"

Tarenen nodded. "Yes, we all did. Carene, Volana, and Undilar were all with me. We went over it numerous times, along with some other documents he had. There was nothing pertaining to any other Mer."

He wanted to feel relieved, but was afraid to. He needed to keep himself strong, this was almost over. He needed to boost Tarenen up. "We will arrive in Port with not only the Dovahkiin; our much needed political ally, but with myself as well. Nothing has changed as far as the Dominion is concerned. In order to have me arrested, Telindil would have to come up with some very strong proof of my wrongdoing."

Ondolemar looked forward, his hands clasped behind him. He wouldn't bring up the fact that Telindil knew exactly who Dhaunare was, and the reason for him being stationed in Skyrim for the length of time that he had was his doing. Not yet. In reality, it may not even matter now. The fact that he had a mixed-breed son, was evidently no longer hidden knowledge.
These were things that they could discuss along the way. What he needed to know, was how this all came to be. Why Telindil would send someone to try and save his son? Why not just let Anariil end it all? The secret dying by his hands?

Tarenen's voice broke through his thoughts as they rounded the corner, going around the carriage and its driver. He could see the ship. The deckhands were busy getting her ready to sail. Altmer guards stood on the dock, awaiting their arrival. "So, you have a plan, then?"

"I believe I do. But I will have to speak to the Dragonborn first. If he's willing to sail there with us in order to keep Fillim safe, then I'm sure he will do whatever it takes to do just that."
What Goes Around

Chapter Summary

Ondolemar had laid his head back, looking up into the wood grain of the ceiling above them, thinking about it. *I do know, that eventually all things come full circle. All things.* He'd raised his head back up to look at him. *Whether it was from all those that knew, and were no longer able to live with this horrible secret any longer? Anariil's hurt and jealousy fueled rage... his need for revenge, finally putting things into motion. Or whether it is simply the natural order of things.*

He'd taken in a long breath through his nose. *Your life being put in jeopardy, though, was something that none of us would ever be able to live with. It is time. Time for this to end.*

Ondolemar's face, when he'd looked at him, he would never forget it. He would never forget his words. *It is time for your father's reign to end.*

Chapter Notes

Instead of rehashing everything that's already been told during the voyage home, I am moving this ahead to just before they dock, with a lot of reflection thrown in. It will start where the last ended, but will speed through. I'm eager to get to the Isles.

Also, I will be introducing another character somewhere in the upcoming chapters. Not a major character, but still, a character nonetheless.

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It hadn't been until the next sunrise that Fillim's eyes opened again. They'd cast off and had sailed through the entire night with him barely stirring at all. Fjolrin helped him sit up a little, adjusting the pillows behind him and carefully handed him his tea.

It was to be expected. He'd been through a tremendous amount. After Tarenen had left him he'd literally passed out from exhaustion. Emotional drain, coupled with his wound, he needed to rest.

Fjolrin's vision faded out as he sipped on his own, remembering the numerous Mer that had come in to see Fillim yesterday, before and during cast off. It had been a complete blend of emotion. All of them glad that he was doing alright, but somewhat upset, nonetheless, that he was asleep and hadn't awoken for them to speak to.

He thought about his conversation with Ondolemar, the Thalmor Commander.

He knew Ondolemar. Not really personally, but professionally. Dealing with each other periodically in Markarth, he knew just how formidable the Mer was. And yet, as soon as they had boarded the ship, that was the first place he'd come. To see Fillim.
His vision cleared, focusing in once again on the small Elf in the bed, sipping carefully on his tea. How was it possible that Fillim, without his own knowledge, was capable of bringing so many powerful Mer to their knees?

Fillim knew nothing of all that had been said. Yet. He would soon, though. Fjolrin sipped his tea, his mind replaying it all. Ondolemar pulling him out of his and Fillim's quarters to a private room... whispering. Telling him of the situation within the Dominion, that this went way above Anariil. It went all the way up the ladder to Telindil Larethian.

He'd heard of him. Heard of who he was and the power that he held. Anyone in the Empire or Legion would know. His eyes landed back on Fillim. He would've never believed that the Mer was Fillim's father. Not with what he'd known of Fillim's background, simply from what Fillim had told him, of course. The fact that he'd been a slave, he wouldn't think him the son of a royal.

Of course, he'd never met Telindil... or seen him. He'd heard of many in the Dominion, trying to remember them all. The important ones. The ones that he may end up having to deal with at some point in his life. But now, knowing he was his father, it didn't set well. Someone that would do that to their own son, and from what Ondolemar had told him had happened to Fillim's mother, he thought he would be ill.

Again, he had to get his temper in check, lest he rant on and on. It was very obvious that those Mer on board with them that knew, were just as upset as he was. More, if the truth be told, for they'd had to live with it.

Much to his chagrin, Dhaunare and Fiiralmo had sat in with Fillim while he and Ondolemar had spoken. Knowing that they were his and Fillim's allies didn't, and in his eyes, would never wash away what they'd done to him in Whiterun!

In front of all that knew him, they'd run Fillim down like an animal. They'd terrorized him, taking away the first real home and semblance of family and community that Fillim had ever known! Possibly tarnishing permanently, any possibility of him ever being able to return and live any kind of decent life.

Knowing that Anoriath, Elrindir, and the couple that owned and ran the War Maiden would always welcome him back. They cared for him and worried over him. As did the twins. Of course, he'd shaken that thought out of his mind, knowing that he was acting the part of a child. No matter how much he knew they cared for Fillim, the whole situation still sat in his belly like something foul he'd forced down.

*He was right.*

But right or not, he couldn't think about the love he knew the Nords felt for this small Mer. It hurt too much. It frightened him. Swallowing down the last of his tea, he'd stood to pour some more, leaning over to check Fillim's cup. *He needed to do what was right for Fillim. Even if that meant himself being left alone in the end.*

He may be alone when it all came down, but he swore that he would watch out for Fillim until his dying breath. No matter who the Mer chose to be with. As long as Fillim wanted him by his side, he would be there. Friend or lover. And if he was sent away... told that his company was no longer needed, he would protect from afar. He would be always watchful.

He knew deep down that the Mer surrounding Fillim would always feel that he needed to be with one of his own kind. In his own heart, he felt that was right. No matter how much the truth pained him. It wasn't a matter of feeling the blending of two races was wrong. That couldn't be farther
from how he felt, and perhaps even the Mer felt the same. It was the life span.

If he'd still had his first, and still, his only true love, he would stay with him till his eyes saw their last. Even with knowing how much it would've pained his Mer at his passing, he would never regret their union.

Love was selfish in this way. It was. For all the times that he would've given his life for his love, done anything for him... staying with him, and forcing him to grieve for his loss, would be the most selfish thing he could ever do.

They would not have hundreds of years together. Ten times that, or more, of what any human couple would have. At the age he was when they met, they would have perhaps, another fifty to sixty years? If he was lucky. If the Dragon blood in his veins granted him a little more time than the average man. If he could learn more from Neloth to lengthen his life span.

Those were many If's. And if all of them failed, instead of being able to look forward to what lay ahead for them, whomever he was with would be burying him. Grieving, and alone. No matter the magic he learned, nor the Dragon blood that flowed inside him, he would still only live a fraction of the life his mate would. Because he knew... he knew that no matter whom he chose in the end, it would be a Mer.

Fillim's stretch, then his intake of breath from pain, roused him from his thoughts. For just a second, his face pinched up from the discomfort. His small hands clutched the teacup to keep from spilling it and he forced a smile. "Have we left yet? Where are we, Fjolrin?"

He stood, setting down his own tea. "We just sailed past the High Rock border. We're in her waters now. The winds, they favor us."

"High Rock... " Fillim's brows gathered as he slowly shook his head. "When I was on my way to Skyrim, I was so distraught that I stayed down below deck most days. I didn't really pay attention to where we were. I missed a lot, didn't I?"

Fjolrin nodded, listening to him as he lowered the blankets down a little to check his bandages.

"Am I well enough to get dressed? Perhaps go up on deck for awhile?"

He thought about it. Perhaps he was. Some fresh air and sunshine would do him good. Brighten his spirits some. "I don't see why not. But after morning meal, and only for a time. You're still weak, Fillim. Too much activity could cause a setback."

Yes. Some time in the sun would do them both some good.

**

Just hearing that he was going to be able to, had lit him up inside. He couldn't stop the smile from taking over his face, and he couldn't help but notice that it had touched Fjolrin's as well. The giant Nord's face broke into a wide grin as he helped him upright to unwrap his wounded torso.

Fillim watched him. Taking in how tender he was with his every touch, taking so much care with him. His heart warmed, easing away a tiny bit of the pain and sorrow that lingered there. He had to say something... let him know how he felt. Running his hand over Fjolrin's, he held it there and the Nord paused, looking up into his eyes. "Fjorin... I- " he swallowed the lump down that had formed in his throat, "Thank you... for saving me... for helping me."

Leaving his midsection uncovered for the moment, Fjolrin sat down beside him on the bed,
holding his hand. Pain clouded his sky blue eyes and for a moment he looked away, down at the bed. "It was not me that saved you, Fillim." Fjolrin looked up to him. "It was Tarenen. They came to me in Solitude. They told me of what... of what he planned to do."

"If only I'd been there... gotten to you in time. Then none of this- "

Fillim squeezed the hand he held. Fjolrin was blaming himself, and he wouldn't allow it. "You've done so much for me. Please don't speak like that. Please."

**

Ten days later

It hadn't mattered... all of his reassuring that he understood. That Fjolrin had risked much, following them the entire way to Solitude. That he'd faced the General and been pushed into an even tighter corner than he already was politically. That he'd been unwelcome in numerous businesses there out of fear.

He wouldn't take any credit. By the time they were done speaking, they both had wept. Fjolrin was falling for him hard. He'd taken him on as his responsibility. Not out of just a sense of duty, but because of what he felt for him. He wouldn't give up a chance for there to be something between them.

Fillim wanted to love him. He did. He felt for him. There was an attraction there, and not just that. There were feelings too. But the feelings were young, just starting. He'd cried as he spoke, his nose running and his face wet from tears. 'I can't say what I feel right now, Fjolrin.'

The agonizing pain in his heart felt as though it were cutting him in two. 'I care for you. I want there to be something in the future... but, I'm in so much pain. I hurt so bad right now that I can't stand it.'

The big man had openly wept, holding him in his embrace, his choked voice in his ear. 'I know... I know, and I will never ask for more than you're able to give, Fillim. Just allow me to be here for you... please.'

He was so glad to have Fjolrin. So glad that he couldn't put it to words. But he still felt bad that he couldn't commit his heart to him. It made him feel like he was being selfish. But he just couldn't. He was torn into what seemed like a million pieces, all of them grasping and aching for something different.

The fact that he'd lost the opportunity that he'd had in Whiterun. His split with the twins and the fact that he still loved them both, and that he didn't know if he'd ever see them again. Their faces constantly came to him in his dreams as he relived all that they'd shared together. The good and the bad.

Vilkas' pain, so apparent when he'd left. Telling him that he was his only true love, that there would never be another. And the hurt and betrayal on Farkas' face when he saw him leaving from Fjolrin's home. Them making love. The mate mark. And his bitterness over having not been given a choice.

The fact that he had been reunited with, and had lost Anariil. The fact that his dead body lay just down below from where he and the others slept. He'd gone to him... visited with him. And he'd wept. The pain of him being gone from his life forever was like a raw, bleeding wound in his chest. So much worse than the one he'd almost died from. This one affected his soul. It consumed it, and
he felt at times that it would never dissipate.

At times it was almost crippling, and he could see how it affected Fjolrin. Even though the Nord was expert at keeping his feelings hidden, doting on him constantly, trying to keep his mind off it, or simply consoling him. He could see it in his eyes. It was there, turning his blue a darker shade, as if the storm clouds had rolled in. He never said anything, though. He never complained. And he would hold Fillim, both of them giving the other comfort, just as they each took it.

Tarenen had visited with his father daily. He knew each time, because not only could he hear him talking and weeping down below, but in his demeanor afterwards. The control he held over himself waned. His expression took on a pained and pinched look and his eyes and nose were always reddened from his tears, despite the healing that either Carene or himself would cast to shoo it away.

He had aged, and it wasn't over. One evening after such a visit, and much wine, Fillim had sat with him, holding his hands and wiping his tears. Tarenen said that his grief was eating him alive. Like a cancerous growth that started in his heart, and it was spreading outward. That it was a living thing... and it was killing him.

They had sat together numerous times. Although all the visits they had were different, some more somber than others, Tarenen truly tried to be positive. To give him hope. Fillim knew that he needed it. They both did. But even with that, their talks were always honest and speaking from the heart.

Tarenen had assured him that with time the pain would ebb. That no matter how grief stricken he may presently be, he knew that it would heal, and that he would finally know peace. They both would. That he, himself, knew how Fillim suffered, and that he would always be there for him. They were, after all, a part of each other's lives and their destinies lay together. Not as mate. But as friend, confidant. Family.

In fact, the whole time they'd been on the water had felt like a gathering of family or friends. It was both. They were gathered together to feed off from one another's ideas. To give comfort and strength. To prepare each other for what was coming.

But even with all the sadness that had come from these events, there was also an underlying gladness. For if none of this had happened, he may have never known the truth. Not all of it. Who his mother was, and that was Ondolemar's doing.

He may have never had the closure that he so needed.

Ondolemar had told him, that this, had been coming. All of it, was justice being served. Whether it was fate, or the universe, making things right... the Gods finally lending their hand. He did not know.

Ondolemar had laid his head back, looking up into the wood grain of the ceiling above them, thinking about it. 'I do know, that eventually all things come full circle. All things.' He'd raised his head back up to look at him. 'Whether it was from all those that knew, and were no longer able to live with this horrible secret any longer? Anariil's hurt and jealousy fueled rage... his need for revenge. Or whether it is simply the natural order of things.'

He'd taken in a long breath through his nose. 'Your life being put in jeopardy, though, was something that none of us would ever be able to live with. It is time. Time for this to end.'

Ondolemar's face, when he'd looked at him, he would never forget it. He would never forget his
They'd sat alone many times over the length of their sail, and some of those times, Dhaunare and Fiiralmo had been present. Some of the times, they all were. Planning.

**

Fillim stood on deck. His new tunic rustled in the warm breeze, his hand, holding his teacup resting on the deck's railing. He could see land off in the distance, resembling what appeared to be a tiny speck. Within just a matter of hours the shoreline of Alinor would be fully visible.

Breathing in deeply through his nose, he let it out through his mouth, hoping it would possibly carry away some of his worry along with it. The closer they got, the more his stomach churned. It wasn't from the wound in his gut that was still healing, it was from fear.

Not only would he have to face his father, but he would be one of his accusers. Just thinking about that was enough to make his mouth water from nausea. To say that he was intimidated by him, was a gross understatement. No matter how much he'd grieved for the relationship they would never have, the love he needed from him and would never get now, he was terrified of him.

Because he knew that his father wanted to be rid of him. Perhaps it hadn't been by measure of death when he'd sold him to Anariil, but it would be now. He would have to go in front of the Council. The Elders. He would be going up in front of his maternal grandfather, whom he'd never met, along with Ondolemar and Dhaunare, and he would be accusing his father.

He heard Fjolrin's footsteps behind him. His large shadow, momentarily blotting out the sun at his back. His hand came down onto the railing next to his as his other arm went gently around him. "Are you ready?"

He swallowed. "As ready as I'll ever be."

The arm around him tightened just a touch. "You'll do fine. We're just going to go over it once again before we get too close."

**

Telindil sat in his chambers, his desk littered with parchments and scrolls that he'd dug out from Anariil's chest. Everything from Orders, and all sorts of Dominion business that he'd completed and accomplished, down to personal things. Family things. The chest, now sat behind him, the key still in it's lock, completely open. At his home, his bedroom and sitting room, were literally filled with items that had been removed from his lifelong friend's home and boat. Many of these things had belonged to Fillim.

Things that were given to him by Anariil. He knew, because not only were many of them mentioned in his journal, but he'd kept proof of payment for them as well. Things that he'd gotten from all over during his numerous duties away. He had no interest in anything belonging to Anariil's wife, nor their son.

He'd lived in those two rooms for days, combing through everything they'd taken. There was nothing else. Nothing else that pertained to Fillim, nor of his mother. He'd even gone to the length to go to the Training Center and question Undilar and Volana. Decently, of course, as there was nothing that he could charge them for without incriminating himself, asking them if there had been anything else that pertained to Fillim.

He'd mentioned nothing of Einsa, of course, as they knew naught of her. His heart clenched up at
the mere thought of her name. There had been nothing. Both of them stating that Tarenen had given them only the journal, and nothing more. That the journal was the only thing his mother had given to him.

And that was exactly what Fairne had said when he'd questioned her. He had personally tortured her for days. For days. Still, nothing. She was protecting her son. He knew it. After pouring over everything and even going to search the house again with a group of his most trusted, he'd come up empty.

The servants that had remained there, were now his own. Their lives, his. Their quarters searched... the boat. He couldn't find it. The document he'd signed when Anariil had taken ownership of his son. For awhile, he'd questioned whether or not it had been wise to keep any form of paper trail that could be followed. But he trusted Anariil with his life. He had. Now, he could only hope that Anariil had, perhaps thinking about it himself, burned it?

Even though the journal, which was locked in his personal safe at home, mentioned him taking on a female for a slave, a gift. No one had any proof of who she had been. Nor did it prove that Fillim was no more than his illegitimate child from a union with said slave. His property, to do with as he fucking pleased! And if someone did ever see it that was in a position to question him, he would say that it was no more than a whimsical indiscretion that had been dealt with. Au-riel knew that he was not the only one that had, and still did, have personal tastes that, at times, went against what they allowed the masses to see or know of. It would be swept under the rug and nothing more. He was sure of it.

Concerning the two instructors, he actually trusted them. Undilar had come to him first, keeping the knowledge quiet. They assured him that Tarenen was acting under the utmost discretion, that he simply wanted Fillim to be safe and his father stopped.

At first, he was shocked that Tarenen would be used against his own father, but after thinking about it, he felt relieved. The young Mer was being trained well. Taught by the very best! He was loyal to his people, and for them to trust him with such a task, he had to be fierce.

They had no knowledge of who Fillim's mother was. In fact, the instructors had not even seen him. It was someone other than Tarenen seeing him, that he feared. And it was too late! As soon as the vessel arrived, if Fillim was on board... if they'd found him and he still lived, he would have to get him alone. Get him to his property.

Those in Skyrim seeing him was not an issue. None of them knew what she had looked like. It was here! Here, where the resemblance could be noticed. There were many Bosmer here, and some Altmer even, that had known her before her disappearance. Those that had been close to her father... welcome in their home!

His fist clenched around the parchment in his hand. How could he have been such a fool!? He should have had him killed the moment he was born! He swallowed, releasing the crumpled item. He grabbed his goblet and drank. He'd been weak. Too weak. He couldn't do it. Nor could he order it done. Fillim was her's.

Refilling his goblet, he pushed the memories from his mind. His head swimming with all the possibilities of what could happen now. This wasn't over by a long shot! With Tarenen being close to Fillim, he couldn't show any hostility, he would have to welcome him and act the part of the caring father. Then once he was at his property, he would kill him. Kill him and dispose of the remains, just as he had Fairne's. Then if Tarenen asked after him, he would simply say that he had opted to do some traveling. After all, he was an adult Mer, no one would question it.
Just like Fairne. After questioning her, he couldn't just let her go. She had lived with Anariil. She knew of all his secrets. He knew she did! She just wouldn't tell him the truth! She wouldn't admit to anything! There was no way that he could just release her and expect her to keep quiet. If she was going to do that, she wouldn't have given her son his father's journal. She wouldn't have gotten him involved at all!

She cared for Fillim! For what Anariil had planned for him. She cared more for him, than she did her own husband! Their friend! They had all grown up together, and she cared more for his slave than him! No. She couldn't be trusted.

If only she would just have put the fucking thing back in the Godsdamed chest, none of this would be happening now!

His mind spun as he clutched his goblet, thinking over every trace of evidence that could be tracked back to him. Tarenen would go home and find it disheveled, as if a robbery had taken place. He'd taken the liberty of taking his best friend's weapons and precious personals to keep for himself. Keepsakes.

Her lover had been found and taken in the night, his home was left untouched, other than some clothing and coin missing. People would believe them eloped in Anariil's absence. Her name and character besmirched as a treacherous whore. No one would question. And just let them prove that he had anything to do with it! He had better, more pressing things to deal with than his friend's tramp of a wife!

Now, everything literally depended on whether or not Fillim was alive. Whether or not he was coming back on that ship.
**Grave News - Part 1**

Chapter Summary

"We're not due to dock in Sunhold for another day yet." The Captain nodded to Fjolrin, then to Ondolemar. "But you and yours are definitely welcome to be aboard till then. He eyed the Justiciars that stood behind them with, if not suspicion, definite curiosity. "I suspect we'll have no trouble with the Thalmor... being that you're hesitant to get off in Alinor?"

**

Telindil stood at the dock, his guard surrounding him, watching as the vessel was moored in. He took in all the activity on the deck. The Bosun giving their Altmer and Bosmer sailors direction as they readied the ship for her stay in Port. Tarenen, and his counterpart, Carene, surrounded by those under them in this quest came up on deck.

Completely unexpected, was the tinge of guilt that struck him square in the chest as he lay eyes on his old friend's son. He fought to reign it in. To keep his expression one of propriety and business. The gangplank was lowered, reaching the dock and being fastened in place.

Tarenen, if he did choose to even go back to his childhood home now, would find it ransacked, his father's things missing. His mother nowhere to be found. And this was all his doing. He watched the young Altmer. Noticing the redness around his eyes and nose. The solemn expression.

He'd already gone through so much... done so much, to keep this secret safe. To protect his position. Would this be something that he was going to be able to live with? There was no choice. Not now. He'd already acted.

Those thoughts died instantly as he saw what was being carried out from below decks. A coffin.

Tarenen and Carene shooed the soldiers away as they attempted to pick it up. Telindil's face lost it's controlled expression and twisted up as he watched the young Charmen bend his knees, Carene on the other side of him, and hoist the coffin up, the two soldiers taking the rear of it.

He's going to carry it himself...

Telindil swallowed, seeing the sunlight sparkling on the fresh tears as they made their way down his face. He held himself steady, head high, as they walked down the gangplank and onto the dock.

Was it Anariil in that box? Or was it Fillim?

He thought himself ready. He was wrong. To have that lid opened up, and to see the face of either... it was going to kill him. What was left of his heart would shrivel up and blow away in the warm breeze.

They were walking towards him now. Everything else that was taking place aboard the ship was forgotten. Anyone else in their midst, was forgotten. His eyes took in his lifelong friend's son as he puffed out his chest, steadying his expression as they approached.
Tarenen didn't bother to wipe away the tears that fell onto his robes. His mouth slightly opened to steal a breath before he had to speak. Readyng himself. They stood before him and set the coffin in the cart that stood waiting.

They were prepared for this. He knew a body would be coming back, perhaps more than one. He knew what they'd gone there to do. He'd been the one that had ordered it. Why was he so broken up over it?

Taking a step back, Telindil looked at the coffin, his eyes locked on it. The salutes given him by Tarenen and the others not mattering. The guard and crewman present stepep aside, giving them room to talk as they continued on with their duties. He had to know. Licking his lips, he took in a deep breath and met Tarenen's weary eyes. "Is this?"

Tarenen said not a single word. Instead, he reached out and took Telindil's hand, ignoring the gasps of those around that saw, and raised it up to him, palm open. Raising his other hand, he dropped into it, the one thing that had mattered most to his father.

Telindil's resolve broke. It shattered, as he felt the white-gold links fall into his hand. They stared into each other's eyes. His own tears now falling. He dare not even look at what he knew lay in his palm. No... no! Tearing his eyes from Tarenen's, he looked at the coffin. His voice broken. "And... my... " He couldn't say it.

Carene stepped forward, speaking for Tarenen. "He is alive and well, my Lord. He has chosen to remain in Skyrim."

"I... I see."

Undilar's voice behind him, made him turn, surprised. Tarenen stood next to him, Undilar's hand on his shoulder, an attempt at comfort in the most appropriate manner.

The Instructor now spoke. "I will gather all information, my Lord, and hand deliver the full report to you myself on the morrow."

Telindil turned back to the coffin. "There is no hurry. Take your time." He thought of all that was going to come to light. His mind spun with it, wondering if he had acted in haste. In err. For who in their right mind would have dared to burglarize the home of such a powerful Mer? There was very little crime here, for those that committed such acts knew what awaited them if they were caught.

"My mother... she will have to be informed. She will want to oversee- "

Even though he should have been prepared for this, ready for it. He wasn't. His throat tightened up. He needed to get this over with... like ripping off a bandage. Telindil cut him off, turning to face them all. "Tarenen... I'm afraid I have grave news."

**

Sitting under the protection of a linen canopy, Tarenen faced the crystal blue pools that sat in Volana's garden area. He faced them, but his eyes saw naught. Shock and grief completely consumed him. And for all the pain that filled him, he felt numb at the moment. Perhaps this was a defense mechanism. If that was the case, he was thankful.

He'd been to his home and seen the wreckage. Walked through it. There was nothing left. Very little that was his father's. Volana, Undilar, and Carene had all agreed that it was Telindil's doing. His way of covering his title. For who else would have taken only his father's things? There would be no reason. Many of the items stolen had little to no value. The trunk that had sat in his father's
study, all his documents, etc. Even the things that he'd gotten for Fillim that were left behind by his mother were gone.

There weren't even any servants there anymore. Telindil had actually stated that he'd taken them into his residence, after it was reported that the home had been robbed. He said they'd been questioned regarding the events, and knowing nothing, simply absorbed into his household. They were all fine.

Somehow he doubted that.

His mother was missing. And this, as well, they did not believe to be truth. He'd known of her lover long ago. Why would she just up and leave? When she had property here that was worth a fortune? His father's yacht.

Not that she cared for all these things, but she wouldn't have abandoned them either. Her lover had his own premise, and yet they were both missing? Why would he leave his? Why not just wait and see what awaited Anariil before they acted? If he succumbed to death, there would be no reason to flee. They could marry, or cohabit after the funeral.

No, something horrible had taken place.

Taking what little of his own possessions he'd still had there, and what little he could find that was left of his father's, he moved into Volana's and Undilar's residence, taking one of the spare bedrooms for he and Carene to share. It hadn't been till they were unpacked, with his father's few remaining possessions in a chest, that he and Carene, now risking everything, had told them the entirety of it.

The identity of the Bosmer slave that Telindil had come to own, and how he'd come to own her. The fact that Anariil had taken her from her bed. From her home. The fact that their own Commander, among others, had been forced to take part.

The fact that she had been held prisoner, while Telindil pretended to aid her father in her recovery. That she'd died only moments after her son was born.

The fact that Fillim was not in Skyrim, and he was not dead.

"We're not due to dock in Sunhold for another day yet." The Captain nodded to Fjolrin, then to Ondolemar. "But you and yours are definitely welcome to be aboard till then. He eyed the Justiciars that stood behind them with, if not suspicion, definite curiosity. "I suspect we'll have no trouble with the Thalmor... being that you're hesitant to get off in Alinor?"

"We don't need to go as far as Sunhold. We need to get to Alinor, we just couldn't go in on that vessel."

The Captain looked down at Fillim, twisting the small cigar into the corner of his mouth, thinking it over. His golden skin had been darkened from all his evident years in the sun. His long blonde hair, bleached white. He definitely looked to be of pure blood. Why he was spending his years on the water was anyone's guess. That's what Fillim knew others were thinking. The upper-class Mer that saw him and his crewmen each time their fishing vessel made Port.

Fillim couldn't help but grin up at him. The Mer's leggings were stitched together from age softened leathers. His shirt, linen, open to mid-chest with no sleeves, a leather vest matching his leggings hanging open and loose. Strong arms, corded with muscle from so many days of hard
labor, and scarred up hands, now resting at his hips.

He was here because he chose this, over a life of looking down his nose at others. Over a life of knifing his neighbor to earn rank in their society. Only then, to worry each day whether or not he would find someone else's dagger in his own back.

This was an honest life, and he was free.

He admired him. And he wondered if he would ever have that. This kind of freedom. Away from the judgement of others. Again, he thought of Whiterun. How Adrianne and Ulfberth had welcomed him, giving him a chance to earn his own way.

He thought of Anoriath and Elrindir, his friendship with them, and the support they'd given him. He thought of the twins, and their love for him. It was everyone else, and what he'd suffered because of their prejudice and gossip that soured in his stomach. Would he ever be able to go back? And if he did, after what had happened, what kind of life would he have? And would it be any different elsewhere?

He was truly a mutt, just like Anariil had said. A mixed breed. And to top that off, he was a male that laid with males. Would he ever be welcome anywhere? Or would he be driven out?

His eyes met the Captain's and stayed there while the large Mer thought over what he'd just said. And taking in the lines around the Mer's mouth and corners of his eyes, knowing they'd earned their place there from laughter, he knew his answer.

If this Mer, who could've had a place in their own society, had chosen the freedom of the seas in it's stead, then so could he. He could choose the life he wanted. He could be free like this... like him. To Oblivion with them all.

Brilliant green eyes squinted at them, finally landing back down on Fillim. "I have my crew to think about, and my own life as well. Whatever the reason you're not wanting to dock in Alinor is your own. But anyone that see's me letting you off, it will come back on me."

Ondolemar stepped forward, putting his hand on Fillim's shoulder. "You'll have no trouble. I give my word as Commander. Just let us off in the Bay on a small boat, and we'll be out of your hair. There is a small town-"

He nodded his head. "I know where it is. The one you speak of."

Fillim smiled up at him. "You won't have to dock. Your seaman will be back on board in no time, and it'll be just a day's ride for us. Please."

The Captain crossed his arms, the small cigar makings it's way to the other side, clenched in his teeth. He looked toward land. "Alright..." his eyes locked onto Ondolemar "Get your gear, we'll be close enough to lower the boat in about an hour."

With that, he turned away, shouting orders to the other sailors.

He'd already been paid just for letting them onto the ship without any questions. He would take no more gold, telling them to save it for whatever horses the small town's stable could afford to sell off. No doubt, they'd have to double up for the trip to Alinor.

Ondolemar whispered to them as they loaded their satchels into the boat before it was lowered down to the water. "The arrival of Anariil's body will cause a stir, no matter how much Telindil may try to conceal the truth, there will be council meetings held over this. Numerous ones, more
than likely. And it will take time to prepare his body for his Last Rites... days."

He looked at Fillim. "We'll get there in time. Your Grandfather will be amongst them, Fillim. No one will be expecting us to ride into the city, and with myself and the Dragonborn there, no one will try to stop us."

The boat was lowered down, and one by one, they climbed down the rope ladder. The shore wasn't far off. Soon they would be in Alinor, and he would see his Grandfather for the first time. And his father, for what may be his last.
Grave News Part II - Exposed

Chapter Summary

Eniurron sat still. The unease in his stomach increasing with each word spoken. He knew all that was being said. He'd heard it, hence why his stay here had been extended. This was an emergency meeting. The Dominion wanted answers. *True* answers. For none of what had been brought to light, thus far, made any sense.

The voice that spoke next, came from one row above him. Unafraid, and loud enough to be heard by almost all in the room, the old Bosmer voiced his thoughts. "Why do you all sit and whisper? Why do you not simply say it out loud?"

He crossed his arms, the disgusted look he bore, twisting his aged features. "It's what we're *all* thinking! So I guess I'll be the one to show my size and do it!"

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

*The King and his men, stole the Queen from her bed, and bound her in her bones*

**

Eniurron Gaelrinthil had taken his seat in the great meeting hall. His place, at the head of the Bosmeri section, along with four others. Seated around him, Treethanes and other Chieftains, Council members. Next to them, divided by a row of steps, was the Khajiit section of the Dominion, which was quickly filling up with those that were present in Alinor on this particular date. Across from all of them, was the largest section of seats, which was filled by the Altmer. Elders and Council members.

The long courtroom was filled with Mer and Khajiit. The center of the floor was the lowest point, and where any facing judgement, or any that needed to be heard, were to be seated as they addressed the Council. Rich, polished reception desks, made of the finest woods, lined both sides moving upward in tiers, so that each Council member could see and hear.

At the head of the room, facing the center, sat three desks that were adjoined. Any Elders, etc, that were chosen to speak for the group, were to be seated there. Alongside each one, was a court clerk and a secretary, that would take minutes from each meeting held and prepare any documents needed. The floor, the most intricately carved stonework, the walls lined with the current Aldmeri banner up until the very center. That banner, was the original. The very first Aldmeri Banner, sealed in glass, so that it may be preserved.

He sat back and listened to the chatter and hushed whispers that filled the massive room. They were all in wait of his arrival. Telindil Larethian. And he just knew that as soon as the Mer's presence filled the entrance, all would be hushed.

His sensitive ears tuned in to all that was said around him. "*Anariil is dead! Tis true! One of the gaurds is betrothed to my niece. He told her that Telindil cried! Shed tears in full view of all!*"
To the other side of him... "His body is currently at the temple, being prepared." The Khajiit shook his head, the golden hoops gracing his large ears tinkling together, the same way his mate’s wind chimes did that were hung all around their abode. "It is horrible, indeed. That his own son was the one to bring his body back home."

From across the room... "Poor Tarenen. I heard that his mother is now missing. Their home was robbed." The Mer listening in on this, gasped. Their hands covering their mouths, slanted green eyes, open wide in shock. "Yes! But only Anariil's things were taken. How odd?"

Eniurron sat still. The unease in his stomach increasing with each word spoken. He knew all that was being said. He'd heard it, hence why his stay here had been extended. This was an emergency meeting. The Dominion wanted answers. True answers. For none of what had been brought to light, thus far, made any sense. News of this nature tended to travel fast among the people. It made them afraid, and suspicious.

The voice that spoke next, came from one row above him. Unafraid, and loud enough to be heard by almost all in the room, the old Bosmer voiced his thoughts. "Why do you all sit and whisper? Why do you not simply say it out loud?"

He crossed his arms, the disgusted look he bore, twisting his aged features. "It's what we're all thinking! So I guess I'll be the one to show my size and do it!"

Eniurron turned to look at him, knowing what his old friend was about to do, made him want to reach out and take hold of him to still his tongue! Too late. It was out.

"Telindil and Anariil were raised together! Inseparable! As was Anariil's wife! Do you honestly believe that we will hear one honest word spoken today?"

Everyone in the room stilled. Dead silence filled the air. Every eye, glued onto the Bosmer that spoke. The Bosmer, that now stood, his arms held out wide, as he addressed them all.

Eniurron swallowed.

"Does not anyone here, find it odd that it was Anariil's home, that was robbed? And Anariil's things, that were taken?"

His voice raised to yelling. "Why was Anariil in Skyrim!? Why was his son, sent there!? And who killed him?" He looked around at them all, as if they should see the obvious that was right there in front of their faces. "Do you really think that we will get a speck of truth, here today?"

He turned, looking at each one there. "If you do, then you are all fools!"

It was now, that the silence was broken. Mer huddled together, voicing not only their thoughts, but their feelings on his use of words. It mattered not. The Altmer could be fussy and easily offended all they pleased, but still, they knew he had spoken true.

"Telindil is doing as he pleases with our Dominion! This is something that has been suspected for years!"

Everyone, Khajiit, Altmer, and Bosmer alike, were talking now. All it had taken was one, to voice their true thoughts for the flood gates to open.

Now, he did stand.

Tagorn whirled back around, looking him in the eye! "And do not for one moment, Eniurron, think
that because he lead your daughter's search, that he is beyond wrong doing! You know better!"

Eniurron flinched at her mention, leaning back from him in shock. More gasps rung out.

Mahogany, slamming back against marble, startled them all, bringing silence once again to the chaos-filled court room. Telindil stood in the doorway, staring around the room in shock.

Each Mer had fallen silent. And as each Mer and Khajiit stood to address him as he walked down the center, to take one of the seats at the head of the room, each eye was upon him. Eniurron looked at all those around him. The expressions on their faces, what their eyes held.

It was question. Distrust, and suspicion.

Now he almost wished he'd stayed home.

Though Telindil was seated at the head of the room, and at it's center, he was surrounded by his peers. On his left, was a Bosmer Treethane, and on his right, was a Khajiit Chieftain. None of whom looked very happy to be where they now were.

Telindil's eyes were red and weary. He looked as though he hadn't seen a decent night's sleep in days. Striking the gavel just once, he brought the room to order, and started their session. Two Altmer guard, took their places on either side of the massive doors that led into the room. The doors were closed.

Clearing his throat, he folded his hands before him and looked down into them... not at anyone else. "We are here today, to go over some very troubling events." A sheen of sweat, covered his golden skin. "Anariil Charmaen was killed... in Skyrim. His remains arrived yesterday on board the vessel returning from there, along with his son, Tarenen Charmaen, who is currently on track to graduate from the Training Center."

Voranil, leaned forward, speaking for the Altmer section. "We wish to ask, Telindil. What was Anariil doing in Skyrim? Though this would not be public knowledge, as we all know, any ships leaving for Skyrim, and why, are supposed to be brought to the Council's attention! We are all allowed a vote on this!" He sat back, awaiting Telindil's answer.

Telindil stared down into his hands. The Bosmer, and the Khajiit at his sides, staring at him, evidently just as eager for an answer.

He swallowed, the sound and sight visible to many who sat close enough. He was under massive scrutiny. "I was informed by guard at the docks, that Anariil boarded a small vessel with his personal guard without the necessary travel documents, and left Port for reasons unknown. At that time, in fear of what his intentions were, I took it upon myself to send a party to retrieve him. I felt that if his son was among that party, that he would be able to speak reason to his father and get him to return."

Everyone in the large room began to speak. Almost unbearable noise filled the room, echoing off the all the stone around them. Telindil sat quiet, staring down into his folded hands, until the Bosmer beside him grabbed his gavel, striking it over and over against the wooden sound block. Finally, the noise subsided, but not entirely. And again, Tagorn stood.

Leaning down over the desk in front of him, his knuckles pressed against the wood, paling from the pressure. "So you knew all of this, Telindil, and not only did not inform the council, but acted on your own!" He yelled out! "With the Dominion's funds, you sent a party out on another ship to retrieve your friend! Who has now been brought back dead! You have involved, not only the
Training Center without our knowledge, but sent a cadet into harms way!"

"It is true, that I acted in haste. In err. I let my personal feelings steer my actions where this matter was involved. I did, in fact, fear for my friend... my comrade."

Two Altmer now stood, along with several Bosmer and Khajiit. The Altmer speaking out for them all, it seemed, earning nods from all those around him. "This err that you have made... it has impacted us all. Us as a whole, Telindil. For Skyrim to be involved in this, at such a sensitive time. This is an offence of gross proportions! And not only has it affected the Training Center, but Anariil's home to be burglarized?"

The Altmer raised his hands, looking around at them all. "Who on Nirn would do this? And we were notified that only Anariil's possessions were taken?" He crossed his arms, staring at Telindil, others now standing as well. "I am not alone, when I say, that we would like to hear from Anariil's son! We want to hear from his own lips, what exactly happened in Skyrim! Why his father was there at all!"

The Khajiit next to Telindil spoke. "Why have you not prepared for him to be here, Telindil? Did you not feel he would need to serve as a witness?"

Finally, Telindil looked somewhere else, other than at his hands. Looking around the room, at them all. "He had just lost his father. His mother is missing, and their family home ransacked. I did not think that he would be ready for such questioning."

Tagorn spoke again. "So, you thought that due to the sensitive nature of what has happened, that we would simply overlook this, as we have many other matters?"

Telindil stood, staring down the offending Bosmer. "You speak of treason! To me! You would accuse me of treason!" He pointed at Tagorn. "Perhaps you should stay your tongue, Bosmer!"

Eniurron cried out in his shock, as did many, and not just Bosmer. For it may be nothing to call a person by their race in Skyrim... but this was not Skyrim. To call one by their race, rather than their name, was akin to slapping them in the face. It was uncivilized and offensive. Most distasteful!

Eniurron stood, and walked up to stand at Tagorn's side as his friend responded to Telindil. "I will not stay my tongue, Telindil. Nor will I call you by your race, as you have me! I do not have family that I fear for anymore, for anyone to threaten me with! So I will speak my piece!"

Telindil gaped at Eniurron. "You would stand there, beside him? After all I have done for you and your's?"

Before Eniurron could pull himself together enough to even give answer to such a statement, the main doors opened, a soldier running forward from the outer room. "My Lords! They wouldn't listen! They demanded to come in!"

Tarenen entered. Dressed in his best robes, his head held high as he walked slowly toward the front of the large room. Stopping at the spot where a chair would normally be stationed, he placed his hands behind his back. Fastening them together, he looked up at Telindil and those next to him.

Turning away from Eniurron, Telindil gaped down at his deceased friend's son, the color leaving his face. The Khajiit, and the Bosmer next to him, stood, the Khajiit addressing him. "They? Where are the rest of your party, young Charme?!"

"My Lords, I would address the court first, if I may? My party awaits me in the outer room. They are here to stand witness to many events, and are prepared to validate my testimony."
The Khajiit spoke. "Please proceed, we are very interested to hear what you have to say." His slanted eyes took in Telindil's demeanor and narrowed. "Please sit, Telindil, so that Anariil's son may speak."

Telindil stood rooted to the spot, trembling, his mouth hanging slack. Finally, the Bosmer next to him took hold of his arm, directing him down into the chair. Stiffly, he lay his arms on the desk in front of him, clenching his fists.

Tarenen turned in a semi-circle so he could look at every Mer and Khajiit present. "Several years ago, my father, Anariil Charmaen, took on a mixed-breed Mer as a slave." Attempting to remain oblivious to all the noise that suddenly erupted throughout the room, he immediately turned to face Telindil.

Attempting to rise, the hands of those seated on each side of him, now grasped Telindil's shoulders, making sure he stayed put!

Tarenen pulled a rolled piece of parchment from within his robes, holding it up for all to see. "You may be wondering what this has to do with today's hearing. But, I can assure all of you, that it is the very reason that my father boarded a ship, illegally, and went to Skyrim."

All eyes, were on him, taking in the tears that now made their way down his face.

Eniurron, amongst every other Mer there, sat forward, staring between Tarenen and Telindil.

Holding up the item in his hand, "This is an agreement of sale." He opened it. "My mother, who is now missing, brought this to me, along with many other items, which she retrieved from my father's study after he left for Skyrim." He turned once again, to face them all. "It is an agreement of sale, between Telindil Larethian, and my father."

The hands on his shoulders tightened.

Clearing his throat, Tarenen read. "I, Telindil Larethian, hereby release my ownership of Fillim. A mixed-breed Bosmer/Altmer servant. Aged sixteen years, to Anariil Charmaen, as payment for services rendered as requested by Anariil Charmaen. Fillim, is to remain in his custody for the remainder of his days, to act, and or perform, any duties that his owner may deem fit, and or necessary. Anariil Charmaen has agreed to my one stipulation, that Fillim's heritage is to remain solely between himself, and myself, alone."

Reading off the date, he rolled it back up, and turned to face Eniurron. Two guards, now walked up into the seating area behind Telindil at the request of one of the Altmer Chairmen. They stood at the ready.

Eniurron sat back in his chair. Sweat sprung up all over him, his mouth watering, as Tarenen climbed the steps that led to where he sat. Standing next to him, Tarenen handed him the rolled up parchment before turning, to once again, address them all. He did not look at Telindil.

"Another of the items taken from my father's study, was his journal. Which is now in Telindil's hands, and more than likely destroyed, to keep it's contents from being known." He turned toward the main doors. "Volana, and Undilar, would you please enter?"

Telindil attempted to stand, fighting against the hands that held him! The guards at his back, drew their swords! "You will please remain seated, Master Telindil!"

Watching the two instructors enter the courtroom, he spat out! "I'll have your heads for this! Your positions!"
Everyone in the room now stood, in complete shock at the display taking place. The Bosmer seated next to him bared his fangs! "You'll have nothing! We will hear from these Mer!"

Tarenen continued. "Masters Undilar and Volana. I brought this journal and the document of sale to you. And did you read it?"

Both nodding, "Yes."

"And what lied therein? Please tell the court."

Undilar stepped forward.

"Amongst all that it contained. What Tarenen's mother, and himself were wrought over, was what it contained regarding Master Telindil Larethian, and Fillim. And Anariil's actions toward him." Pausing to look at all present, he turned to where Tarenen stood... next to Eniurron.

"Anariil had great feelings for his childhood friend, Telindil. Feelings that were not returned."

Telindil's head hung, resting on the desk before him as he wept. His shoulders shaking under the hands that held him.

"Because of this unrequited yearning, Anariil did a great many things to garner for his favor. One such thing, was done during his last visit to Valenwood." He turned. "Commander Ondolemar, would you please enter? Dhaunare, as well?"

Telindil's reddened face rose up to see them as they walked in. His voice, shaken, as wet and garbled words, poured from his trembling lips. "Bastard! You bastards!"

"Quiet! Let them speak!"

Eniurron pushed back his chair, his hands clutching the parchment.

Undilar continued as Ondolemar and Dhaunare took their places at his side. "Commander Ondolemar was present during this visit, and was under Anariil's command. As was the Battlemage, Sarudalf and Wizard, Mithril. Sarudalf, now being deceased, and Mithril, stationed in Skryim, are not present."

Pulling a parchment from his robe, Ondolemar held it up. "These are my duty papers from that time, they show the date, and the places we traveled to. And who we were to serve under while on tour." Opening the parchment. "Dated, 4E 180." Turning, he walked up the steps, and handed the papers to Tarenen, making every attempt to not look Eniurron in the eye.

Returning to his place next to Dhaunare, he took in a deep breath. He was ready... he was ready.

He closed his eyes, and thinking about Gerrad, he spoke, tears, making their way down his face. "On this date, Anariil forced myself, Sarudalf, and Mithril, to accompany him to Marbruk."

Eniurron bolted up from his seat, crushing the parchment that lay within his hands! He sobbed out! "No!"

Tarenen, raising a hand to his arm, shook his head, whispering. "Please, let this be told... please!"

Ondolemar turned to them, looking at Eniurron through tears, his body shaking. "We took her. From her room. We drugged her. We blindfolded her, and bound her... and, we took her!"

Eniurron was over the desk, pushing and climbing over the Mer seated below him! "No! No!" His
screams filled the courtroom!

Falling onto the courtroom floor, he scrambled to his feet, running toward them. Tagorn and Voranil, ran to him, standing between him and Ondolemar! Tagorn threw his arms around him, attempting to restrain him!

Guards and soldiers now poured in from the outer room, surrounding the floor. A chair was brought for the grieving Bosmer, and he sat, his friend, and the Altmer speaker, at his side. Just as they all understood his need for retribution, the Commander, and this case, needed to be heard. Fully.

Tarenen turned towards the doors and shouted out. "Dovahkiin, would you please escort Fillim Larethian into the courtroom?"

Chapter End Notes

Lyrics: Hoist the Colours
by: Hans Zimmer
Chapter Summary

Undilar looked between them. "Then there will be an investigation, where all these other misdeeds will be used against him. But, you are correct, Commander. It is Einsa's presence in his home that will call for not only his seat of power being taken, but very possibly his execution."

His green eyes settled on Fillim. "I am truly sorry, Fillim."

Tears ran down his face, dripping onto the stone table. "I won't feel safe while he still lives." Breathing in deep, he sobbed out. "He'll come for me! I know he will!"

Chapter Notes

Literally just going over the night before the council meeting. The next one coming soon and will be longer.

One Day Earlier

Fillim rubbed his bottom, looking disdainfully at the horse he'd just climbed down from. He'd switched from horse to horse, taking a turn in riding behind each one of them, realizing that the animals needed a break from the extra weight.

By the time they'd reached the shore and gotten into town, it was well into mid-day. The stable hand had offered to let them stay in the barn for free, saving them the cost of two rooms for a night, but they'd declined.

If they set off right then, they could stop the next night and rise early enough to reach the outskirts of Alinor by day break. Which was the plan. Tarenen would be waiting for them. They had the perfect meeting point.

He and Ondolemar had thought it all through. They'd just been lucky enough that the Captain of the fishing vessel had agreed to take them aboard at all. If he hadn't, he didn't know what they'd have done. Having to get off in that Port, while his father awaited him, having to go back to that home... there was no way that he could have done it. No way. And he'd have been forced to.

Telindil, at that point, could have done almost anything he wanted and no one would have questioned him. Some of them possibly arrested under false pretenses, the evidence they held against him, confiscated. It could have ruined everything.

Just the thought of seeing that place again, and being in his father's possession made him sick to his stomach. He'd been a slave there. Some of the most heartbreaking moments of his life had taken place there. Even with what he'd endured while under Anariil's control, it had at times, been better than living under his father's shadow. His absence.
Not in the physical sense, for he was almost always around. It was the fact that he hated him. His own son. He regretted him, and refused to even acknowledge him.

He'd longed so, for love from his father. Simple acceptance. Now, people had seen him. Anariil had done some very unacceptable things to get to him, and had exposed his father even more. Now, he would want retribution. And he couldn't take it out on Anariil, he was dead.

No, he could not be left alone with him. The only way to do this, was the way Tarenen and Ondolemar said. They had to surprise him. And they had to do it in front of his Grandfather. That was the only way that he would possibly be stopped. If the Dominion found out about his misdeeds, perhaps, even if he wasn't imprisoned, he'd be relieved of his power. Only then, would he be safe.

But would he? If Telindil wasn't imprisoned, would he just give up after his life and credibility were destroyed? All he wanted to do, was to find his Grandfather. Let him know he was alive... that he existed. Just a chance at having a real family.

The place where they'd met, Ondolemar said he knew of. Out in the country, away from the city. A family that his parents had known personally for many, many years. He'd always known that Volana's parents were good Mer. Loyal Mer. Loyal to the Dominion. Not, Telindil!

Standing at what was the entry to a beautiful estate, their horses were led away by Volana's stable hands. Tarenen, walked to him, wrapping his arms around him and squeezing him tightly. "I am so glad you've all made it safely, though I was sure you'd have no trouble. This property is very secluded." He looked at them all. "Telindil has no reason to question Volana's, nor Undilar's loyalty. He knows naught."

He turned, leading them into the massive estate. "He hasn't even requested for an official report on what's happened, so he definitely wants things to be kept quiet. That would be most convenient for him at this time, I believe."

Volana, Undilar, and Carene joined them, showing them where their rooms were, so they could rid their hands of baggage and get cleaned up. There were, at one time, four guestrooms. Now that Tarenen and Carene were living here, there were only three.

Dhaunare and Fiiralmo chose a room for themselves, desiring some much needed privacy. Ondolemar, went to one on his own, leaving Tarenen there, looking expectantly between Fjolrin and Fillim. "It is fine, Tarenen. We've been in a cabin together the whole way here." Fillim chuckled, noting the bit of color that tinted his friend's cheeks.

Tarenen smiled, "I did not want to assume." Turning, he led them to the only remaining guestroom. Lifting a latch, he opened up a large window, letting a soft breeze blow through. "The Council meeting is set for tomorrow morning. You will have tonight to rest and have a good meal."

He turned to them, doing his best to keep his expression neutral. "For I doubt any of us will be up to eating much in the morn."

**

Under a thick, woven canopy, they all sat around a table that overlooked the garden area. The early evening light, dancing off the stone pools, reminding Fillim of his father's gardens. Looking away, he swallowed, focusing once again on the conversation and his wine.

The food that sat in the center of the table sat nearly untouched. Even as hungry as his body had
felt when they'd arrived, the thought of putting a single bite into his mouth made him want to wretch.

Carene and Tarenen sat on one side with Volana and Undilar, while he, Ondolemar and Fjolrin, sat to the other. Fiiralmo and Dhaunare, pulled up chairs to the sides. Goblets, filled with wine, were clutched within each Mer's hands as they discussed what they thought would take place at the meeting, and what they hoped the outcome would be.

Tarenen leaned slightly against Carene for support, his expression pinched with pain as Undilar and Volana filled them all in on what had taken place at the home of his birth. The fact that his mother had gone missing, and that mainly his father's things were taken.

"Prior to your ship returning, word of these transgressions had spread like wildfire." Volana looked at Ondolemar. "You've spent your entire life here, Commander." He shook his head, "These types of things simply do not happen."

It wasn't that they had no crime. It just wasn't of this sort. Most of the indiscretions that took place, did so in secret. Infidelity. Abuse of sorts, and Necromancy. Political indiscretions. But burglary wasn't usually a problem. Especially of this magnitude.

Tarenen emptied his goblet, setting it down to be refilled. "No one would have dared to burglarize my father's home. Everyone feared him! None would have risked it!"

His eyes met Fillim's. "You know, Fillim..." A tear slid down his face. "In all the years, there has never been an attempt. Not even a threat." Fillim reached his hand across the table, grasping Tarenen's. "My mother is not missing! She's dead! I know it!"

Undilar nodded. "We went through the home with him, Commander. Every inch of the premise had been turned upside down. Someone was searching for something... or things."

His gaze traveled over them all. "And it just so happened, that Telindil, was the one to report it. He told the military police that he took it upon himself to take possession of Anariil's servants, being that he was absent at the time. And that his wife was nowhere to be found." He leaned forward. "He was also the one that reported her lover missing. Supposedly hearing from one of the Mer's family members."

Volana refilled his mate's wine. "Normally, in a case like that, the police would investigate, and the servants would be in charge of restoring order back to the property until their employer's return. Not this time, though. There was no investigation."

Ondolemar watched as Carene held Tarenen tighter, the fear he felt, etched across his young features. "Undilar, Volana, you both being at the training center, you have more access to information. Exactly what has been the response to these acts? What is being said?"

The two looked at each other. "Well, there have been rumblings since Anariil's ship sailed, and then Tarenen's." Undilar looked at Ondolemar. "You know how strict they are over every septim that is spent. Over every action that is taken."

"Ever since his ship sailed, there have been questions, though none went so far as to call a meeting over it and accuse." Volana glanced at Tarenen. Carene held him tighter.

"The burglary took place very shortly after Tarenen's party left port. Right after we had notified Telindil of what had happened with Anariil. Perfect timing, being that no one else seemed to know that Anariil was leaving when he did. And, one of our close friends is high ranking within the
Military Police. He stated that two wagons were taken out under Telindil's authority, using none of their officers. Which means that Telindil used his own personal guard. The wagons weren't checked back in until the next morn."

"What on Nirn would he need wagons for here?"

Tarenen pulled his hand away, looking at Fillim solemnly. "He needed them to raid my home, and more than likely, take my mother and our servants. That had to be when it was done. From what Volana and Undilar have been told, it fits the time frame."

"I haven't attended many of these council meetings, but I am well versed in the laws, and how they have changed." Ondolemar looked between Volana and Undilar.

"Although these actions; the wagons being used for unknown, and personal use, and him allowing a ship and party to set sail without authorization are against regulation, they may not be enough to have him ousted from his position. The things that will, are the document showing that he sold his own son, and the items taken from Fillim's mother. The time frame, and Fillim's age, match up with Einsa's disappearance. These things, are what will condemn him in the end!"

Undilar looked between them. "Then there will be an investigation, where all these other misdeeds will be used against him. But, you are correct, Commander. It is Einsa's presence in his home that will call for not only his seat of power being taken, but very possibly his execution."

His green eyes settled on Fillim. "I am truly sorry, Fillim."

Tears ran down his face, dripping onto the stone table. "I won't feel safe while he still lives."

Breathing in deep, he sobbed out. "He'll come for me! I know he will!"

Fjolrin pulled him into his side, his face pained at seeing Fillim in such a state. "He is still weak from his injuries. He needs to rest... and eat."

Ondolemar nodded. "I am sorry, Fillim. I agree. You need to rest. Tomorrow will... well, it could be quite harrowing. But, I must tell you. We will make every effort to bring you in last. You will carry your mother's items, and the Dovahkiin will stand with you. We absolutely must build the case against him prior to the ring and necklace being shown. Then, Enuirron, your Grandfather, will have every legal right to have him held and questioned, along with whatever else the Council deems fit."

Fillim nodded, and with help from Fjolrin, rose to his feet.

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Fillim rested on the cushioned window-seat, looking out at the distant sea, Fjolrin at his side. Several candles lit the room behind them.

Turning toward the Nord, he looked closely at his fair skin in the moonlight, wishing that these were different circumstances. That he wasn't filled with fear and grief. That he could give in to the feelings that had sprouted and were now attempting to take root in the soil of his heart.

His tunic was off, and Fillim allowed his eyes to travel over every hill and valley of muscle. Raising up his hand, he lay it against the flaxen hair that graced the Nord's chest, allowing his fingers to nestle in.

Closing his eyes, Fjolrin's hand raised up to lay atop his own. He knew the look on his face well. It spoke the same thing it had many times since the night of their first dinner in Whiterun. It said: I
want this so badly. You... I want you, so very badly. But, before I give in, I need you to want me back. The same way that I want you.

It was a pained expression. Painful and achingly longing.

Taking in a deep breath through his nose, Fjolrin pulled Fillim in close, wrapping his arms around him. "Let me hold you, Fillim. I just want to hold you. Feel your skin next to mine."

Rising from the seat, they blew out the candles, Fjolrin opening the bedding for him to climb in first. Fillim snuggled into him. Both, wearing only their breech, skin on skin, he drunk in the Nord's natural heat. There were no words, and it was like this, that he'd awoke.
Chapter Summary

"Did you know that Anariil had taken her, Telindil?" The great cat's slanted eyes narrowed. "If you knew this, even if it was not your decision or action... if you knew this, and did nothing, then you are as guilty as the ones that took her, and the one that ordered it done."

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

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The goal, was to have Fillim walk in last. Walk in last with the damning evidence and deliver the killing blow. That was the plan.

The city around them was buzzed with tension. It was like a hum, but one that wasn't discernible with the ear. It wasn't audible. You felt it. Like the pressure in the air before a storm. It was electric. Filled with energy.

They could tell that the Mer in the streets were doing their very best to look like they were going about their business. But the closer their horses got to the meeting hall, the more they noticed how off things actually were. Small groups of Elves were beginning the gather.

Fjolrin wasn't known by looks to many there. They knew of him. But not what he looked like. To the Mer that watched them as they dismounted and tied their horses to the hitching rail outside of the entrance, he was simply just another Nord.

No. Not just any Nord. A Nord that was evidently important enough to enter a Dominion Council Meeting.

The mumbled speaking amongst the Mer grew increasingly louder as they all saw who exactly was in the party walking up the many steps leading in. Two Justiciars, the Commander for all Dominion soldiers, Wizards, and Justiciars in Skyrim, and two Instructors from the training center. Along with Tarenen and Carene.

And himself. An unknown half-breed. And yes, it was that evident. Just by looking at him, anyone, could tell.

They gathered together, whispering to each other and pointing. Fillim's instinct, was to disappear. Shrink away from the many eyes that were upon them all. Fjolrin took his hand, squeezing it gently as they got farther away from the questioning crowds.

Beads of sweat sprung up all over him as one of the soldiers stationed at the outer doors opened one, allowing them entry.

Every step. Every minute that ticked by, until they reached the Meeting Hall's doors, he felt his life grow shorter. And he was sure that he wouldn't live to see tomorrow.
His father would see him, and just laying his powerful eyes upon him, would stop his heart. He would collapse on the stone tiles and go to meet Auriel.

What seemed like an eternity, was only moments, as those in their party left them to enter and speak their piece. Soon, it would be his turn.

Fjolrin stood beside him. His hand engulfed in the Nord's giant one, and he closed his eyes, listening to the noise in the Meeting Hall as multiple Mer and Khajiit's voices raised. As what could only be his Grandfather, cried out, as he found out who had taken his daughter.

Fillim swallowed, fruitlessly wiping at the tears that ran down his face. He squeezed Fjolrin's hand, his voice croaking out just before those doors were opened for them. "I don't know if I can speak, Fjolrin... I'm terrified."

Carene walked up beside him, placing a shaking hand to his shoulder. "You are not alone, Fillim."

That's right. He wasn't alone, and by the tremor he felt in Carene's hand, he wasn't alone in his fear as well.

Walking in to the Meeting Hall, was what he would liken what walking into a smelter would feel like. It simply didn't melt off his skin. The energy that met them was a million times what he'd faced that morning when he'd gone into Anariil's study to find that he and Tarenen had been discovered.

Rage, despair, suspicion... fear. And it all hit them full on. The need to fold in around himself was almost more than he could handle, and he literally whimpered, causing Fjolrin's arm to come up around his shoulders.

Fillim's hands went to his mouth as he took in the display before him. The Bosmer that could only be his Grandfather, was being physically restrained by an Altmer and another Bosmer, who were wearing the same form of robes. And Ondolemar, who was surrounded by Altmer soldiers, was on his knees weeping into his hands.

In complete shock, he took in all those around them as they literally pointed at himself and Fjolrin. Whispers floated throughout the noisy room regarding the Dovahkiin, and why he was here. Then, his eyes were led to the front of the massive hall, landing on his father, who was being forced down into his seat.

Their eyes met. Warm amber, meeting it's like. His father's face distorted in pure hatred. His lips curled back, baring his teeth, as if he were some sort of animal that'd just found it's prey. No, it's enemy. Because that's what he was now. The enemy.

His father was surrounded by Soldiers, just as Ondolemar was, and their swords were drawn. He took in his father's face, wanting to remember this moment. This moment, where this powerful, and seemingly untouchable Mer, was brought to this.

Forcing himself to stand tall, he raised his head, staring at him. There were dark marks under his eyes. They were reddened from his tears, and the way his jaw was clenched, he could tell his father was fighting to keep his words from spilling over. Doing nothing but condemning him even further than he already was, or had been.

The Bosmer and the Khajiit beside him were at their feet, gawking at him as if in disbelief. Probably, no doubt, noticing the massive resemblance they held to one another, realizing that he was, in fact, his father's son.
Lowering his eyes, he took in a deep breath and exhaled, finally daring to really look upon his Grandfather. And he did this for a few moments. It was then that he realized that everyone had gone quiet.

Ondolemar, was being led to the side, where a chair waited for him. Realizing that he was resolute in turning himself in, the Soldiers around him had sheathed their weapons and stood at attention around him so that the Meeting could continue.

It was Eniurron, that startled him. He had finally calmed, thus the Bosmer and Altmer that had been restraining him, had stepped back, giving him some space.

Standing about six feet before him, Eniurron literally stared at him as if mesmerized. And again, he remembered what Ondolemar had told him. That no matter his resemblance to his father, he also looked like his mother.

While they'd been on the vessel there, any time he could find a mirror, he stared into it, trying to see her in himself. Just to try and capture what she may have looked like. He could feel the stares of all the Mer and Khajiit upon him and the rest, and he wondered if any of them remembered what she looked like as well?

Tarenen's voice broke the silence. "Fillim... would you please tell the Council where you were raised, and how we came to meet?"

Very quickly, his mind ran through what he should say. Before any words could come from his mouth, Telindil shouted from across the room, pointing directly at him!

"Yes, this is my son! And yes, I sold him to Anariill!" He looked wildly around the room then, "But, that is my only sin here! That, and allowing my feelings for an old friend to out-weigh my better judgement where my duties were concerned! It has no bearing on the fact that Anariil took Eniurron's daughter! That was not my decision! It was his!"

Fillim internally fought the words coming from his father's lips. Fought the fear that clawed it's way through him. It was the Khajiit Chieftain, that sat next to his father that allowed him to tamp it back down again.

"Did you know that Anariil had taken her, Telindil?" The great cat's slanted eyes narrowed, "If you knew this, even if it was not your decision or action... if you knew this, and did nothing, then you are as guilty as the ones that took her, and the one that ordered it done."

The no, that was getting ready to come from his mouth, was halted when Ondolemar spoke up. The red on his skin from his tears was worsened now by his rage! "We delivered her to your home, Telindil. So, do not sit there and lie! We literally handed her to you!"

Eniurron turned from Ondolemar, gaping at Telindil! "You took my daughter?" His entire body trembled as he stood there in absolute disbelief. Tears streamed down his already saturated face. "You helped me... you led searches for her!" His hands raised, gesturing toward all that surrounded them. "You led searches... you lied..."

Every eye in the room, was on Telindil. The Khajiit next to him spoke up louder. "You led searches with Dominion funds, searching for Eniurron Gaelrinthil's daughter, while the entire time, she was in your home? You did this to him? To us?"

Telindil's head shook continuously, though no words came from his mouth.

The large room was dead silent. And it was then, that Fillim spoke. "I was born in Telindil's home.
My mother... she died giving birth to me."

Eniurron collapsed down to his knees. His hands covered his face as he wept. More Altmer and Bosmer left their seats to surround him, attempting to offer any comfort they could. But Fillim was not interrupted.

"No one was allowed to speak her true name. Even I did not know it until I met Commander Ondolemar. I was nursed by one of the other servants that had an infant, and raised by them. Forced to be a servant in my father's home."

Quiet gasps rang out through the Meeting Hall as he spoke, and hands were raised to cover mouths.

"One day, when I was very small, I was led into Telindil's study, where he told me who he was. That he was my father. But, that I was to never tell anyone this was so."

Fjolrin's hand released his as Fillim stepped forward, closer to his grandfather. But he did not approach him yet. He knew that Fjolrin was there for him, but this was something that he needed to do on his own. He needed to be strong.

"There was a witness to this... that I was a servant there." Turning to look at Dhaunare, the Justiciar nodded and stepped forward, away from Fiiralmo and Carene. There was also no missing the disgust on Telindil's pinched up face as just one more of his accusers stepped forward to condemn him.

Dhaunare stood at attention before them, his head held high. "I was in attendance during one of Telindil's gatherings at his home," he glanced at Fillim, "now, being almost six years ago." He looked briefly throughout the Meeting Hall. "Many of you that are present here today were more than likely in attendance as well."

Fillim looked around at all of them, seeing the recollection as it became clear on so many faces as Dhaunare spoke.

"I happened into Telindil's kitchen, looking for a bottle of wine, and stumbled upon Fillim. He was at the water pump, filling a bucket, and he was dressed in a servant's linens. I spoke to him, and it was at this time that Telindil happened in, seeing us together."

Fillim stared deeply at his father now. Of course, he and Dhaunare hadn't been speaking when he'd come in and seen them. Dhaunare had kissed him, and his father had interrupted them. His first kiss.

But, that, evidently wasn't going to be mentioned. Even with all that was transpiring around them and what was at stake, he almost had to fight his urge to grin at Dhaunare's discreet choice of wording.

Dhaunare moved his arms behind him, grasping his hands together lightly, at ease. "It was the very next day that I was called from the Barracks to see Telindil. I sat before him, and was told that I was being stationed to Skyrim permanently. That I would never be allowed to set foot on the soil of my Homeland again."

The rage in Dhaunare was evident, even as he kept his voice low, his jaw was clenched and his eyes, hard. "He told me that if I ever uttered a word of Fillim's heritage to anyone, that he would have my tongue cut out. That I would be chained and tortured till my last breath."

Several Altmer males stood unexpectedly, their voices ringing forth in unison. "I remember that!"
They looked down at Dhaunare in acknowledgement, then around at everyone else. One male in particular stepping forward. "I remember you coming into the Barracks that day! You started packing and refused to answer any of the questions I asked. Many of us wondered what happened so suddenly."

Though Dhaunare could have carried on, he turned and once again, took his place next to Fiiralmo and Carene.

Fillim continued. "Telindil requested that Anariil school me in magicka. And it was this, that led to me meeting Tarenen. Anariil was also the one that told me why my father even bothered with it, if he was just going to give me to him." Fillim swallowed as he remembered the conversation. Just one of many that they'd had while he lay healing from being whipped.

"He said that he did it in my Mother's honor. He did not tell me of who she really was. But, that, even though she'd been kept as a servant, Telindil loved her, and grieved when she died."

Eniurron struggled to his feet, and aided by others, took the chair closest to Fillim. His voice, ragged, as he called out to them all. "She was pure! She was in love with her fiance, and was to be married before this happened! She was bound, drugged, and gagged! Stolen from the safety of her home! Taken from her people!" Now, he stood! Pointing his finger accusingly at Telindil! "YOU RAPED MY DAUGHTER! YOU BASTARD!!"

Telindil looked at him, shaking his head. "I did not rape her. I did not touch her for quite some time, and when I did, she was willing."

Eniurron struggled against those that held him! "NEVER!! You will never get me to believe that! She had no choice! She was your prisoner! If she did not fight you, it was because she knew there was no choice! You can't tell me that she did not weep to you! You can't tell me, that she did not beg to be set free!"

The soldiers behind him stood at the ready. "She did." Staring vacantly down at the hard wood before him, he cried. "She did, but it was too late. I could not set her free. I couldn't lose her, and all that I had built as well."

The Bosmer to the side of him stood and spoke. "You, did not build the Dominion, Telindil! And what is any of the good you have done for our people, if these acts you have committed, are what it is built upon? I shudder to think of the things that we know nothing of, if all of this is what is coming out today."

What was being said at the head of the room didn't even register. Fillim could only cringe at his Grandfather's words. She was raped...

What was he the product of? A Mer so filled with treachery that he would do this to another, and a female that had everything taken from her by his hand. A union that only he wanted. Even if she didn't fight him, in her heart, she didn't really want him. Then... what had she thought of me?

Chapter End Notes

Still a lot coming. I plan to post for Wild and Leverage, then the 2nd for this. Sorry for the wait.
There may be some unanswered questions, but all will be told in the coming chapters.

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